



**An Exploration of Women's Voices in the Public Sector: A Case of a
Government Department Cape Town**

By

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the exploration of women's voices in the public sector in a government department in Cape Town. It analyses the causes of women conforming to male dominance, their inability to voice their opinions, and how they can make decisions for themselves in the public sector. The investigation is conducted on the presupposition that women are still not given their full rights, specifically in the workplace, where an insignificant number of them are given high positions that are permanent and how women face discrimination within the workplace because of male dominance. Moreover, in Cape Town, most women are believed to work in lower-paid jobs, and those who hold permanent positions in the public sector are not given an opportunity to practice authority due to inequality between men and women.

The study also investigates how the government department of Cape Town has a serious problem of women holding qualifications yet struggling to attain better positions that will match what they have studied. They are forced to settle for entry-level positions that do not motivate them to climb the ladder and fully support their families financially. Inclusivity is also a detriment to women in the workplace. It has been observed that women are not given the room to be confident and be part of management decision-making. Instead, they are belittled and undermined and given unfavourable duties that are not important. Moreover, women are excluded from major work meetings and events that allow them to express their input and viewpoints, as it is believed that it is not their place to do so.

This dissertation is underpinned by the social constructivist theory, where knowledge is built from human experiences. The social constructivism theory postulates that such experiences are influenced by society and its cultural setting. In addition, the data collected in this research was gathered utilising interviews and questionnaires where participants were given a series of questions to answer. The interview questions were structured as a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee. Moreover, questionnaires were also collected in the research, which allowed the researcher to gather information from a larger audience than interviews. The

researcher managed to receive a good number of questionnaires from the participants, while others were uncomfortable answering the questionnaire. The findings from the data collected insinuate that the government department of Cape Town still needs to put more effort into opportunities that support and uplift women. Furthermore, a course of action should be taken to eliminate inequality and discrimination in the workplace so that employees can be in a healthy work environment.

Keywords: Fairness, Equality, Discrimination, Women, Exploration, Voicelessness

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my late mother, Nontsikelelo Elda Nketsha.

I feel honoured and privileged to have been your daughter. You always loved me unconditionally.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction and Background of the Study

Despite 26 years of democracy, women still face limitations in exercising their rights. According to Maseti and Ntabanyane (2017, p. 07), less than half of South Africans working in the public sector believe that equal opportunities and fair treatment for women have improved, expressing doubts about the government's effectiveness. Only 46% of women have access to exploring opportunities within the organisation, and those in high positions are few, with their permanence in these roles being uncertain. Globally, women encounter workplace discrimination due to the permanent allocation of certain senior management positions to men. Furthermore, women's access to the workforce is often restricted, and when granted, it tends to be associated with lower occupational levels within the organisation (Sinden 2017, p 37). This research delves into the issue of women's lack of voice in the workplace in Cape Town and explores avenues for empowering them.

In Europe, men and women in the workplace are expected to behave in a masculine and feminine manner (Profeta 2017). Women in the workplace are not allowed to make any decisions that include work-related issues; their decisions are not supported. Women earning high salaries receive 20% less than their male counterparts, as Lamberti (2018, p. 14) indicated. Women's empowerment in the workplace has persisted as a significant challenge in Asia for an extended period. According to Huynh (2016, p. 3), 51% of women in Asia identify equal pay as the most prominent concern in the workplace. Women ask for pay raises as often as men, but their request is denied. Men are most likely to be successful (Council, 2018, p. 8). Furthermore, Asian countries still encounter challenges when it comes to advancing in the workplace. The issues that concern women in the workplace in Asia are equal pay and harassment, but still, men benefit more from small talk than women in the workplace (Slaughter 2015, p. 227).

In Africa, women are treated differently. Many factors diminish women's political power in West Africa. One of those factors includes employment. Women in West

Africa are also dealing with a serious issue in the workforce within the region, Easley (2020). Most West African countries have poor infrastructures and fully functional public services, which drive women into more domestic and care work. In West African regions, men are more likely to be paid more and are more likely to spend less (Meneses & Thim 2018, p. 220).

According to Griswold (2017), women in West Africa spend 2 to 10 times more time on unpaid care work than men. This leads to economic and social issues in West Africa. Since their work is unpaid, they have little to no upward mobility, and this lack of economic status pushes them further down the social ladder. Consequently, women find themselves without a voice in their communities, struggling to raise and address issues that affect them. In line with this, women in West Africa are more likely to receive poor health care than men, resulting in gender inequality such as lack of education and job opportunities, which results in more women being in poverty, and they are less likely to afford good medical health (Griswold 2017). According to Olivier and Heineken (2017, p. 38), 80% of women in South Africa are experiencing far higher unemployment rates despite their academic qualifications and knowledge about the organisation. These researchers argue that women in the public sector face a stumbling block that limits their chances to undertake leadership positions in civic organisations and public institutions. Hence, they are economically disadvantaged and tend to be employed in lower-paid jobs.

Even though the position of women has improved since apartheid, there are still critical disparities between men and women in the workplace. It should also be mentioned that women in South Africa are still struggling economically. In Cape Town, women have fewer education opportunities and are likelier to work in lower-paid jobs. Their voices are almost silent when it comes to decisions at work. South Africa is said to be one of the countries with the lowest unemployment rates. Most women in Cape Town live in poverty due to a lack of equal access to opportunities (i.e. employment and education) and lack of political representation (Cole 2015, p. 2). Hence, this study investigated these women's voicelessness and how to improve this.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Both pervasive poverty and poor representation in society continue to be challenges that women continue to suffer from. Through the successful implementation of laws, the government has been able to legalise abortion and address the issue of domestic abuse. The legislation that is supposed to support women's rights is still a mystery, despite the fact that the experiences of women in our society are influenced by both race and gender. Women in the Western Cape confront difficulties in acquiring improved career possibilities, primarily due to the fact that they have a low level of education and receive inadequate compensation. The roles that they hold inside the organisation limit the opportunities that are available to them. A notable deficiency of women in board seats, chief executive roles, and senior management positions may be observed in the departments that are located in the Western Cape jurisdiction. According to Maziriri (2015), this spreads beyond the territory of the public sector and governmental organisations. According to Mandla and Moolman (2000) and Matoane (2015, page 24), the lack of recognition in the workplace is the primary factor that impedes the advancement of women into higher positions in the Western Cape.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Research.

1.3.1 Aim

The study explored women's voicelessness in the workplace and seeks to create a more informed understanding of the issues women face and their opportunities in Cape Town. Hence, the study sought to:

1.3.2 Research Objectives

- Ensure women have equal opportunities and skills to participate in building the economy.
- Give a voice to women in society.
- Ameliorate better working conditions for employed women in the Western Cape through their voices and better opportunities.

1.4 Research question

1.4.1 The main question:

Why are women voiceless in the workplace?

1.4.2 Sub-research question:

- What opportunities and skills are there for women to participate in building the economy?
- How can women be given a voice to participate in building the economy?
- How might employed Western Cape women's level of life be improved?

1.5 Purpose of the study

- The primary purpose of this study was to investigate and analyse the representation and impact of women's voices within a specific government department in Cape Town.
- The purpose of this research was to explore the extent to which women's perspectives, experiences, and contributions are integrated into the decision-making processes and policies of the public sector.
- This study sought to shed light on the challenges and opportunities women face and the potential benefits of increased gender diversity and inclusion in the public sector.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study holds considerable significance for several reasons. Firstly, it adds to the broader conversation on gender equality and the empowerment of women within the public sector, providing insights into the experiences of women employed in government departments. Secondly, it provides insights into the potential impact of gender diversity on policy development and implementation. Moreover, the findings of this study can be valuable for government departments in Cape Town and beyond as they seek to enhance inclusivity and address gender disparities. Additionally, this research can serve as a basis for advocating for more equitable and inclusive

policies and practices within the public sector, ultimately leading to better governance and improved public services.

1.7 Scope of the study

This study focuses on a specific government department located in Cape Town, South Africa. It includes an in-depth examination of the experiences, perspectives, and contributions of women working within this department. The scope of the research encompasses various aspects, such as the representation of women in leadership positions, the challenges they encounter, and the policies and initiatives in place to promote gender equality. The research was limited only to qualitative research, with a focus on 20 participants working at SASSA offices in Cape Town, South Africa

1.8 Definition of key terms

Voicelessness

Voicelessness manifests when individuals cannot express their opinions, are powerless to bring positive change in a particular place, and their opinions do not carry weight in a meeting or gathering (Macky 2018, p. 4).

Gender

The term conveys a distinction between men and women, encompassing the rules and norms to which each gender is expected to adhere. This interpretation of biological differences between genders leads to unequal opportunities, as highlighted by Heise (2019, p. 3). He defines it as a process that involves expectations regarding the characteristics and behaviours of both men and women.

Gender Equality

The idea that individuals of all genders have the liberty to pursue personal abilities or lifestyle choices without facing discrimination is known as gender equality. According to Hideg and Krstic (2021, p. 7), it is a process that aims to prevent the mistreatment of women within organisations and combat violence. They also characterise gender equality as a fundamental human right for everyone.

Empowerment

Empowerment is a process that enables individuals to act and enhance aspects that hold great importance in their personal lives. According to Williams (2019, p. 211), empowerment involves mutual support, aiding others in achieving their aspirations. It is also a social process designed to assist individuals in gaining control over their lives.

Legislation designed to protect women

The following laws accommodate the key components that were made to protect the rights of women:

- The Constitution of South Africa (1996).
- The Employment Equity Act (1998).
- The Municipal Systems Act (2000).
- The Electoral Act (1998).
- The Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act (2000).
- The Communal Land Rights Act (2004)

1.9 Brief Overview of the Chapters

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background of Study

Chapter 1 introduces the research topic, emphasising its relevance and presenting background information, research questions, objectives, and rationale. It highlights the significance of the study and its contribution to existing knowledge.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Chapter 2, the literature review, will comprehensively review relevant literature on gender diversity and women's roles in the public sector. It aims to explore theories, concepts, and empirical studies to establish a theoretical framework for the research.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

Chapter 3 outlines the research methodology and the detailed research approach. This includes information on data collection methods, sample selection, and data analysis techniques. The chapter explains the rationale behind the chosen methodology and how it aligns with the research objectives.

Chapter 4: Data presentation and analysis

Chapter 4 focuses on data presentation and analysis, presenting the study's findings. It delves into the representation of women in a selected government department in Cape Town, examining their roles, experiences, contributions, and challenges.

Chapter 5: Discussion of findings

Chapter 5 interprets findings within the context of literature reviewed in Chapter 2, providing insight into implications for government departments and the public sector.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and conclusions

Chapter 6 deals with suggestions for the government department, policymakers, and other stakeholders based on the research findings. It proposes potential strategies for enhancing women's representation and influence in the public sector and identifies areas for future research.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a foundational introduction to the research topic, "An exploration of women's voices in the public sector: A case of a government department in Cape Town." In this section, the researcher provided an explanation of the research topic as well as the fundamental issue that served as the drive for the investigation. A description of the research aim, objectives, research question, and purpose of the study was provided by the researcher. The researcher emphasised the relevance of carrying out an investigation into the representation and influence of women in the public sector. Both the significance of the study in advancing gender equality and inclusive governance as well as the research's concentration on a certain government department have been brought to light. In order to preserve clarity and uniformity throughout the investigation, the ensuing chapters have provided a comprehensive explanation of the key concepts that are relevant to the study. In preparation for a comprehensive investigation into the participation of women in the selected government department, the existing policies and efforts pertaining to gender diversity, and the potential impact that these factors could have on decision-making and governance, this chapter has prepared for the investigation. The following chapter will provide a literature review in order to improve the reader's understanding of the subject matter that is being investigated.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The section focuses on an overview of relevant surveys investigating females' voicelessness in the workplace in the public sector. The chapter also represents the theoretical framework that underpins the study. It further reviews relevant literature concentrating on the value of women's power, promotion of women's rights, women's opportunities in the workplace, females' voicelessness in society and females' engagement within the economy.

2.2 Background

Women's rights have been a major topic of discussion, with different researchers and governments coming up with possible solutions to address the situation. This is because women were previously disadvantaged and were considered less than men. Their role was mostly considered at home for bearing children and caring for the household. This has since changed, although women are still fighting for human rights, demonstrating that, while some progress has been made, much more still needs to be done.

These days, females—and mainly black females—are economically deprived as they make up a disproportionate percentage of the unemployed and have a tendency to occupy menial jobs, including home workers, cleaners and farm labourers and most customarily earn much less than males for the identical tasks (SAHO 2021).

Furthermore, females are stated to be disadvantaged when it comes to access to productive resources. According to OECD (2018), women's entry to land, assets, and estates is time and again controlled in Sub-Saharan Africa by statutory laws or the economy, with their rights often infringed upon. Thus, having access to land is the main thrust of the women's movement because it opens up the opportunity to engage in the agricultural sector of the economy. An area in which women have yet to break the glass ceiling is decision-making, especially within the public sector.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

A framework addresses the themes or theories associated with a research study, potentially encompassing multiple theories. This facilitates the analysis of the research problem and contributes to the enhancement of existing theoretical knowledge (Kierzkowski 2018). The theoretical framework aims to make research findings unique to the theoretical constructs of the study field. The theoretical framework helps energise the research, gives direction to enhance the exactness of the research and gives life to the research (Hussein 2018, p. 439). The theoretical framework gives a basis for organising its credibility and guides the research path. It provides solid evidence for the academic standards, explains why the study is important, and provides the research with sufficient support (Adom 2018). Additionally, it assists in dealing with the questions of 'how' and 'why' through articulating a study's theoretical assumptions. Finally, it allows the researchers to remember their barriers and options (Moallem 2000).

2.3.1 Constructivism theory

The principle of social constructivism underpins this study. According to social constructivism, learning happens through social interaction and other people's assistance, frequently in a group setting. Lev Vygotsky (1896-1934), a psychologist from the Soviet Union, established the social constructivism hypothesis. The foundation of social constructivism is the notion that students create new knowledge (Vygotsky 1978). This theory is further defined as a concept of understanding, which states that people create understanding and sense from an interplay between their experiences and intentions (Magashoa 2014, p. 52). It also focuses on the role of human consciousness in social life. It states that ideational factors mainly shape human interaction (McLeod 2019).

Furthermore, Amineh (2015, p. 16) states that constructivism is a theory that projects learners to be able to construct knowledge rather than being passive receivers of information. This theory proposes that one should mentally construct the world of experience through cognitive experiences. Moreover, Troelstra (2011, p. 150) argues that constructivism is building knowledge of oneself and one's daily

experiences and reflecting on one's primary goals to provide a democratic and critical learning experience.

Constructivism is a theoretical perspective that is defined by Yeboah and Ankrah (2016, p. 2) as the idea that knowledge is produced via human experiences rather than being obtained from self-evident truths. It suggests that careful research is carried out whenever human beings are producing artefacts. According to Seel (2012), constructivism places primary emphasis on significant characteristics such as an individual's beliefs and abilities through the utilisation of various learning experiences. According to Yeboah (2016, p. 3), constructivism proposes that human interaction is necessary for the formation of reality. Hence, constructivism implies the following principles:

- Knowledge is constructed, not transmitted.
- Initial understanding is social, not global.
- Prior expertise affects the studying process.
- Building a beneficial information system calls for effortful and useful activity.

2.3.2 Socio/social constructivism theory

The notion of social constructivism places an emphasis on the socially shared experiences and discourses that are responsible for shaping reality, facts, lifestyles, and methods to problem-solving. The society and the cultural context in which it is developed have a significant impact on it through their influence. Within the context of society, it investigates the evolution of ideas and the relationships that exist between individuals. The notion of social constructivism places an emphasis on the socially shared experiences and discourses that are responsible for shaping reality, facts, lifestyles, and methods to problem-solving. The society and the cultural context in which it is developed have a significant impact on it through their influence. Within the context of society, it investigates the evolution of ideas and the relationships that exist between individuals. (Risse 2004, p. 2). Social constructivism

is about our daily life experience or reality, knowledge, and learning. For this to happen, a primary element is needed with two or more participants who must be part of an interaction to enable knowledge construction (Rieber 2004). Creswell (2013) describes social constructivism as a framework where one seeks to understand one's world and advance one's own values that relate to one's experience. It also focuses on what is happening between people as they join to create realities (Shunk 2000, p. 2). Social constructivism also uses a qualitative research method that employs observations as a data collection instrument. It emphasises the value of culture in the process of knowledge construction (Agius 2013, p. 71). Social constructivism is important for research purposes and knowledge and is constructed through social interaction. It strongly affects people's learning ability and is based on specific assumptions about reality, knowledge, and learning while focusing on the role of social interaction in creating knowledge (Teague 2000, p. 3).

Socio-constructivism focuses on how we build knowledge to understand the world. It helps develop critical, analytical, evaluative, and creative skills (Lombard & Kantola 2021, p. 4). Social constructivism enables researchers to transfer their skills to real-world experiences and reach their model of reality inspired by their worldview and lived experience (Sterian & Mocanu 2016). Social constructivism builds knowledge on understanding the world (Detel 2015). The theory, which focuses heavily on small groups (Johnson & Bradbury 2015), is widely used in sociology and supports the social construction of technology (Myburgh & Tamaro 2013). In addition, the theory is applied as a lens to benefit more experts in how expertise is obtained and applied to impact skill and development (Rodriguez & Ahmed 2014). Besides, this theory shows that expertise develops due to social interplay, including language use and mutual exposure rather than individual exposure (Lynch 2016).

2.3.3 Advantages of Social Constructivism

This theory motivates a student to reach the exact point affected by their experience. It is an effective theory that develops student organisations (Slavin 2019). Social constructivism evolves modern skills like critical thinking, analysis, evaluation, and creation. The theory also encourages researchers to review and evaluate one's job

description while helping students to transfer these skills to the real world (Dover 2018). Social constructivism also develops higher-level thinking, builds self-esteem in students, and fosters group construction and group technique in hassle-fixing whilst sustaining accountability (Orey 2010).

The focus of this theory is on the ways in which individuals' interpretation of knowledge is shaped by their abilities to collaborate with one another and their relationship to the environment. Considering the continuing and major changes that are taking place in the globe, it is pertinent to this study. The purpose of this study is to investigate the current state of affairs inside an organisation, with a special focus on the dearth of possibilities and representation for women in the workplace.

2.4 Literature Review

The South African Charter caters for and protects the rights of people in the country. Section nine of the Constitution of South Africa ensures equality earlier than the regulation and freedom from discrimination to the humans of South Africa. Equality is the primary driver of the Bill of Rights. It prohibits discrimination by the authorities and discrimination through the general public. Women are manifestly protected through the broad variety of rights assured within the new constitution.

The Bill of Rights inside the charter guarantees legislative and different measures to sell equality. Furthermore, the Employment Equity Act was adopted to effect the constitutional ideals of equality. The primary purpose of this act was to rectify discrimination and ensure that the workforce in South Africa is varied and equally represented. The Employment Equity Act has several important aims, including promoting equal opportunity and impartial treatment in the workplace and implementing effective affirmative action policies.

2.4.1 The value of women's empowerment.

World Vision (2020, p. 5) defines women's empowerment "as the promoting of women's sense of self-worth, their ability to determine their own choices, and their right to influence social change for themselves and others". According to Cornwall (2016), empowerment involves changing power relations and favouring those who

previously practised or did not have power. It is a process that involves capacity building to help women transform their choices into actions and outcomes. The concept has become a global movement and continues to break new ground. The United Nations created seven principles that strengthen females in the working environment through a collaboration regarding the UN Global Compact and UN Women (Vision 2020). These concepts guide enterprises by developing gender equity and women's movement in the working environment, including society (ILO 2020).

In some countries, women are discriminated against based on their gender, and they are only expected to perform domestic responsibilities. It is considered unacceptable for women to be separated from their family members or to be exposed to other places, as it is believed that women are emotionally and physically weaker than men.

They are not supported and not given the same rights as men. Encouraging females is the same as permitting them, thus giving them fair treatment to play a part in the public and nationally (Doeung 2018). It is important to mention that empowering women encourages them to achieve their goals and believe in themselves. Women can work outside their homes and have opportunities to make up their minds for bigger prospects. Some women are not self-assured enough to work in hard positions because they know it is not a woman's job (Doeung 2018). Empowering women helps to reduce domestic violence and more job opportunities for women (Cornwall 2016).

Empowering women equips them with the necessary tools to have the ability over her entity, thus becoming independent, having equal opportunities, and making strategic choices in all areas of their lives, especially in the workplace (Darrah 2020). Educating women equips them with a better understanding, expertise, and composure to engage equally in the working environment. It is necessary to observe that economically empowering females ensures they can participate in the economy and get equal work opportunities. Furthermore, women's empowerment gives them more control and a right to construct their action plans, improve their knowledge, and attain self-reliance (In.Corp 2020). According to Kandpal et al.

(2013), feminism can gain traction only if its contribution to the working environment is welcome.

According to Duflo (2012), there are different reasons for having effective guidelines for developing females, and ensuring that such development takes place is vital. Females remain at a disadvantage regarding equity, thus the need for empowerment. There is a gender gap in education, political participation, and employment opportunities. Gender differences exist in terms of gaining knowledge, civic involvement and attaining fundamental roles in development initiatives. Additionally, society has adopted a position that the feminist movement applies to productivity structures, policy debate and the ensuing economic guidelines (Doeung 2018).

2.4.1.1 Accept that gender diversity is a priority.

The first step towards women's empowerment is accepting that gender diversity is a priority. Prioritising gender diversity in the workplace creates a sense of urgency for addressing women's rights infringements. Guy and Schumacher (2009) hold that women have less representation compared to their numbers in the public sector, and their income is less than that of their opposite gender. More so, their voices are seldom heard to the point of almost being silent. Soni (2002) opines that some organisations in the public sector have adopted a philosophy of emphasising the importance of workforce diversity and have gone as far as implementing different initiatives for effectively using and managing workforce diversity. Gender diversity is important for the economy and workplace, as it rewards and improves the organisation's performance measurement (Flores 2019). According to Noland et al. (2016), a review of 21 980 organisations from ninety-one nations suggests that having females on board might enhance the corporation's profile, motivating organisations to empower women as this benefits them.

Kearney's Gender Equality Report (2021) reveals that two-thirds of the countries surveyed showed more promising government parity than South Africa, with 44% of its MPs being women (BW 2021). Though the national statistics are encouraging, much effort must be exercised at the local level. Vyas-Doorgapersad and Bangani

(2020) suggest that every South African Public Provider should be required to submit annual gender equality reports to the Department of Public Sector and Administration for analysis so as to be able to identify delays in implementing gender equity within the civil service. According to Vyas-Doorgapersad and Bangani (2020), gender equality continues to be a significant challenge and a contentious issue for the South African Public Service. This is because women continue to face challenges in obtaining well-placed positions and balanced representation. In the public sector, it continues to be a source of concern, and those in positions of authority must pay great attention to it.

2.4.1.2 The strength of women's civil society

Several scholars emphasise that political institutions and elites significantly influence women's empowerment, particularly by reinforcing women's role in civil society (Alexander 2007). Although political environments have the potential to reduce the ability of an active female civic organisation, it is important to note that female movements are important, and they develop female social control, including political power. Women must unite to run activities, provide services, and establish local networks through civil society groups (Schwabenland et al. 2016). This is because they are better suited to articulate their challenges and be at the forefront of empowering fellow women.

2.4.1.3 Establish goals for improving gender diversity.

Gender equality is key as it ensures a corresponding representation of females in the working environment, thus ensuring equal, effective outcomes for the corporation. According to Brown (2021), women generate just 37% of GDP globally, even though they comprise 50% of the population. Organisations must analyse themselves and implement recommendations for important improvements their employees make. They can thus establish diversity goals from the information collected on enhancing gender equity and also examine restrictions meant for female commanders to be on top (Slaughter 2015). The next step will be to educate employees and relevant stakeholders regarding the capability and ensure the gender diversity aims are fulfilled and all-embracing.

2.4.1.4 Support Professional Development.

Professional development is a vital empowerment tool organisations can use to encourage diversity and inclusion, thus empowering women. Evolving training and policies allow organisations to support and follow up on professional development. Women have been previously disadvantaged; thus, they must be empowered through professional development. Organisations, especially in the public sector, need to create opportunities for professional development for women by embracing mentorship, sponsorship and coaching. Besides going for an effective method of employee career advancement and professional development plan focusing on women, organisations have a better chance to mitigate employee turnover and drive more productivity as they provide empowerment (Narayanan & Selvanathan 2017). Professional development assists organisations in identifying and developing skills, implementing cross-departmental training programs, offering learning opportunities, and recognising and rewarding women's development within their organisations (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin 2011). Organisations stand to benefit when they look at professional development as a tool of empowerment, as empowered women are much more confident in their work, thus contributing to the efficiency and effective running of the institution.

2.4.1.5 Close pay gaps

Pay equity remains unsettled via measures aimed at making females choose careers similar to their male counterparts (Elson 2017). Upraising an outlay on females' engagement in the economy may pressure the wage gaps to be addressed. This requires regimes, enterprises, and trade unions, including female corporations, to do things differently to address wage gaps.

WEPS (2020) shows that women's salaries are 22% of those of their male counterparts. The research continues to explain that wage equity between females indicates a widespread discrepancy between different countries among different females based on their age, colour, ethnicity, movement rank, and negative variations. Aspects such as education and training, care duties, work experience, firm size, and union density could be used to elaborate on these pay equity principles

(WEPS 2016). According to the OECD (2017), the pay gap causes inequality in terms of income over their existence, which in turn continuously reinforces the inequality that women face in the economy, especially in matters pertaining to the work environment. Equal pay for equal work is a principle that must be put into practice in order to eliminate gender inequality in terms of achieving gender equity (International Labour Organisation 2018). This principle must be implemented in order to remove both positive and negative biases in the process of determining the quality of work. In addition, the International Labour Organisation (2016) maintains that organisations can eliminate wage disparities by performing gender pay gap inspections to identify differences in compensation. As a result, this will guarantee that workers of similar characteristics earn comparable compensation, irrespective of the gender and ethnicity of the employees.

2.5 Promotion of Women's Rights

Advocating for constitutional rights constitutes a crucial aspect of national legislation. According to Vance (2010), disseminating knowledge and understanding of human rights and raising public awareness of this issue requires various activities. Eniola (2018) asserts that women's rights hold a central position among the human rights recognised in international treaties. Gender disparity permeates nearly every facet of society, delineating rights and responsibilities based on physiological distinctions between men and women. Open discussions, public debates, roundtable discussions, and forums are essential. This approach will empower women to safeguard and advance their rights, leading to establishing a more democratic society grounded in equal opportunities. Consequently, organisations should offer free and confidential legal assistance to women experiencing gender violence and discrimination, as advocated by Vance (2010, p. 25).

2.5.1 Use of statutory instruments to promote Women's Rights

Enhancing women's rights necessitates cohesive legal frameworks, emphasising the importance of increasing efforts toward effective implementation and practice. It is crucial to prioritise gender integration across policy agendas and allocate ample resources to all pertinent implementing bodies, as recommended in a report by

OECD (2018). Many countries came together to sign international human rights treaties to promote human rights (UN 2020). The United Nations has a specialised entity dedicated to advancing gender equality and empowering women. The organisation has observed the pervasive nature of inequality, highlighting issues such as women's limited access to quality employment and gender wage gaps within many of its member countries (UN 2020).

Consequently, through its dedicated entity, the UN encourages governments to develop legislative measures that uphold women's rights. UN Women plays a crucial role in developing policies, norms, and global standards related to the status of females. The primary responsibilities of UN Women include supporting inter-governmental bodies in formulating these standards and assisting member states in their implementation. In the implementation process, UN Women stands ready to provide financial and technical support to member states that seek assistance, fostering effective partnerships with civil society to pursue these objectives (UN 2020).

Numerous African countries have officially endorsed vital global agreements concerning women's rights. Additionally, they have developed distinct human rights instruments that are customised to the African context, aiming to promote and protect women's rights. The principal continental organisation in Africa, the African Union, incorporated the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa into its framework in 2003. This Protocol serves as an extension of the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, as delineated by the OECD in 2018. Zimbabwe, for example, has addressed gender inequality concerns through its Gender Policy, with the Domestic Violence Act playing a pivotal role as supportive legislation. The introduction of this instrument aims to eliminate gender-based exploitation and discrimination, ensuring fair treatment of women and promoting their socio-economic empowerment across all sectors of the economy (UNESCO 2016, p. 15). Recognising that women encounter numerous challenges in economic and social spheres, where they are sometimes treated as second-class citizens, UNESCO (2016, p. 15) emphasises the use of statutory instruments to champion women's rights.

The Gender Policy and the Domestic Violence Act advocate for gender equality and equity, emphasising women's rights. They provide extensive areas for advocacy efforts to facilitate the realisation of women's full potential across various domains. In West Africa, Nigeria employs statutory instruments to advocate for and safeguard women's rights. Nigeria has ratified several international instruments, and its constitution mandates the domestication of these treaties before their application in the country. Despite this, a significant number of these treaties have not been implemented regionally because there are not enough women in parliament. This circumstance led to the rejection of the Gender and Equal Opportunity Bill during its second reading at the Nigerian Senate on March 15, 2016, primarily attributed to the Senate's low female representation of only 109 women

In South Africa, women's rights are promoted through the constitution, which caters to and protects the rights of people in the country. According to Vyas-Doorgapersad and Bangani (2020), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, Act 108 of 1996, "provides for the establishment of one sovereign state, a democratic system of government committed to achieving equality between men and women, as well as all people of all races by providing for the prohibition of racial, gender and all other forms of discrimination". The introduction of the Bill of Rights ensured that all women in South Africa received formal recognition as equal citizens (SAHO 2021). South Africa's Section 9 of the Constitution guarantees equality before the law and freedom from discrimination. The first right in the Bill of Rights is equality, ensuring protection against discrimination from private and government entities. The comprehensive rights outlined in the new constitution notably safeguard the rights of women.

In addition to constitutional provisions, the Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act and the Employment Equity Act are crafted to uphold the constitutional principles of equality. These acts specifically aim to address discrimination, ensure diversity in the South African workforce, and promote gender equality. The Employment Equity Act, for instance, strives to achieve objectives such as promoting equal opportunities, fair treatment in employment, and effective affirmative action measures. Statutory instruments play a vital role in promoting

women's rights by mandating fair treatment in all spheres. They empower women with the right to address infringements on their rights through legal channels if necessary.

2.6 Women's Participation in Economy/Nation-Building

According to several researchers' findings, women's participation in agricultural activities is beneficial to the production of agricultural goods, growth, particularly at the micro and average firm levels, and the improvement of business management and returns on investment (Schwabland et al. 2016). Over the years, efforts have been put in place to encourage women to participate in the economy by making access to some resources much easier than it was historically. Earlier studies have highlighted that economic growth can result from investing in women, attributed to the "gender dividend." This concept suggests that when women become the focal point of business decisions, communities thrive around them (Duflo 2012).

The females' movement in the Republic of South Africa to participate in the economy is meant to address the inheritance of racism and how society has changed, especially the conversion of potential among both genders and legislations (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani 2020). It is based on issues concerning gender imbalance, discrimination and structural oppression. It is also important to note that women's access to public leadership roles is still a global challenge in politics, law, the corporate sector, and academia. About 27% of judges globally are women, and barely one in five women are parliamentarians. According to Easley (2020), in the public sector of the European Union, just 22% of top managers in economic and strategic roles are female. Despite rising employment rates and robust representation in the public sector, why do women still make up a disproportionately small portion of decision-making positions (Easley 2020)? What is required to enable women to take on leadership roles in society? This shows an endless supply of statistics to support the idea that there is an urgent need for more female leaders and women to participate in nation-building.

2.7 Women's Opportunities in the Workplace

The workplace is occasionally known as a cold place for females because of multiple varieties regarding gender equity that infringe on their rights Stamarski and Hing (2015). In the context of the government, gender discrimination by corporations is referred to as a compounded reality that reveals the government's structure, procedures, and routines. Some adverse gender inequalities are being given the go-ahead by human resource practices, which include guidelines and decision-making. Additionally, their acceptance affects training and wages, and it also impacts women's advancement and development (Hideg & Krstic 2020).

Some organisations have yet to recognise the significance of having women in the workplace. Women contribute to creating a better work environment, with a higher number of women in the organisation linked to reduced burnout and increased job satisfaction. One of the advantages they bring to the workplace is a wealth of talent, contributing to overall development and growth (Hannan 2020). According to Profeta (2017, p. 07), women remain underrepresented in decision-making roles worldwide. The lack of adequate representation often means they are not considered for opportunities that arise in the workplace, as there may be a perceived shortage of qualified women for top positions. Despite these challenges, promoting gender equality in the organisation has positive effects. Regardless of females making up simply $\frac{1}{2}$ of the populace in the Republic of South Africa, they remain quite unrepresented in positions of authority and power. This is identified through South Africa's Constitution, which identifies gender as a founding precept of the female movement, and the Gender Equality Bill specifically calls for 50% representation in decision-making (Vyas-Doorgapersad & Bangani 2020).

Considering the entire workforce, 44 out of every 100 companies employed women, according to the labour data released for the second quarter of 2017. Furthermore, women filled four per cent of the available professional positions. Since September 2002, these individuals have not communicated with one another (STATS SA 2017). They are comprised of heads, experts, and knowledgeable individuals. Despite this, South Africa has made progress regarding female representation; however, according to data from 2014, it is still below the stretch limit of fifty per cent. The

following areas are of special relevance in tackling the issues women continue to encounter in the workplace. This is because there are numerous challenges that women still face here.

2.8 Equal Access to Employment and Productive Resources

Although frameworks and policies have been put in place due to their previous disadvantages, women still have challenges in accessing employment and productive resources. For example, women still struggle to break the barrier in male-dominated industries because most jobs in those sectors are still seen as male jobs, and not much has been done to assist women in breaking the ceiling at a policy level within the organisations. The Republic of South Africa introduced Employment Equity (1998), which aims to reduce discrimination of various groups, including women, from employment and access to productive resources (Garbers 2000). Public sector organisations should ensure their policies do not discriminate against women from accessing employment.

2.8.1 Getting more women into management.

Organisations should set targets for the representation of women in management and use those targets aggressively. According to Huang et al. (2019), even though women continue to be underrepresented at every level, the number of women in senior leadership has increased. The promotion of women's participation and gender equality in leadership roles is identified as a crucial policy challenge for all countries, according to the OECD report. In 2019, the average percentage of women on company boards in OECD countries rose to 25% (18% in G20 countries), up from 20% in 2016 (15% in G20 countries) and 16.4% in OECD countries in 2013 (OECD 2020). Commonly used metaphors like "glass ceiling," "sticky floor," and the "labyrinth of leadership" vividly illustrate the obstacles to women's upward mobility in the workplace. These metaphors should inspire organisations, especially in the public sector, to augment the representation of women in managerial positions.

Numerous studies provide evidence that the business rationale for having women in leadership positions is significant. Studies, such as those conducted by Huang et al. (2019), suggest that gender-diverse boards can enhance corporate governance

by bringing a broader range of backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, and problem-solving skills. Numerous studies have concurred that gender-diverse boards contribute positively to firm performance. The OECD's 2020 research presents a noticeable positive relationship between a firm's financial performance and the presence of women on boards or in senior management positions.

2.8.2 Diverse slates for hiring and promotions.

In order to improve diversity hiring, the most straightforward and efficient technique is to demonstrate proof that incorporates a consistent integer between the two genders. This guarantees that diverse candidates are presented for interviewing (DPB 2020). The reason for this is that individuals reduce injustice and subconscious bias in the process of appointing and engaging (Huang et al. 2019). Having a variety of interviewers will provide vital viewpoints to the decision-making process regarding recruiting, and it will also assist candidates in gaining a better understanding of how they will fit into the company. It should be a top priority for organisations operating in the public sector to have human resource policies that consider the difficulties that women experience and foster diversity.

Females are often confined through quite a few social, legalised and institutional barriers, such as: “the double burden of work and domestic responsibilities; gender stereotypes around women in the workplace and which sectors they choose; lack of female role models; and lack of opportunities to network” (OECD 2020, p. 20). These constraints need to be noted in hiring and promotion policies within the public sector organisations. Recruiting and promotion systems should also not forget the expertise required by the profession, especially for the females who take maternity leave.

2.9 Voicelessness of Women in Society

Women in society face limitations in their ability to engage in various activities. They are forever limited, and their focus is to look after livestock and walk miles barefooted and carrying heavy bundles of wood on their heads. Most of them cannot attend a school or get promoted in the workplace due to discrimination (Lumadi 2012, p. 230). For a considerable period, the voice of women in society has been perceived as

inadequate, subjecting them to gender discrimination and inequality compared to men. Women encounter discrimination in various spheres, including the workplace, society, and within their homes. It is noteworthy that, in certain locations, women continue to be deprived of their right to receive better education. It is important to create a platform for women to be heard. Their ideas and thoughts should be considered in the decision-making processes. It is crucial to entitle females, allowing each an opportunity to ensure they leave a mark. On the world stage, the Commonwealth Women's Forum amplifies the voices of women and addresses a variety of difficulties, which include gaining knowledge, automation, gender gender-based violence, including exclusion of females to the civil services and private enterprises (Commonwealth 2015).

Organisations like this are necessary in every country to empower women. In South Africa, various organisations in the private and public sectors have created platforms for women's voices to be heard. This has been done at the political stage and in the economy, with big organisations supporting women's empowerment groups. Amplifying women's voices ensures that more women take up leadership positions in government and, to some degree, in public sector management. Women's collective voices are important, especially when coordinated and recognised globally. This empowers them to operate optimally, driven by their innate ability and confidence. In some cases, there is evidence demonstrating females' political impact, which has remedied the inequalities in the arena of gender discrimination (Domingo et al. 2015).

2.10 Women's Voicelessness at the Workplace in the Public Sector

Historically, women have been voiceless within the workforce, including the public sector. This is due to them being previously disadvantaged as they are seen to be less than men. They are generally uninvolved in decision-making processes, and their opinion is seldom asked (Burnier 2003). The ongoing international discourse revolves around the persistent worries regarding the marginalisation and lack of visibility of certain groups in policy formulation and development. Some feminist theorists have been advancing a theory that states that "congresswomen's impact on women's issues, suggest that women are a homogenous group who need to be

represented in discussions that result in policy-making and implementation, as their experiences are unique and different from those of men” (Ilesanmi 2018, p. 02).

The engagement of women in political processes is a matter encompassing human rights and fostering inclusive growth. Globally, women face political obstacles, encountering under-representation and detachment from decision-making at various socio-political levels within government institutions (Mlambo & Kapingura 2019). Numerous countries have ratified protocols that specifically address gender equality and women's political engagement. As highlighted by Zubeyr et al. (2013), the introduction of a gender quota system has increased women's presence in public decision-making across various African nations. Notable rates include Mozambique (34.8%), South Africa (32.8%), Tanzania (30.4%), Uganda, Burundi (30.5%), Rwanda (48.8%), Namibia (26.9%), and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The data reveals a gradual ascent in the participation of women within the public sector, actively contributing to decision-making processes in Africa.

This slow progress reflects the historical marginalisation of women in decision-making roles, underscoring the significance of creating opportunities to institutionalise visible women's participation in decision-making (Ilesanmi 2018). Hence, the relevance of this study in South Africa in particular and the world in general. Fourth World Conference on Females in Beijing had one of its recommendations noted down as “establishing gender-balanced governmental bodies, committees, public administration and judiciary, through specific targets and a positive action policy; integrating women into elective positions in political parties; promoting and protecting women's political rights; and reconciling work and family responsibilities for both men and women”, (Declaration 1995, p. 08). This consists of political illustrations that also work together. The study also offers an analysis of the participation of women in civic and political life, highlighting the need to monitor women's participation and mobilisation in political settings that are both formal and informal.

2.11 Economic Development and Gender Equality

The correlation between economic advancement and gender equality suggests that economic progress is crucial for increasing the number of women qualified for influential roles in society. Advocates of this viewpoint argue that heightened economic development correlates with a more inclusive distribution of educational and occupational resources. Widespread access to educational and occupational opportunities broadens women's prospects for professional advancement, thereby enlarging the pool of eligible women for positions of power, including political offices. Integrating women into the economy addresses pay equity in the workplace and contributes to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Women 2021). It involves a capacity to take part similarly in current markets, get entry to manage over effective resources, get the right of entry to respectable work, manage over their personal time, lives, including their bodies: also expanded voice, organisation and significant engagement in monetary decision-making in any ranges from household as well as global institution (UN Women 2021).

Sexuality serves as an essential consideration in economic improvement because it examines how protocols and managerial hierarchy affect an individual's existence as well as the chances available to different groups of people (Bouchama et al. 2018). Various researchers had an interaction regarding the relationship linking financial development with women's social, economic, and political status (Eastin and Prakash 2013). Economic improvement results in improvements in social and political factors, thus opening room for women's developmental opportunities. It is equally important to note that though social change goes through both positive and negative effects when it comes to women's employment, at the same time, it supports gendered subordination. Developing gender equity through focused guidelines and plans should be prioritised as it can improve gender equality and economic growth simultaneously. Implementing actions to build up females' financial empowerment has developed their gains, guidance and subjective well-being (IDRC 2020).

2.12 Women's Participation in Economy/Nation Building

The participation of women in politics is crucial for inclusive growth, as it is not only a constitutional right but also a moral obligation. Globally, women face impediments to political participation at various socio-political levels, encountering discrimination within government institutions and exclusion from decision-making processes (Mlambo 2019, p. 3). In the South African parliament, females occupy 23% of all positions, but half the total population are females. Other countries have approved laws for gender equity, including female involvement in politics. African ministry public commitment has not come with a structure to protect women, excluding most women from the political arena (Kapingura 2019, p. 3). Moreover, women are being abused in the workplace to obtain power through self-centred ways, resulting in the government ignoring their concerns. However, women are still poorly treated globally, making it hard for them to get into politics and or take leadership in the public sphere (Rop 2013, p. 3).

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter has emphasised the provision for women's empowerment and inclusion in participation in civic processes. This is because females go through challenges that are particularly peculiar to them. Thus, they need to be involved in decision-making, policy and framework development to develop solutions that are best suited for them. The public sector should have prioritised getting women into leadership positions, starting with those who are deserving because they are qualified and providing resources to train the rest. The next chapter is going to be discussing the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research method used for the study. It focuses on the research approach, research paradigm and research design. It also deals with the sampling and sampling size of the research population and the data-collecting instruments used. The chapter ends with the data analysis as well as the ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Paradigm

A paradigm serves as the perspective through which we perceive the world, moulding and impacting the researcher's thoughts, viewpoints, interpretation, and the construction of reality within the research context (Cortazzi 2014). The research philosophy outlines the worldview that directs the collection of empirical data, the analysis of data, and the application of research findings (Kim 2016). This study employs the interpretive research paradigm to explore the issue of women's voicelessness in the workplace. This helps create a more informed understanding of what women face and the opportunities they have from their points of view. The interpretive paradigm is used to understand the phenomena and how the participants experience these phenomena. When analysing the gathered data, the researcher utilises women's experiences of voicelessness in the workplace to construct and interpret their comprehension of the studied phenomena. This paradigm asserts that 'reality is socially constructed' based on personal experiences, and individuals attribute meaning to events (Nantanga 2014). Hence, the diverse experiences of women unveil varying perspectives, as individual experiences are distinct and unique.

3.3 Research Design: Case Study

Bhat (2020) defines research design as a strategy for systematically exploring the research question and interpreting the data collected. Similarly, according to Denzel and Lincoln (1994), research design is perceived as a strategy to address the

research problem. As defined by Blumberg (2008, p. 195), research design encompasses the plan and structure devised for collecting data intended to address research questions or substantiate hypotheses. Additionally, research design is an arrangement of conditions to gather and analyse data correctly to give relevance to the study (Akhtar 2016). Research design is further defined as a blueprint of research that indicates what the study is about, what information is relevant, what the facts to be collected are, and how to examine the results.

Moreover, a research design serves as a strategic outline for collecting, analysing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007, p. 58). According to Toledo-Pereyra (2012), once the hypothesis and research idea are formulated, initiating the research design is the initial step in the research process. Research design transcends being merely a work plan; it encompasses the entire process from conceptualising a problem to formulating the research question, conducting data collection, analysis, interpretation, and finally, report writing.

The purpose of the study provided guidance in selecting a specific type of case study, and the options to choose from included: Instrumental, explanatory, exploratory, descriptive and much more. Moreover, a research design delineates a flexible set of guidelines that establishes a connection between theoretical paradigms and strategies of inquiry, along with methods for gathering empirical material. In this study, the chosen research design is the case study. The case study method proves to be highly valuable in qualitative research, entailing a thorough and comprehensive observation of a social unit. According to McLeod (2017, p. 02), researchers utilising case studies aim to "describe the activities of the group in-depth" and concentrate on a detailed investigation of the specific case. According to Kim (2016), case studies describe the method used in the study, such as when, whom, and under what circumstances the data was collected. The case study in this research is women's voicelessness in their workplaces, with specific reference to one office in the Western Cape Province, Cape Town.

3.4 Research Approach: Qualitative

This study uses Qualitative Research to investigate why women are voiceless in the workplace. According to Cortazzi (2014, p. 44), qualitative research deals with expectations and uses theoretical constructs that inform the research complications with a focus on how individuals or groups give credit to a social or human problem. Additionally, it explores the respondents' comprehension of human behaviour and their perception of a dynamic and negotiated reality. Moreover, the qualitative research method aims to comprehend how individuals subjectively perceive and attribute meaning to their social realities. (Denzel & Lincoln 1994, p. 2). Hence, it recounts certain aspects of social life as well as the methods used to generate words in the place of numbers during data analysis (Brick & Green 2007, p. 2). Flick (2007) states that the qualitative research method is a "systematic subjective approach" employed to depict life experiences and derive meaning.

In contrast, Bhat (2020) defines the qualitative method as a comprehensive framework encompassing various forms to aid in comprehending and elucidating the meaning of social phenomena. Therefore, this study embraces the qualitative approach to delve more profoundly into the lives of participants and the context in which they exist, aiming to grasp their knowledge and reality. This approach enables participants to articulate and express their perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation.

3.4.1 Advantages of qualitative research

Qualitative research has many advantages, some of which are:

- It offers insights that can be precise for an industry. This helped the study during the interviews to understand the context of what was going on instead of looking only at the choices or behaviours of the individuals.
- It deals with human experience – This assisted in getting relevant information on some of the issues women are dealing with in the workplace.

- It uses a smaller sample, which helped the researcher to gather useful information for the study.
- It is an open-ended process – This was very helpful during the interviews as the open-ended questions allowed the interviewees to share their experiences as freely as possible (Gaille 2018).

3.4.2 Disadvantages of qualitative research

Despite the advantages indicated above, this research method also has its demerits. Some of the disadvantages indicated by Miller (2019) includes:

- It relies on the experience of the researcher.
Data collected via qualitative study needs an experienced researcher because the outcomes rely on the researcher involved in the process, and information must be gathered by a researcher who knows the organisation well. An interviewer must be skilful during the process, ask follow-up questions, and make the participants comfortable so that they can freely open up.
- It may be tough to duplicate results.
Because qualitative studies are primarily on individual perspectives, it becomes almost impossible to replicate the outcomes that will be found, given that an individual might have a different perspective than they had today. This means that the statistics the researcher finds in qualitative research may be difficult to confirm.

3.5 Sampling and Sample Size

The most accurate way to obtain information is from a sample rather than an entire universe or population. A sample represents a population subgroup (Sadler et al. 2010, p. 369). This means that each sample unit represents features of a specific population. Hence, by sampling, one understands which group to use as a resource and to determine the research results. Thus, sampling becomes a fundamental part

of the research, given that it will affect the final results if anything goes wrong with the sample,

it will affect the final results (Naicheng Wu 2016). Blumberg (2008, p. 228) posits that a sample is a part of the population selected for the study and sampling is the method used to select that part of the population for the study. Etikan and Baka (2017, p. 2) argue that sampling guarantees convenience, the collection of intensive and exhaustive data, suitability in constrained assets, and better rapport, and it consumes less time than census techniques.

According to Omona (2013, p. 3), sampling consideration in qualitative studies does not always have the importance it deserves compared to other research methods. Sampling allows the researcher to collect a reasonable amount of data to be able to answer the research questions without having to query the entire population (Bhardwaj 2019). This is because the researcher has a specific objective to explore women's voicelessness at the workplace in Cape Town and how they can be empowered. Hence, this study makes use of purposive sampling.

3.6 Purposeful Sampling

Purposeful sampling is a non-random sampling method that makes use of selected standards or reasons to choose a specific sample. The researcher might also use one or more techniques or standards to choose the sample to gather intensive facts from the right respondents (Palinkas 2013). Through the use of purposeful sampling, researchers are able to extract a wide variety of records from the information and data that they have gathered. This permits researchers to explain the main effects their findings have on the population (Pradhan 2019). Purposive sampling, therefore, comprises finding participants with specific attributes. This study focused on women working at a Western Cape government department. A group of individuals from the Grant Administration have been selected as participants. The department has 52 permanent female staff members, but only 20 were selected for the purpose of this study. The department has employed these individuals for at least three years. Due to the length of time they have spent working for South African Social Security, they have been promoted to managerial roles such as Team-

leaders, Supervisors, and Verifiers. They are aware of everything that is going on in the other departments.

- Site selection

The study uses one of the SASSA offices in Cape Town, South Africa. The SASSA Cape Town local office is the biggest in the Western Cape and has more employees than other offices in Cape Town. The unit used in this study is the Grants Administration. This unit is full of women, and it is rare to find a male there. It is essential to point out that this is the only unit in all of SASSA's offices with a significant number of women with a great deal of experience in the workforce.

- Participant selection

Participant selection is a method through which the partakers are selected to participate in an experiment. It is also the most invisible and least critiqued strategy in qualitative circles. Researchers no longer simply gather and analyse impartial data; they determine who matters as data (Reybold 2012). During the planning phase, the researcher considered which members would be most capable of supplying the required information for the study, particularly when examining issues within the organisation or departments. Decisions about which staff members would furnish the necessary information, among many other considerations, needed to be made when selecting participants for the study. The chosen participants have considerable tenure with the department and possess extensive knowledge about SASSA. They were specifically selected from the Grants, Support Service, and Communications departments. This section furnishes a list of considerations researchers must address before deciding on study participants.

- Data collection procedure

For a researcher to be able to draw conclusions or make suggestions, one should have data to use. Research data is defined as facts that show evidence and confirm research findings (Thorpe & Jackson 2012). The study data was collected through interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and participant observation.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Open-ended questions helped the participants to give feedback in an open-text format. The participants focused on their complete knowledge of the topic and the question asked, although it was not limited to a set of options (Esses 2002). This required longer responses as the participants worked in their own spaces and at their convenience (Reja 2003). The questionnaires were very helpful in collecting the data for this study, given the COVID-19 situation, which was present during the data collection period, where physical contact was discouraged. Hence, open-ended questionnaires were used to substitute interviews where face-to-face or telephonic interviews could not be arranged.

Below are some advantages and disadvantages of using an Open-ended Questionnaire when collecting data (Schonlau 2002).

Table 3.1 Open-ended Questions

Advantages of Open-ended Questionnaires	Disadvantages of Open-ended Questionnaires
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can provide detailed information. • Provide rich qualitative data. • Allows an infinite range of answers. • Obtains demographic information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low response rate - everyone is busy with his own things, and nobody prefers to spend much time writing and filling out the feedback forms. • Can gather a lot of irrelative data – Open-ended questions enable the

Advantages of Open-ended Questionnaires	Disadvantages of Open-ended Questionnaires
	<p>participants to provide freestyle answers in their own words, and every person has his way of expressing his/her feelings. Therefore, there is always a greater risk of capturing data that is not relevant, especially if it is not valuable.</p>

3.6.2 Application of questionnaires

Caution and attention must be given to the layout of the questionnaires to collect beneficial and applicable statistics. Creating a well-designed questionnaire requires thought, work, and careful planning through several stages of development. (Rani 2017). This is a link between the interviewer and the respondent; it allows the researcher to gather information from a large audience (Mathers 2009). A cogent questionnaire was used as a device to gather the desired data. The researcher sent an email to all the participants as a reminder. Only 17 Questionnaires were issued to participants out of 20 participants. The 17 participants who managed to answer the questionnaire were the ones who responded. The three participants who could not answer the questionnaire stated they were uncomfortable about giving the information needed; they felt that their personal information would be exposed to the public.

3.6.3 Interviews

Creswell (2017) describes interviews as instruments that allow flexibility in the responses of the interviewees to research questions. Interviews allow for probing of ideas that may come up, thus improving the research data to some extent (Silvermann 2018). Nevertheless, interviews are disadvantageous as they are time-consuming (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). Furthermore, a great amount of data can be collected, with very little answering the intended research question. This study made

use of interviews as one of the data collection tools. The interview questions were structured in a simplified manner for ease of comprehension. The interviews afforded a two-way interaction where the researcher asked guiding questions about the interviewees' ideas, beliefs, views, opinions, and behaviours. It is important to note that interviews are the most used data collection method as they provide detailed information and could either be 'semi-structured or unstructured' (Bhat 2020). This study implored the use of semi-structured interviews because of its interactive nature.

Bailey (1994) gives the advantages and disadvantages of using interviews when collecting data:

Table 3.2 Interviews

Advantages of Interview	Disadvantages of interview
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They help a researcher explain, understand, and explore behaviour and experiences better. • It makes the interviewer a superior technique for exploring areas where there is little basis for knowing what questions to ask and how to formulate them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time Consuming. • Inhibitions: The tape recorder or video may inhibit the respondent. • Resources: The interviewer's time, travel, and transcription costs can be relatively high if the informants are widely spread geographically.

3.6.3.1 Interview procedure

The interview procedure enables the researcher to delve into the subjects, opinions, behaviours, and experiences relevant to the research. Typically, the interview questions are open-ended to facilitate the collection of in-depth data (Zarinpoush 2006, p. 14). This method is employed to thoroughly explore a topic with a limited number of participants. It is effective for obtaining responses to straightforward questions from a larger audience. It proves particularly valuable when the

researcher aims to understand someone's perspective and the underlying reasons, especially when dealing with potentially sensitive information (Marecek 2015, p. 46).

The researcher had to review the questionnaires to prepare for the interviews. The researcher managed to interview four out of the 17 who participated in the study. In a letter sent by the office manager, it was stated that most of the staff members would not be working in the office but would instead be responsible for assisting clients who could not come to the office. Of the participants who were approached to participate in the survey, only five were willing to do interviews. The rest of the staff was uncomfortable since the office manager issued a letter stating that the interviews by the researcher were not approved.

The researcher interviewed one participant per week. The reason was that the participants who worked in Service Points went to the office only on Fridays. As there was no one else present at the office on Fridays, an interview was conducted with one of the participants directly upon their arrival. The office closed at six o'clock, which meant that the boardroom was unavailable beyond that time. 62 Strand Street, which is located on the first floor, was the location of the boardroom where the interviews were carried out.

3.6.4 Participant Observation

Participant observation is also known as ethnographic research. It is a process where researchers are physically involved in collecting data and understanding the problem. It gives the researcher an understanding of what is happening as she is physically present and participates as a member of the organisation (Crossman 2019). Participant observation assists researchers in studying the behaviours of the researched through observing or being part of those activities (Kawulich 2005). In this process, the researcher is a primary data collector and goes into the field of study to observe people and social contexts.

Some of the advantages and disadvantages of participant observation indicated by Prasanna (2021) are:

Table 3.3 Observations

Advantages of observation	Disadvantages of observation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directness: The primary benefit of observation lies in its immediacy, allowing data to be gathered at the moment of occurrence. This eliminates the need for the observer to inquire about behaviour or rely on reports from others • Appropriate tool: Observations serve as the most fitting method for phenomena that cannot convey information verbally about their behaviour, activities, emotions, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties in quantification. • Lack of control. • No opportunity to learn the past. • Everything is not observed: Numerous personal behaviours and private aspects elude the researcher's observation. Some respondents decline to permit researchers to observe their activities, creating a situation where not all aspects are within the researcher's purview. This circumstance also poses challenges in obtaining information about an individual's personal opinions and preferences.

3.6.4.1 Observation Process

The research observation process is a methodical approach to collecting data, where researchers employ their senses to scrutinise individuals in their natural settings or during naturally unfolding situations. This approach, as highlighted by Choudhury (2017), offers the most precise information about people, their activities, and their requirements. This process aims to delineate a set of variables and capture a snapshot of particular characteristics of an individual, as articulated by Paul (2019, p. 116). There was a certain weekday on which the observation took place. Considering that there were two unique groups that emerged as a consequence of the pandemic, each group was investigated on a weekly basis. The researcher carried out the observation process directly because it is very difficult to observe things such as attitudes and intentions. A researcher has to be extra careful when

doing the observation because if people know that their actions are being observed, they often behave differently.

3.7 Reflexivity

This procedure is critical in qualitative studies due to the fact that this area is closely structured based on facts that individuals provide. This process entails evaluating personal judgements, practices, and ideals structures during data collection. Throughout the process, the researcher should be prepared to put questions to their own assumptions (Palaganas 2017). Practising reflexivity aims to recognise any personal beliefs that might have inadvertently influenced the research.

3.8 Data analysis

Data analysis is defined as an action of data review, cleaning, transformation, and simulation to recognise useful data, disclose results, and help in decision-making. This study makes use of thematic content analysis.

Flick (2007) argues that themes and patterns that emerge from different varieties of responses by the participants are identified by thematic content analysis. However, Brick and Greene (2007) state that the data obtained are grouped according to identifiable themes and conclusions drawn. According to Brick and Greene (2007), the researcher accurately transcribed the data collected through interviews. This thoroughness was used in this study to ensure that the participants' exact words were not thwarted. This was in support of Dimatteo, Kahn and Berry (1993), who emphasised that the researcher must be objective in recording the exact words and views of the interviewees.

3.9 Ethical Clearance

Ethical clearance gives protection to the participants as well as the researcher. It also assists in improving the legitimacy of the research findings and ensures that the study is being conducted in an accountable way (Hanekom 2018). Ethical clearance was acquired for this study because it involved living human participants

(Van Der Nagel 2014). Hence, all the ethical measures indicated below were put in place.

3.9.1 Informed consent

Informed consent is a founding principle of research ethics. It is a study procedure of information among the researcher and human contributors of the study (Joshi 2020). This allows the researcher free access to the participants with full information about what it means for them to partake in the research. The participants in this study also gave consent to the research to use them and their information before they entered the research activity. They all signed the consent letters before the research activity started.

3.9.2 Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity is an aspect of confidentiality that hides the personal details of the individuals who took part in the study. Both anonymity and confidentiality are key in the study as they protect the personal information of the partakers in the research. The researchers are focused on aggregating the information that participants provided, regardless of the specific individual(s) who provided the information (Davis 2021). Before the participants agreed to participate in this study, the researcher had a face-to-face interaction with the participants, explaining to them that there would not be any cameras around the room when doing interviews with them. No names would be mentioned because others were scared that they might be exposed to the public.

3.9.3 Credibility

Credibility refers to the authenticity of data or participants' opinions and how researchers interpret and express these opinions (Brick & Greene 2007). If people with the same experience can immediately recognise the description of human experiences, then qualitative research is considered credible (Brick & Greene 2007). The research instrument relied on contemporary research to assert its usefulness in collecting data for this study. The instrument's strengths and weaknesses were considered to judge whether the data collected was credible.

3.9.4 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in a qualitative study is crucial for establishing the credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability of the findings. The primary focus of trustworthiness in a qualitative inquiry is to support an argument demonstrating the findings' importance. Elo (2014) highlights that trustworthiness is concerned with the level of confidence in data, interpretation, and the methods used to ensure the quality of the study. Therefore, it is essential to ensure that the study's results are reliable, valid, and trustworthy so that informed decisions can be made based on the findings. The researcher ensured that the information collected was from recently published books, journals, magazines, and other reputable resources. The sources were verified by comparing the data collected with other authors to ensure credibility and dependability. The aim was to support an argument with reviews and findings that are reliable and trustworthy. Using the qualitative method ensured that this study was of good quality and that the data was interpreted credibly. During the collection of questionnaires and interviews, a high degree of confidentiality was maintained, and the participants' details were not requested to ensure anonymity.

3.9.5 Transferability

The researcher provided background information about the participants and complete details of the research site. This helped draw the context that summarised the research results (McLeod 2017) as well as helped the reader understand how the data was interpreted. This way, external validity can be achieved, and the universality of research results to other situations or people can be solved (Kim 2016).

3.9.6 Confirmability

To obtain confirmability, two colleagues who have recently completed their master's degrees assisted in verifying the validity of the data analysis plan. In addition, to ensure that the data plan is rigorous, a statistician was also used (Kim 2016). Finally, the research supervisor assisted in verifying the validity of the data as well as the data analysis process.

3.9.7 Triangulation

Triangulation in qualitative research refers to the use of multiple techniques to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena being studied. Triangulation is often employed to establish the validity of the research by converging data from various sources (Denise 2014). Data Triangulation is also known as cross-examination since it double-checks the outcomes obtained from the study. This data gives a clear image of the problem and unique answers and results. It produces innovative ways to understand a phenomenon (Naeem 2019).

3.10 Limitation of the Study

This study only focused on women in the Western Cape (Cape Town), and the targeted women were 25-50 years old. The targeted maximum number for the study is 20 women working in a government department, which made it easier for the researcher to collect and analyse the data.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 presented the research design and the methodology followed in the study. The chapter analyses data collected through open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and participant observation from the workers in the largest SASSA local office in Cape Town. This study explores women's voices in the public sector in Cape Town. Code names were used to refer to the participants, such as Team Leader = TL 1, 2 or 3, Verifiers = V 1,2 or 3 and Supervisor = S 1, 2 or 3 to conserve the anonymity and confidentiality of the Management who participated in the research. The data collected is thematically analysed to provide an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, which explores women's voices in the public sector: A case of a government department in Cape Town.

4.2 Synopsis of the Organisation

SASSA Cape Town Local Office has Grant Administrators, Verifiers, Team Leaders, Supervisors, Grants Manager, and an Office Manager. The office has three departments, each with Team Leaders, Supervisors and Verifiers.

The SASSA Cape Town Local Office working environment is limited in how it motivates workers as many people are not given exposure or opportunities to grow further, especially women. This has caused a lack of productivity, and discrimination against women is seen to be a norm at the office.

4.3 Coding

This study generated a substantial amount of data, capturing the beliefs and value system of the research. However, the researcher had to make careful selections due to space limitations since qualitative studies lack guidelines for determining the necessary instances to support a conclusion or interpretation, making it a subjective judgment call (Taylor & Bogdan 1998, p. 156). It could be argued that a single incident or case is sufficient to support or construct a theoretical framework. In light

of this, valuable insights might have emerged from a relatively small amount of data. The supervisor, team leaders, and verifiers are represented as 'S,' 'TL,' and 'V,' respectively to ensure anonymity.

This study examined two datasets to explore participants' perceptions of the topic. The researcher presents strands that illustrate portions of the discourse derived from questionnaires, interviews, and comments in field notes during observation. It is believed that the epistemological foundations discussed in chapters two and three have provided a hypothetical perspective on knowledge that is particularly relevant to this study. A significant portion of the collected data aligns closely with the themes discussed in chapter two (literature review).

4.4 Demographics

The section presents an overview of the demographics of participants who participated in the research. Looking at the demographics, the researcher first looked at the ages of the participants within the public sector. The following data was collected:

Table 4.1 Age of Respondents

AGES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
25-30	1
31-35	2
36-40	6
41-45	6
45-50	2

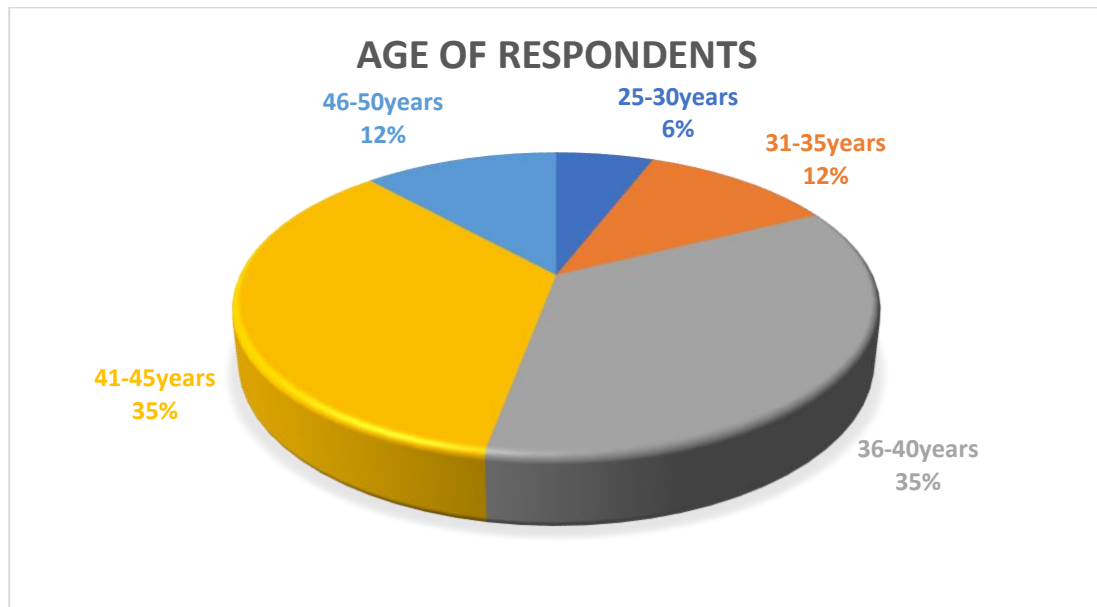


Figure 4.1 Age of Respondents

There have been mild variations in the ages of the respondents. The age diversity above shows that the department had more skilled and experienced employees ranging from 36-40 years and 41- 45 years, and these age categories constituted 35% of the women. It is important to note that the department has a few employees aged 50. This shows that women trailing a decade ago were empowered to hold positions and jobs within the public sector. According to Cornwall (2016), empowerment involves changing power relations and favouring those who previously practised or did not have power. It is a process that involves capacity building to help women transform their choices into actions and outcomes. The concept has become a global movement and continues to break new ground. Hence, it is believed that women in the public sector are breaking new grounds of transformation as they can hold positions in their diverse workstations within the public sector (Cornwall 2016).

4.4.1 Departments filled in by participants.

The researcher also collected data on the different departments the participants filled, and the following results were established.

Table 4.2 Departments filled by participants

DEPARTMENTS	PERCENTAGE %
Grants	70%
Communication	20%
Support Service	10%

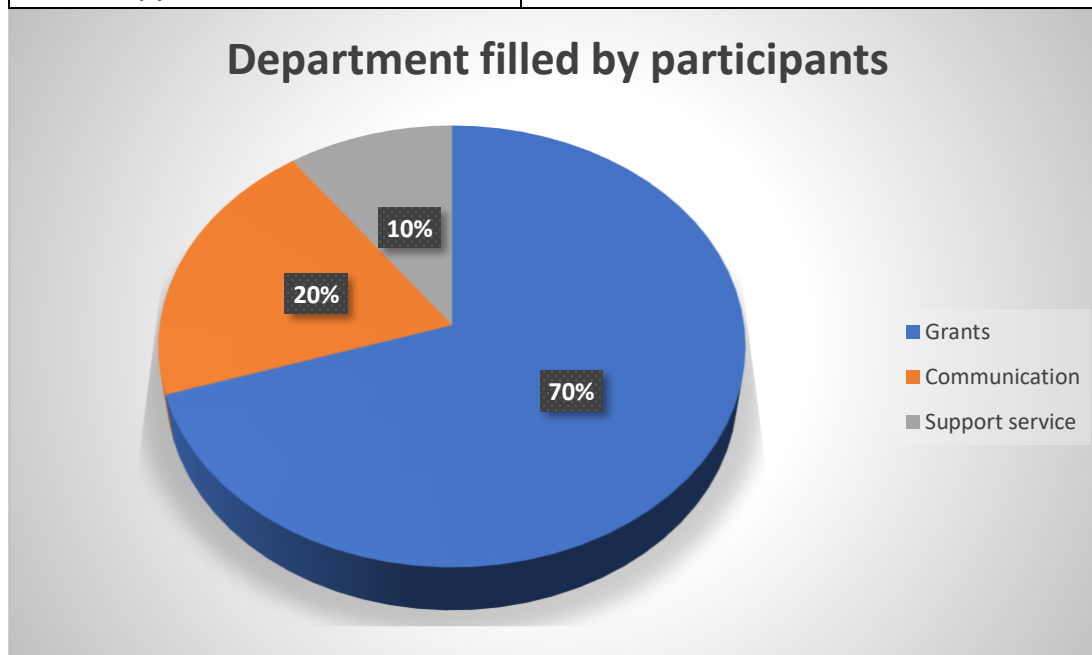


Figure 4.2 Department filled by participants

From the provided data, it can be seen that more women work under the Department of Grants, which constitutes 70%, followed by Communication 20%, and Support with 10%.

Table 4.3 Departments filled by participants and other departments not mentioned in the study

DEPARTMENTS	
Grant Administration	60%
IT Specialist	5%
HR Clerk	15%
Admin Clerk	20%

Other departments that women work in include Grant administration, IT specialists who constitute 5%, HR clerks who constitute 15% and Admin Clerk who constitute 20%. The data collected projects that there are fewer women in technical departments, such as IT specialists. This shows that women need more representation in technical departments, as these are opportunities that men usually have.

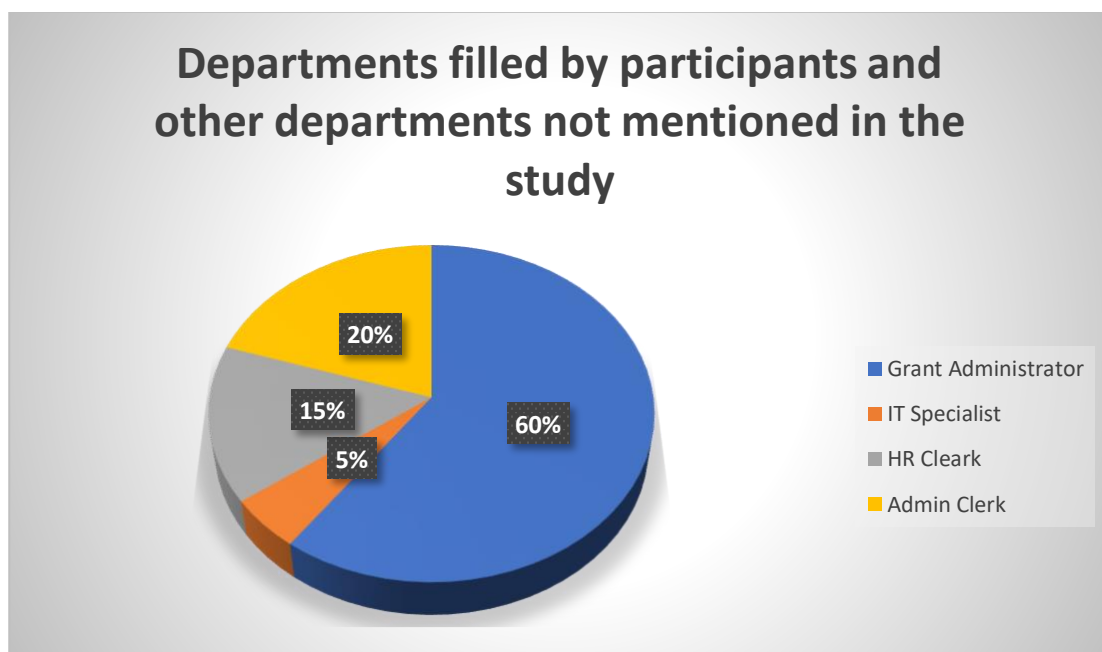


Figure 4.3 Departments filled by participants and other departments not mentioned in the study

4.5 Data Presentation and Analysis

As the research data collection was enormous, it was necessary to select and categorise data strands based on the themes. The researcher used italics to present the verbatim data from respondents' interviews. Segments were formed based on respondents' responses. In order to answer each interview question, the researcher used two strands of data. To organise, collate, and interpret the qualitative data, Burtun et al. (2008) recommend a content analysis approach, which identifies emergent key themes that can be used to organise, collate, and interpret the data. The two data strands were listed for each interview question, along with the themes that emerged.

4.5.1 High number of women are employed in the department.

According to the 2019 data, approximately 8.1 million individuals were engaged in multiple jobs, of which 4.1 million were women. Interestingly, the percentage of women involved in multiple job holdings was higher than that of men, standing at 5.6 per cent compared to 4.7 per cent for men. From January 2017 to December 2019, around 2.7 million individuals aged 20 and above faced displacement from their jobs after working for at least three years. Out of these individuals, 45 per cent were women. Moreover, the outcomes of job displacement were similar for both men and women in the labour market. As of January 2020, the reemployment rate for unemployed women was 68 per cent, slightly lower than the rate for unemployed males at 72 per cent. In the same month, the likelihood of joblessness for displaced individuals was 13 per cent for men and 12 per cent for women. Notably, 16% of displaced men and 20% of displaced women had ceased working.

4.5.1.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

The question below promoted the establishment of the theme of the number of women employed in the department.

Q: How many women are employed in the department where you are working?

This question was aimed at understanding the gender equality within the department. It also sought to explore if women were being provided equal opportunities as men. Based on this, the following opinions were expressed:

TL1: *"There are various women in each department however, the number varies."*

TL3: *"More women are in the Grants department compared to any other department in the organisation."*

S2: *"Over the past 2years, there has been an increase of women recruited in most if not all departments within the organisation"*

The provided data shows that there is an increased number of women that have been recruited within the organisation. This shows an increase in opportunities and participation of women in organisations.

4.5.1.2 Data Segment 2: Open-ended questionnaire

Q: How many women are employed in the department where you are working?

Based on this question, varied opinions were expressed. While some respondents believe women are employed within the department, others disagree. The views are presented below:

V2: *I believe that many women are employed in the department where I am working.*

TL3: *Many women are employed in the department where I work.*

On the other hand, one participant thinks very few women are employed in the department, as seen below.

S1: *I feel that very few women are employed in the department. More can still be recruited since statistically in other departments, more men are employed compared to women, and I still don't understand why.*

From the data provided above, there is an agreement that most women are indeed employed in the department where they worked. However, one participant had a different view, suggesting that the level of women employed can still be improved.

4.5.1.3 Data Segment 3: Observation

The researcher observed that few women work in the SASSA Cape Town Local office. There were approximately five women in a department that has over 25-30 employees. This means that women make up only 20% to 30% of the total number of workers in each department. Women need to be given more opportunities to work, such that at least there is a balance between 50% of workers as women and 50% as males.

4.5.2 Treatment of women by male colleagues

Women are said to be treated differently from men in the workplace, as well as the treatments they receive from their male counterparts. It is widely acknowledged that women are paid significantly less than men globally for equal work, a reality that is often deemed unacceptable. In the United States, women are infamously paid "79 cents to every dollar a male makes," and comparable discrepancies exist for wage jobs in both developed and developing nations (WDR, 2012). Around 41 per cent of women work in the public sector globally, compared to 38 per cent in the formal private sector, which has a lower percentage of female employees. Although women are employed at a lower rate than males in both the public and private sectors in most countries, as seen in Chapter Two above, patriarchy still affects women in the workplace, where they are viewed as the weaker gender. Even though many nations have started taking steps to eradicate patriarchy and promote equality, it is doubtful if many will still witness gender parity. It is necessary to mention that the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 estimates that it will take 99.5 years for this to be achieved.

4.5.2.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

The question below was asked to get the views of the respondents on the above theme:

Q. How are women treated by their male colleagues?

This question aimed to establish the relationship between males and women within the department. It also sought to assess whether the treatment was solemnly based on gender. Hence, the following came out:

TL1: *Women are fairly treated by their male colleagues.*

TL2: *There has been no gender-based complaint in the organisation. As such, we believe that women are treated well by male colleagues.*

S3: *There are problems that women face; however, it is not always that they are mistreated by men.*

S1: *Some women are undermined based on gender.*

TL2: *Not all male colleagues fairly treat their female colleagues fairly and this can be said to be based on gender.*

Based on the provided data, most respondents said that women are treated fairly by their male colleagues. Nevertheless, a few of the respondents highlighted that women are mistreated based on their gender. This is drawn from patriarchal practices that view women as the weaker gender that should be submissive, docile and under men.

4.5.2.2 Data Segment 2: Open-ended questionnaire

Q. How are these women treated by their male colleagues?

TL1: In our department women are fairly and respectfully treated by their male colleagues. We have never encountered a problem where women are sexually or verbally abused since I joined the department.

S3: Women are fairly treated by their male colleagues, as it is evident through how we amicably work together. Of course, there can be conflicts, but they are not gender affiliated.

V2: I have not personally encountered a personal conflict with a male colleague; however, I do not know if other women share the same sentiments.

From the data presented above, women are treated fairly by their male colleagues because most participants agree with this view. A few participants, however, project through strong disagreement that women are undermined and unfairly treated by their male colleagues simply because they are women. This shows that gender can determine the treatment one is given within a workplace.

4.5.2.3 Data Segment 3: Observation

The researcher observed that most women are happy with their relationships with their male colleagues regarding treatment. It is important to mention that conflict is very common in most working environments; however, during the observation period for this study, no conflict arose. I observed mutual respect and collegiality among the staff. Hence, the researcher concludes that male colleagues at the SASSA Cape Town Local office treat their female co-workers well.

4.5.3 Number of women holding managerial positions

In 2019, according to GAO estimates, there were 42 per cent fewer women in management jobs than in non-management occupations (about 48 per cent) in South Africa. Female managers were more likely to be younger, better educated, single, and less likely to be white than male managers. Even though there has been

little progress, women are still disproportionately underrepresented in managerial positions in the South African workforce. The compensation disparity between male and female managers remained steady, and this trend persisted.

4.5.3.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

Q. How many women hold managerial positions, and what are the positions they hold?

This question was used to determine if women hold managerial positions and, if so, how many. Some of the responses were:

***S1:** Women are limited on the level of managerial positions they hold; a very few are in the top management.*

***S3:** It is very rare to find women holding top managerial positions such as CFO, CEO positions, especially in the public sector.*

***TL1:** Few women have held managerial positions; the highest they held is Human Resources Management position.*

***TL3:** The highest managerial position women hold is in the HR department or General Managers.*

Based on the responses above, it can be said that women hold limited managerial positions. Another important fact is that, even if they hold managerial positions, they may not go beyond middle management. This means higher-ranking managerial positions are still held by men, thereby creating huge disparities in gender equality and equity within the workplace.

4.5.3.2 Data Segment 2: Open-ended Questionnaires

Q. How many women hold managerial positions, and what are the positions they hold?

V3: In our department, only two women hold managerial positions, and the other 4 are men.

TL3: In our department, we only have one woman as a supervisor who happens to report to male managers.

TL2: Yes, women hold managerial positions; however, it's a very few and I feel there is need to improve and create opportunities for women in our industry.

S1: Were neutral.

The data shows that very few women hold managerial positions. Most participants disagreed that women hold managerial positions in the workplace. This shows that more opportunities need to be created for women to hold more managerial positions within the workplace. A few participants, however, had a different view; they believed that women hold managerial positions that are proportionate and fair when compared to their male colleagues.

4.5.3.3 Data Segment 3: Observation

The researcher observed that the females who are grant administrators are unhappy with how they are treated and excluded from a lot taking place at the office or not being included in decision-making by the verifiers. SASSA refuses the 3% increase to the Grant Administration Department. It is important to note that women dominate this department. It is, therefore, unclear if the 3% increase is being rejected because of the organisation's financial issues or because the department is female-dominated and hence less important in addressing their needs. In the communication department, the researcher observed that women working in this department are unhappy with SASSA Cape Town's local office management. This is because males are getting promoted without any interviews or any posts being advertised. It is necessary to indicate that this has occurred several times, as

indicated by some of the participants in the informal conversations. It was also noted that females within the support department are unhappy because they are not given permanent posts, but SASSA keeps on renewing their contracts, and their salaries are still at Level 2. This means that they are underpaid, whereas they are the main workers in the office.

4.5.4 Influential nature of the women in managerial positions.

There is an endless supply of statistics to back up the idea that there is an urgent need for more female leaders. Companies with larger percentages of women on their boards do far better than those with fewer women. Studies have also shown that businesses with greater gender diversity are much more lucrative than those without, not just among their employees but also among their top management. Although enormous achievements have been made in this area, there are still very few women in leadership positions. In recent decades, there have been calls for more gender equality while boosting the need to reduce the gender wage gap. Organisations must develop better policies and opportunities for women. However, to move forward and break free from the behaviours holding them back, women also require help. Based on this, the question below was asked.

4.5.4.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

Q. What would you say about the influential nature of the women in managerial positions?

This question aimed to understand individual perceptions of women's influential value in managerial positions.

TL2: *Women are influential; however, they are not given opportunities.*

S3: *Women are resilient; hence, they have a very high influential nature within managerial positions.*

TL1: *Managerial positions require assertiveness and strong will; this comes as a natural characteristic in most women; hence they can be arguing to be influential.*

S1: *Many companies have become successful because they have positioned women as leaders who have directed organisations to great growth because of their influence.*

TL3: *Being influential is not tied to gender rather, it is very much subjective, depending on each individual.*

The data provided indicate that women can be said to be greatly influential. Participants argued that women have characteristics that promote the influential force within managerial positions. Some even argued that companies can grow if women are given leadership positions where their influence can be seen and practised. However, some participants believe that the influential nature of a managerial position is highly subjective and has nothing to do with gender.

4.5.4.2 Data Segment 2: Questionnaires

Q. **What would you say about the influential nature of the women in managerial positions?**

V 1: *Women are not given enough opportunities to hold managerial positions, and subsequently, their impact and influence is not seen.*

TL 2: *I believe women, by nature, have a very influential nature in managerial positions. However, there are not given enough opportunities to show this influence, especially in our department.*

S 3: *I feel that women have no influence managerial positions at all because they are not given opportunities to. In fact, their opinions, even through participation as employees, is not even considered.*

The presented data contends that women are highly influential in managerial positions if they are provided with opportunities. Most participants were of this view; hence, there is a need to create opportunities for them to be leaders and assist with growing the organisations for which they work. Nevertheless, other participants did not agree that women are influential in managerial positions, as influence can be subjective and vary from individual to individual.

4.5.4.3 Data Segment 3: Observation

The researcher observed that the women who are employed in these departments are depressed and discriminated against, and they are powerless when it comes to airing their views. Some of the responses I got from the participants from the department were negative based on the kinds of comments the participants made about their working environment, which made them very unhappy. Furthermore, it was observed that the views and opinions of female colleagues were not considered as much as those of their male counterparts. When looking at troubleshooting problems within their daily tasks, male ideas were implemented first before attempting to implement ideas from women. This made it even harder for women to have any significant influence within the working environment and managerial positions.

4.5.5 Strategies to curb existing gender issues that affect women in the public sector.

Gender issues usually entail the disquiets or troubles that men and women face because of society's preconceived notions and ideas about the traits, capacities, and behaviours of men and women. These assumptions and presumptions frequently restrict our knowledge of what women and men are capable of in the workplace. Gender issues that women normally face include gender inequality and gender stereotypes. Fair job conditions for both men and women have long been a focus of gender equality initiatives. Gender mainstreaming takes a different tack; it aims to include the perspective of gender equality in extracurricular activities and guarantee that choices and service delivery have equal effects on men and women. A gender stereotype, on the other hand, is a generalised opinion or prejudice about the traits or qualities that men and women should or should not have or about the responsibilities that men and women should or should not play. Both good and negative gender stereotypes exist, such as "women are caring" or "women are weak." The act of assigning to a specific woman or man certain traits, responsibilities, or duties only because she or he belongs to the social group of women or men is known as gender stereotyping. Based on the facts provided above, the following questions were asked:

4.5.5.1 Data Segment 1: Interviews

Q. What strategies would you recommend to your organisation to address current gender issues that affect you in the workplace?

This question aimed to uncover strategies that can curb existing gender issues in the workplace and assist in improving the SASSA local office working environment. Responses that were drawn from the interviews were as follows:

***TL1:** To address gender issues such as gender inequality, there is need for the human resources manager and other managerial departments to establish policies within the workplace that promote gender equality and equity. Both men and women need equal opportunities to leadership roles and career growth.*

***S2:** Many women in our department are talented and well-experienced, however, they are not given fair chances to compete for promotions/ even leadership roles. There is need, therefore, for creation of policies that stand to empower women and provide them with the same opportunities as men.*

***TL2:** For years, women have not been getting equal opportunities as compared to men, especially with focus to leadership roles. Programs like gender mainstreaming are fundamental especially in the process of conscientizing both women and men on gender issues and how to resolve and most importantly unlearning prejudice traits of treating women.*

***S3:** I believe gender mainstreaming is the best recommendation, which is fundamental in each department and the organisation as a whole. People's perception of women within the workplace needed to be corrected. Women are seen as weak, inferior, and less influential to hold leadership roles, and this promotes inequality.*

The provided data illustrated the importance of gender mainstreaming as a strategy to curb gender issues within the workplace. Gender mainstreaming is a technique that aims to improve the quality of public policies, programs, and initiatives while ensuring that resources are used more effectively. It promotes positive changes in

the workplace that result in better outcomes for both men and women and contributes to the development of a fairer, more sustainable society. Therefore, the SASSA local office must consider implementing gender mainstreaming in the workplace.

4.5.5.2 Data Segment 2: Open-ended questions

Q. What strategies would you recommend to your organisation to address current gender issues that affect you in the workplace?

V1: The best way to solve the existing and future gender issues is creating gender policies that stress more on equal opportunities across all departments.

S1: Many gender issues such as intimidation, sexual harassment, gender inequality, leave a lot of women unhappy and distressed. This even affects how women perform in the workplace. Subsequently, stakeholders need to sit down and formulate gender frameworks and policies that protect and empower women within the workplace the same way men are empowered.

TL1: It is important that the organisation addresses gender issues within the workplace. I believe women can perform better; however, they are disgruntled because their hard work is not as noticed as that of men. Therefore, gender mainstreaming programs need to be planned, implemented and followed up to change the gender inequality narrative, which has been the norm even on a global scale.

Participants shared their views on the best strategies to solve existing gender issues within the workplace. There is a need to formulate gender-focused frameworks and policies that address all gender issues women face in the workplace. Gender frameworks offer a method for organising data on gender disparities across various spheres of social life and analysing how these differences impact men's and women's lives and health. The organisation can facilitate a more diversified workplace base because of its gender policies that seek to promote equality. Gender equality enables businesses to draw in, retain and promote women. This is especially important as more women participate in the workforce globally.

4.5.5.3 Data Segment 3: Observations

The researcher observed that women dominated some departments. The Grant Administration Department is one such department, with 80 per cent being women. It is the same department that receives less attention with regard to addressing their grievances. The idea of grouping women in a department that barely receives attention concerning employee needs is an indication of gender bias. The outcome of their needs being met might be different if the department was male-dominated.

On the other hand, some departments are gender diverse; however, the supervisors are predominantly men. This projects the perceptions of gender stereotypes where, by default, men are supposed to lead, and women follow. This observation made the researcher conclude that, indeed, gender frameworks and gender mainstreaming are strategies that are needed to address the gender issues mentioned above if the SASSA local office is to become a better working place for women.

4.6 Conclusion

The information gathered by the researcher was given in this chapter. The information was classified according to themes that the literature produced. Within the data gathered five motifs that had literary justification were found. Due to the unique issues encountered, the researcher was cautious and sought to avoid using a one-size-fits-all strategy, instead trying to tailor treatments to the participant's needs and skills. Through content analysis, the information was gathered using the two methods of data collection for the study: interviews and questionnaires. The results collected from the data-gathering instruments were summarised, presented, and evaluated verbatim to address the study questions.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The current chapter discusses the research findings gathered through interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and participant observations. This chapter explores and analyses the participants' feelings and experiences in the context of the research topic under study. The research findings in Chapter 4 will be connected to the secondary data presented in Chapter 2, the literature review. Thus, the researcher presented and analysed the data to respond to the research questions for this study. To that effect, the following themes were identified:

- A high number of women are employed in the public sector.
- Unfair treatment of women
- Few female managerial positions
- Influential nature of women
- Gender mainstreaming

The following research questions guide these themes:

- What opportunities are there for women in the workplace?
- How influential are women in the workplace?
- What factors influence the positions that women hold within the public sector?
- What can be done to improve the voices/influence of women in the public sector?

5.2 Subjectivity and Objectivity

Research subjectivity is generally defined as the way in which the researcher's perspective, values, social experiences, and viewpoints are influenced by his or her

research (Lundberg, de Leeuw, & Aliani, 2020). Due to its empirical orientation, traditional science considers subjectivity synonymous with bias, as any impact the researcher has on data collection, handling, interpretation, and reporting renders the results invalid (Gelman & Hennig, 2017).

In this regard, scientific research reports have a claim to objectivity, which is derived from the post-positivist principle that researchers should remain detached from the phenomena being studied. Iosifides (2018) articulates that managing subjectivity in research can be accomplished by adhering to this philosophical belief. Drawing from the provided factors, the researcher ensured objectivity in this study by employing triangulation. In qualitative research, triangulation involves employing diverse methodologies or data sources to establish a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena (Patton, 1999). Triangulation is recognised as a qualitative research approach to assess validity by integrating data from multiple sources (Iosifides, 2018). Consequently, the researcher utilised interviews, open-ended questionnaires, and observations as data sources to prevent bias in the research findings.

5.3 High Number of Women Employed in the Public Sector.

Women seeking employment and are available to work have faced many difficulties in finding work in South Africa. This is attributed to the fact that the overall population in South Africa experiences higher unemployment rates compared to the global average. As per the International Labour Organization (ILO), in 2022, approximately 47.0% of South African women were economically inactive. This suggests that more than half of South African women of working age are unemployed, in contrast to 35.6% of their male counterparts. Women constitute 47% of the labour force globally, while men comprise 72% (ILO, 2022). The report further reveals that in 2019, 8.1 million workers had multiple jobs, and just over half (4.1 million) were women. The multiple job-holding rate for women, at 5.6 per cent, exceeded that for men, at 4.7 per cent. Between January 2017 and December 2019, a total of 2.7 million workers aged 20 and older were displaced from jobs held for a minimum of three years. Among those displaced, women accounted for 45 per cent. Both displaced men and women experienced similar outcomes in the labour market. In

January 2020, the reemployment rate for unemployed women was 68 per cent, while the rate for unemployed males was 72 per cent. Again, in January 2020, the likelihood of displaced men and women being jobless was 13 per cent and 12 per cent, respectively.

Drawing from the research findings, however, there seems to be an improvement in the intake of women, especially in the public sector. Some participants propounded that more women are in the Grants department than any other department in the organisation. This shows an increase in opportunities and participation of women in organisations. However, few women are working in the SASSA Cape Town Local office. It is worth noting that there were only five women in a department that has over 25-30 employees. This means that women make up only 20% to 30% of the total number of workers in each department. Hence, women need to be given more opportunities to work since they constitute 20%-30% of the existing workforce. Given the current debates on women's empowerment nationwide, one would expect some balance. There is, however, no doubt that one of the participants in the previous chapter, segment 4.5.1.2, thinks that the level of women employed can still be improved.

Furthermore, it is important to mention that gender equality is important in any workplace because it promotes fairness, diversity, and inclusivity (Carli, 2020). When a workplace has a gender imbalance, such as 20%-30% female and the rest male, as is the case in this study, it becomes a call for concern to prioritise gender equality to ensure that all employees are treated fairly and equitably. Needless to say, Carli (2020) argues that promoting gender equality in the workplace helps address the systemic barriers that women and other marginalised genders face in the workplace. These barriers can include unequal pay, limited opportunities for advancement, and biased hiring and promotion practices. By promoting gender equality, we can work to dismantle these barriers and create a more level playing field for all employees.

5.3.1 Unfair treatment of women

Numerous factors contribute to workplace gender inequality, encompassing issues such as racism, disparities in promotions and compensation, and instances of sexual harassment. Unfair treatment often manifests in subtler forms, such as reduced opportunities for mothers and increased female burnout. Women are said to be treated differently from men in the workplace, as well as the treatments they receive from their male counterparts (Chang & Milkman, 2020). It is well acknowledged that women are paid significantly less than men globally for performing the same job, while this disparity is deemed unacceptable. As mentioned earlier, in the United States, women are infamously paid "79 cents to every dollar a male makes," and comparable discrepancies exist for wage jobs in both developed and developing nations (WDR, 2012). Around 41 per cent of women work in the public sector globally, compared to 38 per cent in the formal private sector, which has a lower percentage of female employees. Chang and Milkman (2020) argue that although women are employed at a lower rate than males in both the public and private sectors in most countries, as seen in chapter two (literature review), patriarchy still affects women in the workplace where they are viewed as the weaker gender (Buribayev & Khamzina, 2019).

Even though many nations have started taking steps to eradicate patriarchy and promote equality (García Johnson & Otto, 2019), it is doubtful if many will still witness gender parity. Therefore, the Global Gender Gap Report 2020 estimates that it will take 99.5 years for this to be achieved. The data collected for this study showed that women still feel intimidated speaking about what they face in the workplace. This could be inferred when some interview participants opted to be neutral in their responses. However, some of the participants said there has been no gender-based complaint in the organisation, and as such, they believed women are treated well by their male colleagues. Although some participants in the interviews, as seen in section 4.5.2.1, believe that "*Women are fairly treated by their male colleagues*", other participants admitted to encountering problems such as being undermined based on gender. There is, of course, no doubt that people will have different experiences at the workplace.

5.3.2 Few women holding managerial positions.

Despite equal access to employment prospects and genuine equal treatment at work, there is a concerning disparity in the representation of men and women in managerial positions, especially in the public sector. In 2019, according to GAO estimates, there were 42 per cent fewer women in management jobs than in non-management occupations (about 48 per cent) in South Africa. Female managers were more likely to be younger, better educated, single, and less likely to be white than male managers. Even though there has been little progress, women are still disproportionately underrepresented in managerial positions in the South African workforce. The compensation disparity between male and female managers remained steady, and this trend persisted. Research findings show that women are limited to the level of managerial positions they hold, with very few in the top management positions.

Another important point to highlight is that when women are given the opportunity to hold managerial positions, they hardly go beyond middle management. This means higher-ranking managerial positions are still held by men, thereby creating huge disparities in gender equality and equity within the workplace. Despite identical résumés, qualifications, skills, and experience, mothers and women of childbearing age receive fewer managerial opportunities in organisations than male colleagues, as seen in Chapter 4 above.

Profeta (2017) supports the idea that in Europe, men and women in the workplace are expected to exhibit masculine and feminine behaviours. This culture stereotype exemplifies how the work/family paradigm views women primarily as carers and mothers, reinforcing gender biases. There is a mistaken belief that women in high-level positions are less dedicated and unable to work long hours like their male counterparts due to their devotion to family and childcare responsibilities (Lamberti, 2018).

5.3.3 Influential nature of women

Although there are female leaders in positions of authority, there are still more males than women. There are examples of successful women who were able

to obtain important decision-making positions. Meneses and Thim (2018) allude that companies with larger percentages of women on their boards do far better than those with fewer women. Studies have also shown that businesses with greater gender diversity are much more lucrative than those without, not just among their employees but also among their top management. Although enormous achievements have been made in this area, there are still very few women in leadership positions. Drawing from the interviews (Section 4.5.3.1), open-ended questionnaires (Section 4.5.3.3) and observations (Section 4.5.3.4), one can argue that women in this study have no influence in managerial positions. This is because they are not given opportunities to lead and take initiative. In fact, their opinions, even though they participate as employees, is not even considered. The researcher, therefore, concurs with Easley's (2020) assertion that there are very few women in managerial positions. However, the presented data shows that women are highly influential in managerial positions if they are provided the opportunities. The study showed that most participants had this view, as indicated in 4.5.4.1 above.

Based on the above argument, there is a need to create opportunities for them to be leaders and assist in growing the organisations in which they work. Nevertheless, other participants did not agree with the notion that women have an influential nature within managerial positions, as could sometimes be subjective. However, this study posits that *'managerial positions require assertiveness and strong will, which comes as a natural characteristic in most women'*, as seen in 4.5.4.1 above. This takes us to the common saying that "what a man can do, a woman can do it better". Given that there has been a call in recent decades for more gender equality while boosting the need to reduce the gender wage gap (Cole, 2015), the researcher holds that women should also be allowed to lead. Hence, organisations must develop better policies and opportunities for women, as Griswold (2017) suggested, to help them. This research concurs with Griswold's (2017) assertion that governments should be sensitive and cognisant of both genders when making decisions and policies.

5.3.4 Gender mainstreaming

Gender issues exist in the workplace. It refers to the concerns or difficulties that both men and women experience because of societal preconceptions and assumptions

about the characteristics, abilities, and behaviours of men and women (Griswold, 2017). According to Adom (2018), these presumptions and preconceptions typically limit our understanding of the abilities of both men and women on the job. Women typically deal with the challenges of gender discrimination and gender stereotypes. Kierzkowski (2018) asserts that Initiatives to promote gender equality have historically focused on providing equal employment opportunities for men and women. An alternative approach is taken by gender mainstreaming, which seeks to incorporate the viewpoint of gender equality into extracurricular activities and ensure that decisions and service delivery have an equal impact on men and women (Adom, 2018). It is recommended that gender mainstreaming be implemented because of the existing gender stereotypes. A gender stereotype is an opinion or bias held in general about the characteristics or attributes that men and women should or should not possess or about the roles that men and women should or should not perform (Kierzkowski, 2018).

The Grant Administration Department is one such department that faces gender stereotypes, even though 80 per cent of it consists of women. The same department receives insufficient attention when addressing women's grievances. This is illustrated in section 4.5.5.1, where participants assert that women have not been getting equal opportunities for years compared to their male counterparts, with a special focus on leadership roles. Programs like gender mainstreaming are fundamental, especially in the process of conscientizing both women and men on gender issues and how to resolve and, most importantly, unlearning prejudiced traits of treating women.

However, the research observed in section 4.5.5.3 that women dominated some departments. The Grant Administration Department is one such department, with 80 per cent of its staff being women. It is the same department that receives less attention with regard to addressing women's grievances/concerns. The idea of grouping women in a department that barely receives attention concerning employee needs is an indication of gender bias; the outcome of their needs being met might be different if the department was male-dominated.

On the other hand, the same section shows that there are departments that are gender diversified; however, the supervisors are predominantly men. This reveals the perceptions of gender stereotypes where, by default, men are supposed to lead, and women follow. Gender mainstreaming plays a crucial role in enhancing the effectiveness of policies by ensuring they address the diverse needs of all citizens, regardless of gender. Integrating a gender perspective into policy-making and legislative processes guarantees higher-quality outcomes that cater to the specific requirements of women, men, girls, and boys (Hussein, 2018). Public interventions achieve greater success when gender mainstreaming is applied to prevent the recurrence of disparities. According to Hussein (2018), gender mainstreaming seeks to eliminate all forms of inequality, including those that do not equally benefit men and women and may be reinforced or created. It involves analysing the current situation to identify inequities and implementing policies to eliminate the root causes of such inequalities. The successful implementation of gender mainstreaming can result in women experiencing fair and just working environments on par with men.

5.4 Conclusion

The current chapter provided an in-depth discussion of the research findings gathered through interviews, open-ended interviews, and observations. This chapter equally explored and analysed the participant's feelings and experiences in the context of the research topic: An exploration of women's voices in the public sector: A case of a government department in Cape Town. The research findings provided in Chapter 4 were discussed in connection to the secondary data presented in Chapter 2, the literature review. Drawing from these discussions, the next chapter will establish recommendations for future studies on organisations in the public sector regarding empowering women in leadership roles.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the research conducted on the topic "An exploration of women's voices in the public sector: a case of a government department Cape Town". The study focused on the views and experiences of one government. This chapter, therefore, addresses the research questions, linking them to the interpretations of the findings. The chapter provides a conclusion and recommendations based on the study's findings. The primary objective of this research was to explore women's voices in the workplace and create a more informed understanding of the issues women face and the opportunities they have in Cape Town. By employing various qualitative data-collecting methods, the researcher has gained valuable insights into the lived experiences of female employees, the organisational practices, and the societal norms that interact to create a challenging environment for women seeking to assert their voices and be heard.

6.2 Overview of the study

This chapter summarises the previous chapters and recommendations on women's voices in the workplace, particularly in Cape Town and South Africa. The key conclusions established from the data analysis recognised the patterns underpinning the issue of voicelessness in the public sector workplace. These conclusions reinforce the urgency of addressing the issue at hand and also set the stage for formulating targeted recommendations that can facilitate positive change in the workplace. Furthermore, the recommendations offered in this chapter are the culmination of an integrative approach that considers the perspectives of various stakeholders, including employees, management, policymakers, and advocacy groups. These recommendations aim to empower women to reclaim their voices and create a more inclusive, equitable, and supportive work environment. It is important to emphasise that the proposed recommendations are not meant to be one-size-fits-all solutions but a starting point for initiating meaningful dialogue and

fostering a collaborative effort to bring about sustainable change. As the issue of women's voicelessness in the public sector workplace is complex and deeply rooted in societal norms, implementing the suggested actions will require collective commitment and persistence. By applying these recommendations, the research aims to inspire workplaces that not only harness the full potential of their workforce but also set a positive example for other public organisations to follow.

6.3 Relating the Findings of the Study to the Research Questions.

Despite 26 years of democracy, women in the public sector continue to face significant barriers to obtaining their full rights and equal opportunities. A study by Maseti and Ntabanyane (2017, p. 07) reveals that less than half of South Africans in the public sector believe that progress has been made in improving equal treatment for women, and many are dissatisfied with the government's efforts. The representation of women in leadership positions remains dismally low, with only 46% having access to explore higher roles within organisations. Moreover, those women who manage to reach high positions often do not hold them on a permanent basis, perpetuating a cycle of instability and limiting their influence (Sinden, 2017, p. 37).

Globally, women encounter discrimination in the workplace, particularly in senior management positions that men predominantly hold. Access to the workforce for women is often restricted. When they do gain entry, it is usually limited to lower occupational levels within the organisation (Sinden, 2017, p. 37). This research from Chapter 1 to Chapter 5 uncovered the issue of women's voicelessness in the workplace in Cape Town and explored strategies to empower them. The prevailing gender norms in South Africa's public sector workplaces further compound the challenges, as men and women are expected to conform to traditional masculine and feminine behaviours, respectively (Profeta 2017).

Without a doubt, women's exclusion from decision-making processes and lack of support for their decisions further exacerbate the problem of women's voicelessness. As the researcher concludes this study, it is evident that urgent action is required to dismantle the systemic barriers that perpetuate gender inequalities in the workplace. The recommendations purported in this chapter aim

to foster a more inclusive and empowering environment where women can exercise their voices, participate in decision-making, and access equal opportunities for career advancement. The research findings and data analysis have led to specific recommendations for each research question investigated.

6.3.1 Why are women voiceless in the workplace?

Women in society encounter limitations that hinder their participation in various activities. They often find themselves restricted to tasks such as livestock care, walking long distances barefoot, and carrying heavy bundles of fuel wood on their heads. Discrimination prevents many women from attending school or advancing in the workplace (Lumadi, 2012, p. 230). Their voices in society are deemed insufficient, facing gender discrimination in workplaces, communities, and even at home. This study highlights the challenges South African women face in seeking employment, primarily due to the country's elevated unemployment rates compared to the global average.

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2022), a staggering 47.0% of South African women were economically inactive in 2022. This statistic indicates that over half of the working-age South African women are unemployed, a significant contrast to 35.6% of their male counterparts. Women constitute 47% of the labour force globally, while men comprise 72% (ILO, 2022). Moreover, the ILO report underscores that in 2019, 8.1 million workers were engaged in multiple jobs, with slightly over half (4.1 million) women. The rate of multiple job-holding for women stood at 5.6 per cent, slightly higher than that for men at 4.7 per cent. Between January 2017 and December 2019, a total of 2.7 million workers aged 20 and older experienced job displacement after holding their positions for at least three years. These statistics underscore the existing gender disparities in the labour market and the significant challenges faced by women seeking stable and secured employment opportunities in South Africa, which contributes to them being voiceless.

Drawing from the findings of this study, the grants department in the organisation has a higher representation of women than other departments, indicating a positive trend of increased opportunities and participation for women in the workplace.

However, the number of women employees in the SASSA Cape Town Local office is notably low. Specifically, in a department with 25-30 employees, only 5 are women. This translates to women comprising only 20%-30% of the total workforce in each department. Given the current national discussions on women's empowerment, creating more opportunities for women to work is essential, as their representation in the workforce is considerably lower than desired. Ideally, there should be a balance in gender representation, aiming for 50% women and 50% men in the workplace to achieve a more equitable environment. Addressing this gender imbalance is crucial in fostering gender equality and advancing women's empowerment in the organisation and across the country.

6.3.2 What opportunities and skills are there for women to participate in building the economy?

Globally, women face significant barriers to political participation at various socio-political levels. They encounter under-representation in government institutions and are often excluded from decision-making processes (Mlambo, 2019, p. 03). In the South African parliament, women hold only 23% of all seats, even though women constitute more than half of the world's population. Many other countries have ratified protocols on gender equality and women's political participation. However, the African ministry's commitments lack a protective framework for women, leading to the exclusion of many women from the political arena (Kapingura 2019, p. 03). Furthermore, women in politics are subjected to abuse and mistreatment in the workplace, as some individuals resort to self-centred tactics to gain power, causing the government to overlook their legitimate concerns. These issues collectively hinder the progress of women's overall empowerment and their meaningful participation in shaping the governance and policies of the country.

Despite providing equal access to employment opportunities and genuine treatment at work, a significant disparity persists in the representation of men and women in managerial roles, particularly within the public sector. The literature review section of this study highlighted that in 2019, based on GAO estimates, there were approximately 42 per cent fewer women holding management positions compared to non-management occupations, where women constituted around 48 per cent of

the workforce in South Africa. When comparing male and female managers, the data indicates that female managers tend to be younger, better educated, single, and less likely to be white. Although some progress has been made, women still face disproportionate underrepresentation in managerial positions within the South African workforce. This gender gap in managerial representation remains a significant concern despite the strides made towards workplace equality. In the communication department, the researcher observed that women working in this department are unhappy with SASSA Cape Town's local office management. This is because males are getting promoted without any interviews or any posts being advertised.

Furthermore, it is necessary to indicate that this has occurred several times, as indicated by some of the participants in the informal conversations. It was also noted that females within the support department are unhappy because they are not given permanent positions, but SASSA keeps on renewing their contracts, and their salaries are still at Level 2. This means that they are underpaid, whereas they are the main workers in the office. It is worthy of note that women also asked for pay raises as often as men, but their requests were denied, but men are most likely to be successful (Council 2018, p. 08). This indicates the existence of a stereotypical culture that validates men over women based on gender.

6.3.3 How can voice be given to women to participate in the building of the economy?

Although there are female leaders holding positions of authority, men still outnumber women in such roles. Despite the successful instances of women reaching decision-making positions in politics, law, the corporate sector, and academia, gaining access to public leadership remains a global challenge for women. For instance, only approximately 27% of judges worldwide are women, and fewer than one in five women hold parliamentary positions. In the public sector of the European Union, only 22% of top managers in economic and strategic roles are female, as Easley (2020) indicated. Despite the increasing employment rates and the robust representation of women in the public sector, there is still a disproportionately low number of women in decision-making positions (Easley, 2020). This prompts the

question of what factors impede women from taking on societal leadership roles. The prevalence of such statistics highlights the pressing need for more female leaders and underscores the importance of addressing the barriers that hinder women's progression into leadership positions.

6.3.4 How might the life of employed women in the Western Cape be improved?

Gender issues persist in the workplace, encompassing the challenges and difficulties experienced by both men and women due to societal preconceptions and assumptions about their characteristics, abilities, and behaviours (Griswold 2017). These ingrained presumptions often limit our understanding of the capabilities of both genders within job settings. Women, in particular, face obstacles stemming from gender discrimination and stereotypes (Adom 2018). Traditionally, efforts to promote gender equality have focused on providing equal employment opportunities for men and women. However, a different approach is advocated by gender mainstreaming, which aims to integrate the perspective of gender equality into various aspects of work and ensure that decisions and service delivery have an equitable impact on both genders (Adom 2018). Given the existence of gender stereotypes, implementing gender mainstreaming is recommended.

Gender stereotypes are prevailing opinions or biases about the traits or attributes that should or should not be associated with men and women and the roles they should or should not fulfil (Kierzkowski 2018). Such stereotypes can be positive or negative, perpetuating notions like "women are compassionate" or "women are weak." The Grant Administration Department is one such department that faces gender stereotypes, even though 80 per cent of it consists of women. It is the same department that receives less attention with regard to addressing women's grievances. To combat these limiting stereotypes and create a more inclusive work environment, initiatives that promote gender mainstreaming become essential. Challenging and breaking down these stereotypes can foster an environment where both men and women are empowered to reach their full potential without constraints based on gender-based assumptions.

The findings from the previous chapter emphasise the existence of few managerial positions women hold compared to men at SASSA. This aligns with the arguments that women are hindered from being leaders.

6.4 Recommendations

The findings propose recommendations below to give women a voice in society.

6.4.1 Gender quality

One of the fundamental steps in empowering women in the public sector is implementing and enforcing gender equality policies. These policies should ensure equal pay for equal work, equal opportunities for career advancement, and measures to address and eradicate gender-based discrimination and bias. By embedding such policies in the public sector's framework, women can have equal access to opportunities and be recognised for their contributions.

6.4.2 Encouraging Gender-Responsive Leadership

Leadership plays a crucial role in creating an inclusive work environment. Therefore, fostering a gender-responsive leadership culture is essential. This entails valuing and actively seeking input from women in decision-making processes. By providing training sensitisation on programs to leaders at all levels, public sector organisations can cultivate a culture that appreciates diverse perspectives and contributions, regardless of gender.

6.4.3 Addressing Unconscious Bias

Unconscious bias can hinder women's career progression. Public sector organisations should raise awareness about these biases/gender stereotypes and their impact on decision-making processes. Regularly reviewing policies and practices will help identify and rectify any bias, ensuring a fair and inclusive workplace.

6.4.4 Gender Mainstreaming

Organisations should adopt gender mainstreaming practices to address gender issues in the workplace. This entails incorporating the perspective of gender equality into all policies, programs, and decision-making processes. By so doing, the impact of workplace practices on both men and women can be evaluated, leading to more equitable outcomes.

6.4.5 Offer Gender Sensitivity Training

Provide regular gender sensitivity training for all employees to raise awareness about gender issues, stereotypes, and discrimination. Such training can help foster a more inclusive and respectful work environment where individuals are encouraged to challenge their own biases and support gender equality.

6.4.6 Establish Mentorship Programs

Develop mentorship programs that pair women with experienced mentors in leadership positions. These programs can help women build confidence, gain insights into career advancement strategies, and navigate potential challenges they may face in their professional journeys.

6.4.7 Promote Work-Life Balance

Create policies and initiatives that support work-life balance for both men and women. Flexible working arrangements, parental leave, and childcare facilities can enable employees to manage their responsibilities alongside their professional commitments.

6.4.8 Conduct Gender-Neutral Performance Evaluations

Public sector organisations need to ensure that performance evaluations are conducted in a gender-neutral manner, with an emphasis on merit and skills rather than gender. This approach can mitigate biases that may influence performance assessments.

6.4.9 Conduct Research and Monitoring

Regularly assess and monitor gender-related issues within the workplace. Conduct research to identify areas of improvement and measure progress towards achieving gender equality goals.

6.5 Conclusion

To conclude, gender issues remain persistent in the workplace, posing challenges and limiting opportunities for both men and women. Gender stereotypes and discrimination continue to hinder the realisation of a truly inclusive and diverse workforce. However, through proactive measures and a commitment to change, progress can be made towards gender equality. This study has highlighted the significance of gender mainstreaming as an alternative approach to addressing gender disparities. By integrating the perspective of gender equality into workplace practices, decisions can be made with greater consideration for the needs and experiences of all employees, irrespective of their gender.

To achieve lasting change, organisations must invest in gender sensitivity training, mentorship programs, and policies that promote work-life balance. Furthermore, diversity at the top levels of leadership is crucial to breaking down barriers and creating an inclusive culture. By advocating for these recommendations, organisations can move closer to realising a workplace where individuals are valued based on their skills, contributions, and potential rather than preconceived notions about gender. Fostering gender equality in the workplace is a matter of fairness, human rights and a strategic imperative for building stronger, more innovative, and prosperous organisations.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

The interview questions of the research focus on the thorough observation of women's voices in the public sector of a government department in Cape Town. The individuals who are selected for the interview are employees of the government department for a long period therefore, the findings are accurate. For the objective of this research, staff members who are women will be used to analyze how equality of employees is practiced and whether women's voices are being heard in the government department. Therefore, the questions are built on the research topic with the view to discuss the experiences women endure in a male dominated work environment.

1. What is your age range?
2. What is the highest qualification that you obtained?
3. How many years in have you been employed in the department?
4. How many women are employed in the department where you are working?
5. How are these women treated by the male colleagues?
6. How many women hold managerial positions and what are the positions they hold?
7. What is your view on their roles in these positions?
8. What would you say about the influential nature of the women in managerial positions?
9. What has been done to make them influential or not influential?
10. Do their managerial abilities meet your expectations? Why or why not?
11. Do you think there is something else that could be done to make them influential in their roles?
12. Do you think the employment equity meets the expected target? Why or why not?
13. Do you think that women at the workplace are being discriminated against?

Explain why.

14. What could be some of the reasons for a fewer number of women at the management of the department?
15. Do you think the government is doing enough to balance gender equity at the department? Explain why.
16. In your opinion, what can be done to get more women in management positions in the department?
17. How can women become more influential in the department?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix B: Questionnaire

The questionnaire intends to interpret the extent of women's voices and their involvement in the public sector of a government department in Cape Town. By means of a questionnaire, a variety of experiences and opinions can be established to understand the aspect of equity in the workplace. As a result of the research topic, only women can be considered as participants as they have first-hand experience of how they are treated in the government department. The aim of this research questionnaire is to perceive how women have had different experiences working alongside with men when their opinions are not being taken into consideration. Therefore, the questionnaire is derived from the topic that deals with analysis of women's views in the public sector.

1. What is your age range?

☐ 26-34

☐ 25-35

☐ 36-49

☒ >50

2. What is the highest qualification that you obtained?

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3. How many years have you been employed in the department?

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4. How many women are employed in the department where you are working?

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5. How are these women treated by the male colleagues?

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6. How many women hold managerial positions and what are the positions they hold?

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7. What is your view on their roles in these positions?

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8. What would you say about the influential nature of the women in managerial positions?

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9. What has been done to make them influential or not influential?

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10. Do their managerial abilities meet your expectations? Why or why not?

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11. Do you think there is something else that could be done to make them influential in their roles?

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12. Do you think the employment equity meets the expected target? Why or why not?

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13. Do you think that women at the workplace are being discriminated against? Explain why.

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14. What could be some of the reasons for a fewer number of women at the management of the department?

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15. Do you think the government is doing enough to balance gender equity at the department? Explain why.

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16. In your opinion, what can be done to get more women in management positions in the department?

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17. How can women become more influential in the department?

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Thank you for your time.

Appendix C: Sample Interview data

Location of interview: SASSA Cape Town Local Office

List of Acronyms: Interviewer (IN), Participant (PT 1 & 2)

Data collection Participant 1

IN: My name is Zizipho, and my surname is Nkentsha. I am an employee at SASSA local office. I completed both National Diploma and a Degree in Public Management. This year I am currently doing my Masters in Public Management. Thank you for your time and thank you for participating in the study.

IN: What is the highest qualification that you obtained?

PT 1: My highest qualification is Master's degree.

IN: How many years in have you been employed in the department?

PT 1: It is 5years now.

IN: How many women are employed in the department where you are working?

PT 1: If I can calculate I have worked within the high institution so the department I have worked with there are about nineteen. There are nine women and ten men in the department.

IN: How are these women treated by the male colleagues?

PT 1: From my understanding I would say I have not noticed any inequality between how men treat women. Maybe there could be something different from other workplaces but my experience from the high institution that I have done a few jobs I would say it is equal or probably it is me who does not look

at or take note of how men treat women. I would say from my relationship with male colleagues I would say it is not bad. Yes, it is okay.

IN: How many women hold managerial positions and what are the positions they hold?

PT 1: In terms of managerial positions, I want to believe that maybe the HOD or assistant HOD in that regard I would say that it is male.

IN: What is your view on their roles in these positions?

PT 1: I do not think that there are females holding any managerial position. Like I said earlier none of them hold a managerial position so the reason I am saying this is because the positions are not permanent. It is something they hold on for if maybe the HOD or manager is not around they just step in and then within few months they are out again.

IN: What would you say about the influential nature of the women in managerial positions?

PT 1: I would say that women in managerial positions are very important in the workplace and their presence creates harmony and increases productivity. They are focused and text orientated as opposed to men. So, women in managerial positions strive for equality, peace among all employees and they treat their subordinates with respect regardless of their gender.

IN: What has been done to make them influential or not influential?

PT 1: There has been an increased intake of female employees in my unit to ensure that they become more comfortable and competitive. The increase in

the employment of female employees increased performance over all the employees so the attitude motivates others to perform better.

IN: Do their managerial abilities meet your expectations? Why or why not?

PT 1: The women in my department who are in the managerial position try by all means to ensure that the work is done correctly so although sometimes their managerial capabilities do not meet the expectations probably because of the limited power and the fact that they are minority in such positions.

IN: Do you think there is something else that could be done to make them influential in their roles?

PT 1: I would say yes. In terms of creating workshops, having workshops regularly to encourage women to develop their skills. It could be professional skills or even academically. They can also encourage women to enrol in higher institutions to grow their skills in a particular role because I do understand that for a woman to be influential if you get a certain qualification, let us say Masters, PHD or BTech. That would also give any women a higher position in a place of work. So, workshops, encouragement within the department and I would say women should be asked quarterly what they have engaged in and what skill they have learned. That would help them to become influential.

IN: Do you think the employment equity meets the expected target? Why or why not?

PT 1: I would say no. According to the statistics it is evident that women only comprise of 30% in the workplace while the whole 70% are men so men still dominate in the workplace more especially when it comes to higher positions so that is why I said when women engage in higher education, they increase their qualifications. That will help them get to higher positions so there needs

to be drastic measures to enforce the implementation of the employment equity.

IN: Do you think that women at the workplace are being discriminated against? Explain why

PT 1: From my experience I would say yes and no. No, like I pointed out earlier that if for instance there are meetings some departments would maybe have quarterly meetings. If there are meetings and a woman is able to air her view, then they would take that view in the meeting and usually everyone in that department. The secretary writes down those views and it is there so I believe that when a lady can speak up, they will take her view. One thing is I believe that some women do not speak up. Again, it is the skills area and qualifications so if a lady feels like she does not have this skill and cannot speak in the meeting then she will close her mouth. When women are empowered, they increase their skill and by the time you increase your skill you are comfortable to speak in public places and meetings. I want to believe that when that happens, they will not be discriminated against so that is my own view in that area. However, you know that most women are not that educated, so the managers need to encourage women to increase their skills.

IN: What could be some of the reasons for a fewer number of women at the management of the department?

PT 1: Number one I would say skill level and qualification. I want to believe that if a lady works within a department and she has got that qualification then when a managerial position comes, I want to believe that she will be appointed to do that job. Again, if for instance the woman has experience, and she does well then I want to believe that she will be appointed to do such. The second one would be years of experience and the third one would be how proactive the lady is, do you speak in the meetings, do people hear your own opinion. So, when something comes up, they will just look around and say that this

person cannot do this so being proactive and speaking in meetings and people understand that she knows she is doing can also help in her getting the position.

IN: Do you think the government is doing enough to balance gender equity at the department? Explain why.

PT 1: I would in a way yes because there are laws there that talk about equality within the workplace. Now the thing would be that the department are taking those laws or policies into action so that is my own point. So, what I would say is I have experience where a manager encourages people. They send out a list of programmes that people can enrol for which is BBEE. The skills that you can train so when they send that out it depends on you as the employee to choose what you want to learn. So those time like I said quarterly they would ask what programme have you trained on and if you have not trained then you will say why you have not enrolled in any programme. That is why I encourage women when they get such an opportunity, they should make sure they go to such trainings. Women should be encouraged; a manager can encourage women to do that, and women should also encourage themselves and push themselves. If we can encourage ourselves to acquire more skills, then I think we will go far.

IN: In your opinion, what can be done to get more women in management positions in the department?

PT 1: Again, I am going back to the training, I am going back to encouraging women, creating workshops, giving women that opportunity to study outside and not just the workshops created within the department but can study outside in higher institutions. I would say make funds available to apply so that they can use such funds to enrol in higher education. As a woman I understand that women community oriented so whatever comes into their salary they want to help this person even if they do not have a child, they

want to help somebody within their family. So, if there's a fund available for women for acquiring more education, I want to believe that women would go all out in increasing their skills and education thereby helping them in getting management positions.

IN: How can women become more influential in the department?

PT 1: I want to believe that when you talk about being influential it is being able to help somebody do something or listen to you and take your own opinion. So again, that also goes with getting skills. For instance, if I have a particular skill in a certain area and something comes up and I am able to encourage people to do this then they will pay attention because they believe I have a skill. So, when a woman has such a good qualification then she is able to speak in meetings. People will see her as someone who is influential. That is why for instance if I want to be in politics you will see during political elections and every other thing, they will look at people who are influential because they believe that if I go to this lady, she will be able to influence this person to vote for me and she is able to speak out. So, if you are able to speak out, you have good qualification and you have skills people would listen to you when you talk.

IN: Thank you very much Ma'am. Do you have any questions for the interviewer?

PT 1: No, all I can say is best of luck in your study.

IN: Thank you.

PARTICIPANT 2

IN: What is the highest qualification that you obtained?

PT 2: I have obtained a National Diploma.

IN: How many years in have you been employed in the department?

PT 2: I have been working at SASSA for eight years.

IN: How many women are employed in the department where you are working?

PT 2: There are seven females working at the grants department and I am working at the grants department as a grant administrator at SASSA local office.

IN: How are these women treated by the male colleagues?

PT 2: They treat women the same but sometimes they become different humans when it comes to work. Our male office manager provides more resources and opportunities to one gender, typically men over others. For example, 42% of women experience gender discrimination in my department.

IN: How many women hold managerial positions and what are the positions they hold?

PT 2: We do not have any level 7 at grants department. We are all level 5, and we report to our verifier at support service team leader.

IN: What is your view on their roles in these positions?

PT 2: I will say she is mindful and takes responsibilities and she is suitable for that position. That position is not really a managerial position but since she is our team leader it means we regard her as superior to us. She is a very dedicated woman who does her job with respect, and she does it well. She makes things easier for us as junior employees and that makes us have a positive attitude towards our work. I will say she also ensures that the working condition for all of the staff especially those who are her subordinates are pleasant. She has a good vision for our department, and she keeps the moral of us positive at all times and ensures that we are working towards achieving the goals and objectives of our department.

IN: What would you say about the influential nature of the women in managerial positions?

PT 2: Females who are in a managerial position create a lasting change and bring qualities. They ensure that whenever they are tasked with something they do their absolute best and ensure that the standard of the work is satisfying. They advocate for a healthy environment and have a positive influence towards all the other employees with their attitude towards their work. They also handle pressure very well and always mindful of the workload they give their subordinates with ensures that everyone is always happy and enjoys the job they do.

IN: What has been done to make them influential or not influential?

PT 2: Mentoring programmes for team leaders are taking place online. Health day where women speak out about their challenges at work. This has made other women feel free to speak out about challenges they are facing when performing their duties. Such interventions make women perform better knowing that their hard work is known out there and remain with the hope that one day things will be sorted out and all will be well.

IN: Do their managerial abilities meet your expectations? Why or why not?

PT 2: I would say they do because they are hard workers. They try by all means to bring positive results and they perform although other people are looking down on them. Yes, their managerial abilities meet expectations, and they work beyond their abilities and capabilities which make them exceed my expectations especially putting so much effort under such despicable working conditions. I always believe that should they have been given the power they deserve they would have ensured that there is peace and harmony in our department and fairness would take place where everyone is treated with respect. Partially they are fair in terms of what they expect from everyone regardless of gender. They have been working very tremendously while they are still acting in their positions, and I believe should they get those positions permanently they will do wonders. You can tell that they have aims and visions for our department and you cannot cast.

IN: Do you think there is something else that could be done to make them influential in their roles?

PT 2: Yes, RAM must allow women who hold managerial positions to rotate not only to local offices to get exposure from regional offices. These women need to be exposed to all the functions and units in our department so that they would be fully aware of what is happening in the department and knows has more experience as potential future leaders of the department as the position they hold are not that enough.

IN: Do you think the employment equity meets the expected target? Why or why not?

PT 2: Yes, our employment equity is designated under different groups. Black people, in other words coloureds and Indians, women and the people with disabilities. Most government departments now when advertising give

everyone an opportunity. They do not include race or type of gender they want. That simply means everyone has a right to apply for any position and therefore means they stand equal chances to be incumbents.

IN: Do you think that women at the workplace are being discriminated against? Explain why.

PT 2: I would say yes. Women are earning more bachelor levels than men, but they are still negotiating salaries on the equal price as men. The women are not treated with fairness and respect in the workplace as long as they still have to fight for equal and mutual respect which is something that should be coming to them without much effort. They are not taken seriously when it comes to their work at all.

IN: What could be some of the reasons for a fewer number of women at the management of the department?

PT 2: It is because they still do not view gender diversity as a priority. The departments do not see a need to ensure that there is gender diversity in the workplace especially when it comes to senior positions. That also results in women not being interested in applying for the post in management because they know very well that males are being prioritized in such positions.

IN: Do you think the government is doing enough to balance gender equity at the department? Explain why.

PT 2: I will say government does but in most departments those in top management come with their own rules. There are policies in place to ensure that there is gender balance and employment equity in the workplace which therefore means that the government is doing its level best to accomplish gender equity. However, the departments do not bother to implement such

legislation and so their failure of implementing such policies results in gender imbalances in the workplace and so it looks as though the government is not doing enough of which it is not so.

IN: In your opinion, what can be done to get more women in management positions in the department?

PT 2: If district managers who are males could stop favourism by giving exposure to people who do not deserve it. This could get a lot of women into leadership positions. Most women are not given a chance to management because males in the top management believe that women do not have power to lead people. Women need to be a priority in the department when there is an advertisement until a gap has been breached.

IN: How can women become more influential in the department?

PT 2: By giving them respect, do follow-ups and have face-to-face interaction with them, allow them to express their feelings. Women need to be given more platforms to voice their frustrations, grievances, feelings and how they would like things to be done and such views should be taken into consideration, and something should be done about such things then women will be treated as equals to men and there should be platforms where fair treatment and opportunities for women in all the other positions.

IN: we are done with the Interview. Do you have any questions before finishing?

PT 2: No questions, thank you.

IN: Thank you for being part of the study, thank you so much.

Appendix D: Signed Consent Letter from Employer



Mr. Peter Burger
Office Manager
SASSA (Cape Town Local Office)
62 Strand Street
City Centre
Cape Town
8000

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Permission to Collect Data at South African Social Security Local Office

I, the Office Manager Peter Burger give Zizpho Belinda Nkantsha permission to conduct her research at SASSA Cape Town Local Office. This also serves as assurance that this Office complies with requirements and will ensure that these requirements are followed in the conduct of this research.

Please contact me of any further clarification.

Yours Faithfully,



Mr. Peter Burger
Office Manager Cape Town Local Office



*paying the right social grants, to the right person,
at the right time and place. N/AACE*

South African Social Security Agency
Western-Cape Region
Cape Town - 62 Strand Street - Cape Town
Private Bag 99145 - Cape Town 8000
Tel: +27 22 2800 923 / 065 264 0637
www.sassa.gov.za

Appendix E: Ethical Clearance



P.O. Box 1906 | Bellville 7535
Symphony Road Bellville 7535
South Africa
Tel: +27 21 4603291
Email: fbmsethics@cput.ac.za

Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	FACULTY: BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
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The Faculty's Research Ethics Committee (FREC) on 3 May 2022, ethics APPROVAL was granted to Zizipho Belinda Nkentsha (216060885) for a research activity at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology for M-Tech: Public Administration.

Title of project:	AN EXPLORATION OF WOMEN'S VOICES IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR: A CASE OF A GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT CAPE TOWN Researcher (s): Dr J. A. Abongdia
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Decision: **APPROVED**

 Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	6 May 2022 Date
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The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the CPUT Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study requires that the researcher stops the study and immediately informs the chairperson of the relevant Faculty Ethics Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines, and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, notably compliance with the Bill of Rights as provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (the Constitution) and where applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003 and/or other legislations that is relevant.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after two (2) years for Masters and Doctorate research project from the date of issue of the Ethics Certificate. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report (REC 6) will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Clearance Certificate No | 2022_FBMSREC 014

Appendix F: Turnitin Report

