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# **Gordon Institute of Business Science**

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**The impact of impressions management on women's career progression in  
an organisation**

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## ABSTRACT

In a moment a woman can decide to remain on a set career path, however through Impressions management, a process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of themselves, decisions are made to continue or opt out. The focus of this study was to explore unspoken or *(in)visible* norms that form part of these impressions. The study explored what the norms are that move a woman along her career journey and norms that move her away. The findings in this research report considered the existing body of literature on women, norms, impression management and career progression.

This research project comprised of ten in-depth interviews with women in an organisation. The women were interviewed face-to-face, in an unstructured format. Secondary sources such as annual reports and company website were reviewed.

The research found that when career building norms were visible to both the woman and others, the woman experienced positive career progression. When the woman was unaware of career building norms, but these were visible to others, the woman experienced positive career development. When the woman was aware of career limiting norms, while this remained oblivious to others and remained unspoken, career dis-alignment was experienced by the woman. Lastly when both the woman and others did not question or acknowledge existing career limiting norms, her career experienced *status quo*.

There was lack of diversity in the sample and the company and country context influenced the results.

This study focused on contributing to *(in)visibility* by assessing the impact of impressions management of women's career progression. This would contribute to considerations when developing women's career progression plans. A total of four suggestions were made for future research.

## KEY WORDS

Gender, Impression management, Career progression, *(In)visibility vortex*

## DECLARATION

I declare that this research project is my own work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the Gordon Institute of Business Science, University of Pretoria. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University. I further declare that I have obtained the necessary authorisation and consent to carry out this research.

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*“If you are going to do it, go all the way and do it properly. There are no marks for half- measures”- Lehotlo Ramokgopa*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>KEY WORDS</b> .....	<b>II</b>
<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>IV</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b> .....	<b>VII</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>VII</b>
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 PROBLEM DEFINITION AND PURPOSE .....	4
1.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH MOTIVATION .....	5
<b>CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BASIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.1 INTRODUCTION .....	7
2.2 FEMINISM.....	7
2.2.1 LIBERAL FEMINISM .....	7
2.2.2 STANDPOINT FEMINISM .....	8
2.2.3 INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST.....	9
2.2.4 WOMANISM.....	10
2.2.5 MASCULINITY STUDIES.....	11
2.2.6 INTERACTIONAL FEMINISM .....	12
2.3 GENDER AND BUSINESS.....	13
2.3.1 IMPORTANCE OF THE “(IN)VISIBILITY” .....	13
2.3.2 EFFECTS OF IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT .....	19
2.3.3 A WOMAN’S CAREER PROGRESSION.....	25
2.4 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE .....	29
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS</b> .....	<b>30</b>
3.1 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE .....	30
3.2 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO .....	30
3.3 RESEARCH QUESTION THREE .....	30
<b>CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b> .....	<b>31</b>
4.1 RESEARCH DESIGN .....	31
4.2 POPULATION .....	32
4.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING METHOD .....	32
4.4 DATA COLLECTION .....	33
4.5 METHOD OF ANALYSIS .....	33
4.6 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS .....	36
<b>CHAPTER 5: RESULTS</b> .....	<b>37</b>
5.1 INTRODUCTION: .....	37
5.2 THE INTERVIEWS .....	37
5.3 THE WOMEN .....	37
5.4 RESEARCH QUESTION ONE: VISIBLE AND (IN)VISIBLE NORMS.....	39
5.4.1 CULTURE.....	40
5.4.2 (IN)VISIBILITY VORTEX .....	42
5.4.3 JOHARI’S WINDOW.....	46
5.5 RESEARCH QUESTION TWO: IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT .....	48
5.5.1 STEREOTYPES.....	48
5.5.2 IDEAL WORKER.....	50
5.5.3 THE WORKING WOMAN.....	52

5.6	RESEARCH QUESTION THREE: CAREER PROGRESSION .....	55
5.7	CONCLUSION OF RESULTS .....	60
<b>CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS.....</b>		<b>61</b>
6.1	INTRODUCTION .....	61
6.2	DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTION ONE .....	61
6.3	DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTION TWO .....	65
6.4	DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTION THREE .....	68
6.5	SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION OF RESULTS.....	71
<b>CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....</b>		<b>72</b>
7.1	INTRODUCTION .....	72
7.2	RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES.....	72
7.3	FINDINGS .....	73
7.3.1	CONCLUSION OF FINDINGS.....	75
7.4	RECOMMENDATIONS TO STAKEHOLDERS .....	75
7.5	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	76
7.5.1	REDEFINING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MERIT IN CORPORATE CULTURE .....	76
7.5.2	DEFINING THE TYPES OF WOMEN THAT ARE REPRESENTED AS THE WORKING WOMEN .....	76
7.5.3	THE FAMILY UNIT AND THE CAREGIVER .....	77
7.5.4	THE IMPACT OF IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT OF WOMEN'S PROGRESSION IN MULTIPLE ORGANISATIONS.....	77
7.6	CONCLUSION TO RESEARCH PROJECT.....	77
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>		<b>79</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>		<b>86</b>
APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE .....		86
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE .....		89
APPENDIX3: RQ1_ CULTURE.....		90
APPENDIX4: RQ1_(IN)VISIBILITY.....		91
APPENDIX5: RQ1_ JOHARI'S WINDOW .....		92
APPENDIX 6: RQ1_ UNCONCIOUS BIAS .....		93
APPENDIX7: RQ2_ IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES .....		94
APPENDIX8: RQ2_ STEROTYPES .....		96
APPENDIX9: RQ2_ IDEAL WORKER.....		98
APPENDIX10: RQ2_ THE WORKING WOMAN.....		100
APPENDIX11: RQ3_ CAREER PROGRESSION: SUCCESS .....		102
APPENDIX12: RQ3_ CAREER PROGRESSION: CAREER LIFE STAGE.....		103
APPENDIX13: RQ3_ CAREER PROGRESSION: GROUNDED TURNING POINT .....		105

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Three Levels of Culture .....	14
Figure 2: The Revised (In)visibility Vortex .....	17
Figure 3: Johari's Window .....	18
Figure 4: Grounded Turning Point Model of Career Progression .....	26

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Themes, categories and codes .....	35
Table 2: The woman's routines .....	38
Table 3: The women's view .....	39



# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH PROBLEM

## 1.1 Introduction

South Africa has achieved advances in the political developments in the country's history. However, as South Africa steps into the global environment and begins to compete in the global village, the country commences to deal with not only its historic challenges but also with the realities of the global business environment and the challenges it faces in remaining globally competitive. One of these challenges is characterised by both a war for talent and the underutilisation of female talent potential (Barsh & Yee, 2012) with both of these areas being of particular concern (Barsh & Yee, 2012). A few aspects have converged in making companies more interested in supporting the career ambitions of professional and managerial women (Burke, Koyuncu, & Fiksenbaum, 2008). With increasing global competitive pressures that draw attention on tangible job performance, loss of qualified women as a result of "opting out" and the need to recruit and retain the best and the brightest individuals in order to win the war on talent have become startling realities for South Africa (Burke et al., 2008).

In the case of South Africa, the 1994 general election brought the end to apartheid with the institutionalisation of a democratic government, which was followed by stringent employment equity legislation in 1998. However, race and gender hierarchy is still prevalent in the current labour force statistics (Department of Labour, 2009). The reality is that ten years later, with 74% of the economically active population being black, white men still represented 61,1% of executive roles and 47% of senior management (Department of Labour, 2009). As observed by Dr Frene Ginwala, the former speaker of the South African National Assembly, "institutions that discriminate are man-shaped and must be made people shaped. Only then will women be able to function as equals within these institutions" (Adler, 1999).

For the past two decades companies and leaders have counted on equality motivated through education, company acceleration platforms, diversity policies and inclusion programmes to develop and hasten the talent pipeline that would allow women to reach the upper echelons of management (Carter & Silva, 2010). The reality remains that men are twice as likely as women to be the CEO or enter the senior executive levels of corporate life (Carter & Silva, 2010). USA companies have

introduced structures to reduce hurdles against women that include opportunities like increased recruiting efforts, objective measurements and rewards for affirmative action (Schein, 2007). The truth remains that women are gaining more opportunities and outperforming men in some instances that have historically not been seen (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010). However, the challenge with the progress being made is that it exists in a half-changed world, where new challenges surface while old ones remain (Bickel, 2012).

Carter and Silva (2010), indicated that CEO and other senior leaders were surprised and disappointed by the findings and agreed that to succeed, organisations must better develop and fully leverage the highly talent women in the workforce (Carter & Silva, 2010). According to Baumgartner & Schneider (2010) organisations and not their women managers should be tasked with promoting women (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010). To better understand the approach, the perceptions that women in higher levels of management have on this issue should be explored (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010). Carter and Silva (2010), believed that it will entail companies revisiting their systems and processes in order to assess where women's career paths end when they come into companies (Carter & Silva, 2010). This focus should ensure that women receive the same development and visibility chances as men (Carter & Silva, 2010). Equal opportunities for women in management may never be actualised if the current structures reaccepted as a status quo which women, mothers and wives must abide by (Schein, 2007).

This study serves to provide understanding the impact that impressions management has on the underutilisation of women. In particular, the research requires an analysis of the unconscious self-perceptions explained in this study as "*(in)visible*" norms that contribute to the underutilisation of women. The researcher is of the belief that through deeper understanding of how these norms impact women as they make decisions during their career progression, the underutilisation of women will be minimised.

Barsh and Yee (2012) noted that barriers to women's advancement could be broadly categorised into four areas namely: structural obstacles, lifestyle choices, institutional mind-sets and individual mind-sets (Barsh & Yee, 2012). Companies have been implementing policies particularly concerning diversity management and have contributed greatly in adapting business models to try and address these challenges pertaining to structural bias and fostering women's participation (Burke et al., 2008;

Carter & Silva, 2010; Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010) with programmes that resolve the identified issues such as of lack of sponsorship, work-life balance and employee wellbeing. Examples of these programmes that have been initiated include crèches and gyms in corporate offices (Burke et al., 2008; Zanoni et al., 2010).

Targets have also been used to deal with diversity goals and a focus on targets being set to achieve senior roles; however, the same focus has not been provided along the pipeline (Fox, 2013). A further challenge with a statistically driven strategy is that the results do not deal with underlying issues such as barriers to equal opportunities and strategic drivers of change (Derby, 2013). What is noted is that women continue to struggle to ascend to senior levels of management, despite having adequate education and the required years of experience (Burke et al., 2008). It therefore becomes important for leadership to still play a role in ensuring that checks and balances against unconscious norms are not maintained (Carter & Silva, 2010; Derby, 2013). The reality that remains is that while great advances are made to change the current situation, significant realities remain intact that hinder the process of change (Tlaiss & Kauser, 2010).

In the spirit of female progression, decision makers fail to see the impact of their current thinking on women's career progression (Schein, 2007). Women are presented with the apparent choice between experiencing motherhood or pursuing a career. However, the remuneration of women without children is equivalent to their male counterparts while women with children and domestic responsibilities still earn less (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). The presence of women in senior roles has become a point of research and comparison for women who are determined to enjoy both managerial and family roles (Schein, 2007). Men who operate in the same environment fail to recognise the limiting effect on women's career progression by attempting to excel at both roles, namely motherhood and career advancement (Schein, 2007).

In the USA women constitute 51% of the labour force (Burke, 2010). Men are beginning to take more responsibility around the home including childcare, which reinforces the dual career family model where both partners work (Barnett & Hyde, 2001; Budworth, Enns, & Rowbotham, 2008). The increase of women in the work environment requires changes in gender and societal stereotypes. The responsibility and roles of males require change through spousal discussion as well as where men

and corporations re-evaluate the current definition of work life balance (Burke, 2010). Derby (2013) noted that breaking societal norms such as gender roles embedded in the workplace culture will need to be considered (Derby, 2013). These would include the review of aspects such as encouraging fathers to take parental leave or re-evaluating the nine to five systems or reconsidering how non-work commitment would fit in with the system (Derby, 2013).

The reality of the economic meltdown in 2008 has reduced the attention of work life balance (Burke, 2010). With the focus turning to company survival, job security and economy stabilisation becomes the primary emphasis; achievements made to date are at risk (Burke, 2010). However, the realities such as skills shortage and the requirement to employ women with family responsibilities while concurrently attempting to reduce absenteeism remain (Lewis, 2001).

The way work is fundamentally structured and the barriers these structures create will need to be examined (Schein, 2007). The trend of women opting out of the corporate environment is still prevalent (Zanoni et al., 2010). Women choose to remain in support business units and not enough of them advance into the executive roles within corporate life (Schein, 2007). Alternatively, women who opt out or question traditional corporate routes to success are seen as people who “can’t make it” or “don’t have what it takes” to be part of top management (Schein, 2007). This indicates the requirement of further studies to articulate the aspects that are not being resolved by policies (Zanoni et al., 2010). Barsh and Yee (2012) emphasised that the challenges observed are deeply intertwined within the current corporate culture, thereby making it more difficult to eliminate them (Barsh & Yee, 2012). Broadbridge and Simpson (2011) shared that the development of the above stated policies contribute to the notion that the challenges have been addressed, which further embeds the hidden aspects in the process of concealment within norms, practices and values (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). The Economist (2009) noted that if the empowerment of women has seen great progress over the past 50 years, dealing with the social consequences will be a challenge for the next 50 years (The Economist, 2009).

## **1.2 Problem Definition and Purpose**

Impressions management is the process by which individuals attempt to control the impressions others form of themselves (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). Also known as

self-presentation or self-perceptions, current studies in this field have focused on the use of impressions management tactics (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). Studies have also focused in determining whether there is a difference in the use of these tactics based on gender (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). This study seeks to understand the impact that some of the more visible and invisible impression management tactics have on women at different stages of their career progression.

### **1.3 Research Objectives and Research Motivation**

The USA has made noteworthy advancement in management. In 1972 women filled 19% of all management roles. The number increased to 33% by the mid-1980s (Schein, 2007). It can be noted that when looking at the initiatives and interventions that have been conducted to recruit and retain females worldwide, it is apparent that the USA has been the most progressive (Barsh & Yee, 2012; Business Women Association, 2011; The Economist, 2009). The current numbers state that females make up 53% of the total educated population. It is then stated that only 50% of those enter into the workforce (Barsh & Yee, 2012). This number drops to 37% at management levels, falls to 26% at senior management level and then decreases to a further 14% at executive level.

Women make up 46% of Brazil's population (Olivas-Luján, et al., 2009). Of these women, 62% are graduates with only 21% of them making it into management (Olivas-Luján, et al., 2009). There are no available figures found on how many women move from management into senior management, however, the representation at executive level is 4,5% (Olivas-Luján, et al., 2009). This further reiterates the comment made by Broadbridge and Simpson (2011) that additional work is still required to function with this evident challenge (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011).

According to The Economist (2009), the economic empowerment of women across countries had made great revolutions over the past 50 years with minimal friction. The social change described as taking a benign form (The Economist, 2009). The reality since 2000 is that six million of the eight million jobs created in the European Union have been taken up by women (The Economist, 2009). Metcalfe (2010) noted the UK Equality and Human Rights Commission (2008) stated "at the current rate it will take until 2081 for women to outnumber men in the boardroom" (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). The concern with this achievement is that the perceived success might be taken for granted by young women, who do not necessarily understand or appreciate

the arduous task that was put into motion by the women who went before them (Bickel, 2012). Currently, while the presence of women has increased significantly; women only hold 3% of Fortune 500 CEO roles, 15% are board directors in those companies, 14% of the corporate executives at the top of publicly traded companies around the world and worldwide represent 40% of the global workforce (Carter & Silva, 2010). Research indicated that companies with a higher percentage of women on their boards perform more successfully (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010).

The work achieved in South Africa to recruit and retain females has yielded numbers that are slightly lower than USA, but are nonetheless deemed successful in comparison to the European neighbours (Business Women Association, 2011) and some of the emerging market countries like Brazil (Olivas-Luján, et al., 2009). It is important to note that although the numbers in South Africa's look optimistic, the unique political and social history raises the possibility of distinct differences in perceptions of managerial stereotypes across race and gender (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010).

Literature that concerns female management is reviewed in the next chapter to build on research regarding impressions management and gender. The objective ultimately is to contribute to uncovering the "*(in)visible*" norms, practices and values that women experience during their career progression.

## CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL BASIS AND LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to understand how feminist theory can uncover the importance of the “*(in)visible*” factors that are embedded in impressions management. This contributes to the development of the questions required that explain the “*(in)visible*” norms that impact positively and negatively across female career progression.

### 2.2 Feminism

Since the 1970s there has been evidence and contributions in leadership, work life balance careers and critical studies on men and masculinities (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). This work has seen great strides in certain fields such as human resource management and organisational behaviour, while areas such as marketing and finance have been neglected (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011).

This review will focus on and briefly critique six perspectives of feminism. There are three significant terms that require articulation prior to discussing the different perspectives namely; **sex** which distinguishes between male and female based on physiological characteristics (Bristor & Fischer, 1993), **gender** which is psychologically rooted in attitudes, beliefs and behavioural tendencies (Bristor & Fischer, 1993) and **feminism** described as the beliefs that there are imbalances in contemporary society that disadvantage women when compared to men (Bristor & Fischer, 1993).

#### 2.2.1 Liberal Feminism

“Liberal feminism is the basic belief in the equality of beings, and seeks to ensure the equal rights, opportunities and treatment of women” (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Bristor & Fischer, 1993). Liberal feminism also believes that rationality is purely mental and underpins the belief that every human being has the same potential (Bristor & Fischer, 1993). This perspective has seen inroads made into policy work such as the division of labour, equal pay and the glass ceiling phenomenon. It discourages policies such as childcare to women with the belief that they derail

efforts made in equal pay policies (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Bristor & Fischer, 1993).

Kanter's (1977) contribution emphasised problems faced by women as token managers, and explained stereotypical attributes assigned to women by men. Furthermore, Kanter (1977) explained the notion of informal networking to close ranks on women (Kanter, 1977). This was conducted in a rational manner in which Kanter (1977) attested to dynamics of both majority and minority groups (Kanter, 1977), where gender is an anomaly within an organisation (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). The strength of liberal feminists is the belief that through state interventions and policies, women will begin to gain equal opportunities and be allowed to compete on an equal footing with men (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Bristor & Fischer, 1993).

Liberal feminism's flaws stem from the liberal political philosophy that believes that women and men are not different, stating that any changes noted is differences in socialisation. The roots of the liberal political philosopher, however, come from one perspective of white, middle-class, heterosexuals who are comfortable with the current socio-political environment (Bristor & Fischer, 1993). The socio-political environment allows women to advance in a non-confrontational basis and requires no real behaviour changes from men (Lewis & Simpson, 2012).

The liberal feminists have definitely brought women's concerns to the table. However, there is still the inability to acknowledge the attributes of gender in undertaking these matters (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). It is apparent that the issues are being resolved at a structural and superficial level, which does not deal with the unspoken realities that women experience (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011).

### **2.2.2 Standpoint Feminism**

"Standpoint feminism attempts to address the neglect of gender in organisational and management structures that were built on patriarchal structures; through acknowledging women's experiences and integrating women's interest and values" (Bristor & Fischer, 1993). Also known as *women's voice* or *experience feminism*, standpoint feminism wants to streamline corporate structures through corrective measures (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). They believe that differences between men and women are primarily linked to biology (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Bristor & Fischer, 1993; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). Standpoint feminism has contributed to areas such as career progress, career orientation, career barriers and leadership behaviours (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011) in the effort to legitimise areas of concern



that were previously ignored (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). The difficulty as noted by standpoint feminists is that while they are encouraged to voice their differences, history has taught them that their opinions are often encountered with difficulties of being heard (Simpson & Lewis, 2005).

The challenge with standpoint feminism is the over-emphasis on all issues through one universalised white, western, middle class woman's lens that does not consider the possibility that some issues could be structural or not particularly female related (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). Some standpoint feminists go to the extent of believing that matriarchal society would be more fitting, with possibly creating alternate social structures where women's voice is encouraged (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). This goes further to emphasise that current opinion has been driven by male dominated majority culture (Simpson & Lewis, 2005).

The perspective of standpoint feminism has opened the door to understanding the importance of one's personal journey, which is important. However, the strength of this view would have a stronger impact if it were done within a context, which allowed one to fully appreciate the gap analysis, being conducted.

### **2.2.3 Intersectional Feminist**

The intersectional feminist appears to build on the work done by standpoint feminists and improving it by addressing the current challenges (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). Intersectional feminists analyse gender in relation to another social context (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). Intersectional feminists believe that gender is but one aspect of a person's experience (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). The strength of intersectional feminism is how race and gender concurrently control the perception of managerial characteristics (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010).

As much as one's experience is important and defines what a particular person within a particular subset goes through, the inability to define what is purely female regardless of one's background will diminish as social context overpowers the female aspect being experienced. As mentioned earlier the dilution of female studies will further weaken the findings around the unspoken realities that women experience (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). It is further apparent that the success of intersectional feminists is weak as the think manager think male stereotype continues despite all efforts made by intersectional feminists (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010).

A possible solution for this could be building a case with an emphasis of gender while appreciating the contribution of other factors to the outcomes (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). This then allows for the study to appreciate contributing factors without losing focus on the pertinent concentration of the study being on women.

#### **2.2.4 Womanism**

The focus for intersectional feminist broadly discusses gender and race. Another conceptualisation that appears in feminist literature is womanism or womanist identity with a fine distinction between identity and feminism (Altintas & Altintas, 2008). The term borrowed from black feminist (a subset of intersectional feminism) writers as a means to describe the outlines of developmental stages with this thinking is pertinent to the experiences of women across ethnicity, social class and sexual orientation (Ossana, Helms, & Leonard, 1992). Black women's standpoint is driven with an intersectional understanding of oppression and the ability to withstand it (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010). They draw on this to create positive self-valuations (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010). The womanist identity is an inner structure that ignores externally based identity and embraces internally based individuality (Moradi, 2005). In the study by Booyesen and Nkomo (2010) the black women in South Africa had the highest intra-class coefficient between characteristics of women in general and successful managers of all four race groups and gender groups studied (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010). They noted that this was significantly higher than their rating of men and successful managers (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010).

The womanist approach underlines women's inner values, beliefs and talents. The womanist identity is not based on feminist belief or social activism but rather provides the value of woman for herself (Ossana, et al., 1992). According to Parks (1996) the woman identity follows four stages namely; acceptance of traditional sex roles and denial of social bias, questioning and confusion about gender roles, externally based feminist stance and idealisation of women and internally defined female identity without undue reliance on the feminist view point of traditional roles (Altintas & Altintas, 2008).

Ossana (1992) who developed a women identity model also stated that women's identity moves through four phases, namely:

- The **pre-encounter** where women act in accordance to their given gender roles and form their thoughts and behaviours according to societal

expectations (Altintas & Altintas, 2008). Womanist belief that feminists at this phase go through passive acceptance, which is an unexamined acceptance of traditional gender roles and discrimination (Moradi, 2005).

- The second phase is the **encounter** where women “adopt” without question, the values and beliefs assigned to their identities (Altintas & Altintas, 2008). According to the womanist, feminists would question self and roles; and would feel anger and guilt (Moradi, 2005).
- The third phase of **Immersion-Emersion** defined womanhood with intense affiliations with women (Altintas & Altintas, 2008).
- The final phase is **internalisation** where women defined womanhood in their own identity with a positive outlook and combined it with her personality (Altintas & Altintas, 2008).

The crucial challenge noted with womanism theory is the absolution of men of any responsibility in the effort of changing the current status quo as the reliance of change relies heavily on the woman’s approach to challenges.

### **2.2.5 Masculinity Studies**

“Masculinity studies the traits that are most valued by patriarchal society” (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). Masculinity is built on post-modern philosophy, “which states that all experiences are mediated by dominate discourse and therefore all knowledge is open to potential revision” (Bristor & Fischer, 1993). It moves the attention from women to men through its contribution to work around multiple masculinities (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Bristor & Fischer, 1993; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). Sometimes this study is seen as a corrective measure to the current women’s studies (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). This could be challenged in that current structures, knowledge and power have already been built on research conducted on men (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Simpson & Lewis, 2005).

The importance of the masculinity studies is in determining and reinforcing the traits and rituals that are most valuable in a patricidal society without further discriminating or disadvantaging women in the process (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). In understanding masculinity studies, for example, the Old Boys’ network; one can have a better understanding of examining men’s historical attitudes towards women (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010). The challenge with the notion is the rate of impact that this work has done in improving women’s situations (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010).

### **2.2.6 Interactional Feminism**

Interactional feminism is concerned with how men and women operate in their everyday interactions to reinforce gender stereotypes (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Bristor & Fischer, 1993; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). Interactional is also known as post-modern, post-feminism or post-structural and is built on post-modern philosophy as described above. The interactional feminists are interested in the influence of social construction in the gender discussion (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Bristor & Fischer, 1993). They want to understand why certain “(in)visible” traits persist and are sometimes not discussed as they are perceived as norms rather than choice (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011).

These feminists view subjectivity as contradictory and believe that through discourse described as historical, social and political aspects one should be allowed to constantly break and build to ensure that only structures or systems that are relevant are retained (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Bristor & Fischer, 1993; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011).

Interactional feminists note that the power structures that remain are strongly driven by the most powerful discourse (Bristor & Fischer, 1993). Kanter (1977) described these power structures as majority groups and articulated how the minority must behave as the *status quo* that has been prescribed by the majority group (Bristor & Fischer, 1993; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Kanter, 1977).

The challenge with interactional feminism is its inability to commit to a course. The innate culture of situational analysis makes it difficult to define what interactional feminists are working towards and therefore this undermines its own work (Bristor & Fischer, 1993; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). However, one could say in the global environment that we operate in; the ability to look at what is considered to be gender norms that particularly embed or breaks structures should be explored.

Interactional feminism is an ideal lens in which to understand in context of business how gender is impacted by “(in)visible” aspects that are embedded in impressions management.

## 2.3 Gender and Business

The challenge for feminists or gender as a whole is to engage the business environment, which is historically based on a patriarchal structure, and to appreciate that it is built on subsets of groups with different levels of power, in a manner that will deal with the underlying issues (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011). Liberals believe that the solution is to fight it structurally. The standpoints believe that it is time to listen to women's experiences. The Intersectionalists believes it is about analysing gender in a particular context. The womanists believe women are their own solution; while masculinity believes it has more to do with self-reflection.

What is encouraging, specifically about the post-structural (interactional) approach, is that to a large extent, it is a combination of the positive work done before it (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). The interactional approach is best to resolve a stand-alone's concern of monitoring gender difference in the creation of policy, an intersectional's concern around women in reference to a macro economic trend, a liberal's concern around gendered hierarchies structures and a masculinity's concern of being emasculated (P. Lewis & Simpson, 2012). Post-structural feminism aims to analyse the ecosystems and to research the positives and negatives of current systems. Countries, companies and organisations are all social clusters that incorporate all the above factors and need to be considered collectively through the lens of revealing what is hidden (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). It will be in dissecting the processes that are built in norms, practices and values that will allow the feminist collective efforts to be addressed.

### 2.3.1 Importance of the "(In)visibility"

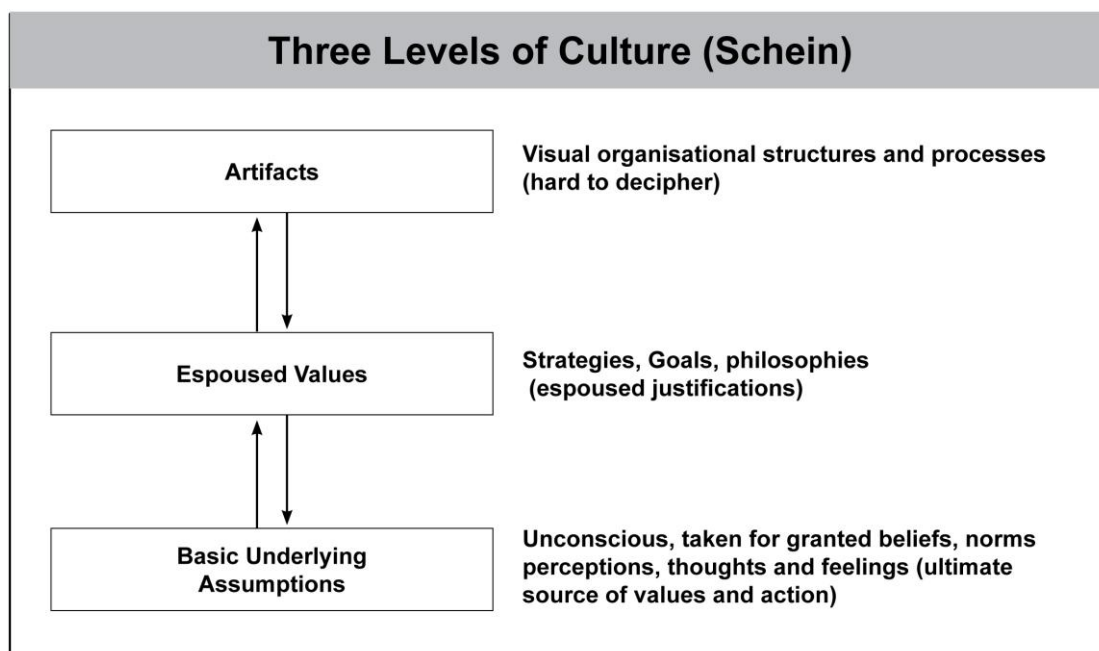
The reality is that in today's world organisations are changing at a rapid rate, which forces them to learn at a faster rate. In order to keep up with the changes, which at times include technology or and change in organisational structures, cultures and subcultures need to develop (Schein, 2003).

Schein (1996) defined the concept of culture (see Figure 1); and occupational communities as

"Culture manifests itself at three levels namely at a deep level of deep tacit assumptions that are the essence of culture. They then exist at the level of espoused values that often reflect what the group wishes to ideally to be and

the way it wants to present itself publicly, and the day to day behaviour that represents a complex compromise among its deeper assumption, and the immediate requirements of the situation. Overt behaviour alone cannot be used to decipher culture because situational contingencies make us behave in a manner that is inconsistent with our deeper values and assumptions. For this reason, one often sees “inconsistencies” or “conflicts” in overt behaviour or between behaviour and espoused value. To discover the basic elements of a culture, one must either observe behaviour for a very long time or get directly at the underlying values and assumption that drive the perceptions and thoughts of the group” (Schein, 1996).

**Figure 1: Three Levels of Culture**



Source: Schein, E. H. (1996). Three Cultures of Management: The Key to Organisational Learning.

The challenge as stated by Schein (1999) is that, “culture in popular managerial parlance usually refers to how people feel about the organisation, the authority system, and the degree of employee involvement and commitment, the “soft” stuff, all of which refer more to climate than culture” (Schein, 1999).

The reality remains that culturally one is over trained not to over think cultural behaviours that maintain the current *status quo* (Schein, 2003). In an organisation, exploring the unconscious behaviours that exist in organisations, it is vital to the

review Kanter's (1977) seminal work which was reviewed by Lewis and Simpson (2012) in the paper *Kanter Revisited: Gender, Power and (In)visibility* (Kanter, 1977; Lewis & Simpson, 2012). According to Schein (1999) managers increasingly engage in discussions about how to change the culture, understand the impact of the current culture and want elements to be retained (Schein, 1999). We have grown up in a climate that is driven by behaviours where people are granted the choice to make an immediate assumption based on what has been claimed or the choice to refute it (Schein, 2003).

However, behaviours such as tact and good manners that are embedded into our routine limit the way that the questions behind the meaning of these behaviours are being questioned (Schein, 2003). The challenge that remains for most organisations is the art of creating climates of openness. This can be achieved through understanding cultural assumptions about individuals who create sub cultures and ultimately frame the organisational culture (Schein, 1999).

In order for one to understand the cultural climate for change, one must understand what goes on in an organisation, and in particular why it happens the way it does (Schein, 1999). One way of achieving this is by digging deeper and examining the values and assumptions of the organisation (Schein, 1999).

Lewis and Simpson (2012) demonstrated through a report a post-structural lens through which dimensions of gender could be discovered (Lewis & Simpson, 2012) in Kanter's original work, which was not acknowledged due to its liberal feminist roots (Kanter, 1977; Lewis & Simpson, 2012). In developing a conceptual framework around an "*(in)visible*" vortex (see Figure 2), they emphasised the turbulent nature of these power relations and discussed some of the processes through which gendered hierarchies are perpetuated and concealed (Lewis & Simpson, 2012).

Kanter through liberal thinking was a key feminist contributor to work done with organisational behaviour in the context of structures or groups. She acknowledges women, but does not see women as a fundamental part of her argument as she defines gender as an example of power (Kanter, 1977; Lewis & Simpson, 2012). Stead (2013) described this as surface level conceptualisation which emphasises the states of exclusion and difference (Stead, 2013). An example of this thinking is in terms of the definition of voice. Liberal feminists believe voice is the act of speaking and being heard (Simpson & Lewis, 2005). Visibility would focus on the problem,

which in most cases would relate to numerical imbalance experienced (Simpson & Lewis, 2005).

In contrast, post-structuralism feminism observes organisational behaviours as socially situated practices with individuals who are involved in socially situated activities and in which gender relations are understood and embedded in norms and values (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). In the case of post-structuralism, voice would be the process of understanding the voice that lies behind the silence, while assessing the “*(in)visibility*” that accompanies the norm (Simpson & Lewis, 2005).

Lewis and Simpson (2012) further emphasise the need to include gender as a lens on Kanter’s (1977) work in their argument that in concentrating efforts to achieve boardroom balance through numbers and by justifying the inability to change this culture as the detrimental effects of minority groups, has undermined the on-going concealment of existing gender privilege which post-structuralism can help expose and explain (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Kanter, 1977; Lewis & Simpson, 2012).

Kanter (1977) discussed the implications of a minority member being a visible member, which included performance pressures that subjects the minority member to overachieve or hide to reduce exposure (Kanter, 1977). This also included the feeling of isolation by the minority as the majority group over emphasise their own commonalities (Kanter, 1977). Furthermore, there is the impact of role entrapment when the minority member is forced to adopt a stereotype that is understood and enforced by the majority (Kanter, 1977). The impact of conforming to any of the above-mentioned results is the minority member behaving in a way that is not natural to them and takes additional emotional effort to work through (Watts, 2008).

The standpoint feminist would believe that voice should not encompass the physicality of expression but should extend to the more political process of listening and giving attention (Simpson & Lewis, 2005). For a standpoint feminist the challenge remains that even while they are visible they remain unheard (Simpson & Lewis, 2005).

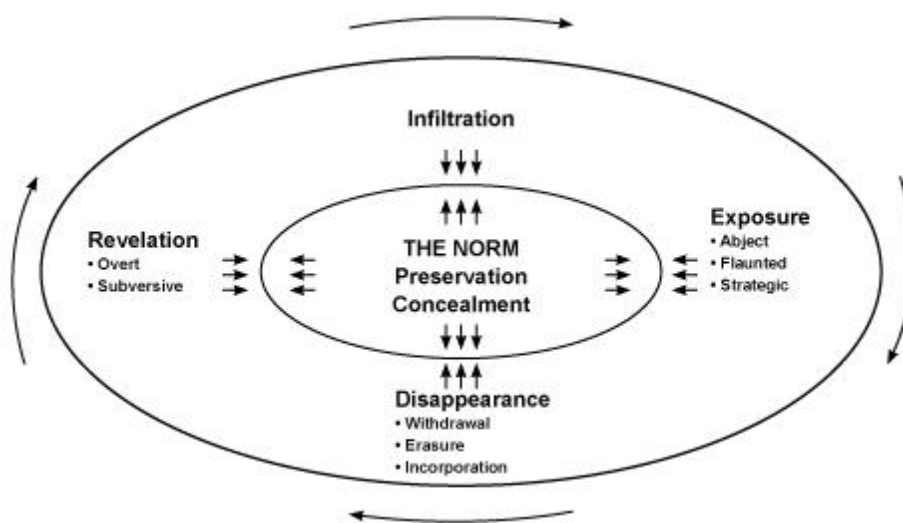
What Lewis and Simpson (2012), were able to decipher is that by adding the *(in)visible* vortex and post-structural perspective on Kanter’s (1977) work an explanation of how visibility and invisibility as subsets of norms are implicated in the way power is reproduced and retained was possible (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). Simpson and Lewis (2005) defined deep conceptualisation as a process of



maintaining power through “(in)visibility” of the norm (Simpson & Lewis, 2005). Through a post-structural view these norms are driven through power relations built into written and spoken language (Simpson & Lewis, 2005), which are built into meaning and interpretations thereby maintaining the privileged position of discourse through silence and implied meaning. As a result “(in)visible” power located in norm and consent is manufactured, produced and reproduced (Simpson & Lewis, 2005).

The result of this “(in)visibility” is that through deep conceptualisations one can try to understand the implied nature of social and situated learning in relation to women. According to Stead (2013) “The power of the (in)visibility vortex as a metaphor is how organisational practices and processes produce and reproduce invisibility or high visibility in organisations”(Stead, 2013). The closer one is to the centre of the vortex the closer to the norm and being part of the majority and therefore “(in)visible”, while those on the edge who do not fit the norm and are in minority visible (Lewis & Simpson, 2012; Stead, 2013).

**Figure 2: The Revised (In)visibility Vortex**

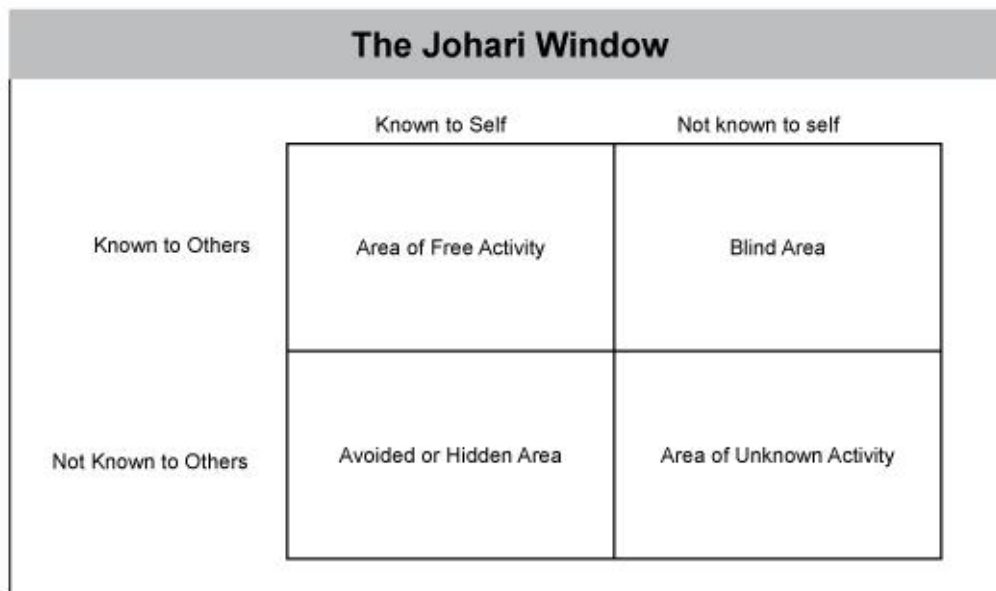


The Source: Lewis & Simpson, (2012). Kanter Revisited: Gender, Power and (In) visibility.

In order to avoid the impact of this vortex people have to consider to what extent they are aware of their individual power and how it is applied. This takes great consideration to the extent to which individuals are aware of their personal Johari’s Window. According to Luft & Ingham (1982) Johari’s Window can be described as the four rooms of awareness namely:

- Room one is the piece of ourselves that we notice and others witness.
- Room two is the aspects that others observe but we are not conscious of.
- Room three is our private space, hidden from others.
- Room four is the most unsolved room because it is the unconscious or subconscious part of us, which is not acknowledged by neither others nor us.

**Figure 3: Johari's Window**



Source: Luft, J., & Ingham, H. (1982). The Johari Window: A Graphic Model of Awareness in Interpersonal Relations.

In the ability to deploy “*in*visibility” managers and organisations will be able to uncover organisational culture, norms and values that will require managers to review what happens in room two and three (Luft & Ingham, 1982; Stead, 2013). This behaviour can be aided by an organisation or manager through the implementation of self-efficacy. According to Gist & Mitchell (1992) self-efficacy can be described as the extent to which a person has confidence in their ability to achieve a goal or target (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). Self-efficacy is an important factor in a manager’s level of commitment to a particular goal (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). The stronger the managers’ belief in self-efficacy, the more likely they are to accept a goal and remain committed to it through obstacles and setbacks (Gist & Mitchell, 1992).

Another invisible power to note is unconscious bias. This is described by the unconscious knowledge that humans are exposed to, which leads to auto pilot thinking (Chesler, Barabino, Bhatia, & Richards-Kortum, 2010; Lee, 2005). This unconscious knowledge is represented in concepts between relationships, associations that are formed and repeated (Lee, 2005). Through repetition they

become stronger and require less effort to activate and therefore automatic and unconscious (Lee, 2005). It is important to note that both males and females display this behaviour. However this performance is driven predominately by male behaviours as key driver of leadership traits (Chesler, et al., 2010). The challenge, as noted by Kanter, is when women in a minority position display behaviours that are associated with men they will run the risk of being penalised for “un-stereotypical” traits which in most cases are unintentional and unconscious (Kanter, 1977). While unconscious thinking and biases pervade every aspect of one’s life, there are gender based unconscious biases in organisational systems and culture that could affect women’s career progression. Through post-structural thinking and as further contributions are made changes will occur (Lewis, 2001). Gender equality challenges some of the assumptions that are taken for granted, therefore it must be expected that as one part is integrated, new challenges will surface that will further require creative solutions (Lewis, 2001).

As subsets of power, it then becomes important to evaluate how these visible and invisible subsets through impressions management are allowed to continue breeding. As previously stated, this will advance the impact that impressions management has on career progression for women. Learning to move between states of visibility and invisibility become the challenge, however, with greater awareness is the ability to create opportunity (Stead, 2013). This is achieved through the use of the behaviour frameworks discussed above. The power then resides in understanding what are the appropriate types of *(in)visibility* and how to better use them through impression management to improve women’s career progression(Stead, 2013).

### **2.3.2 Effects of Impression Management**

According to Goffman (1959), impressions management is entrenched in the probing of individual identity, group interactions and dynamics in developing what is understood to be generally accepted social interaction (Goffman, 1959; Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007; Watts, 2008). The practice of impression management supports the post-structuralism understanding of organisational behaviours as socially situated practices in which individuals are involved in socially situated activities (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). According to Denzin (2002), Goffman provided tangible experience to what many other theorists and writers only wrote about (Denzin, 2002). This allowed for moral meaning and nuance to the notion of interaction (Denzin, 2002), without determining whether a person is moral or not. In the case of Goffman we are

judged by a moral standard (Raffel, 2013). Therefore one is only motivated to appear to be conforming to the standard notion of morality (Raffel, 2013).

Goffman (1959) described impressions management as a set of impressions or a “front” which is designed to deliver a particular goal intended by the individual or group to achieve a desired goal (Goffman, 1959; Watts, 2008). In the re-enactment of these on a regular basis they become engrained as norms (Watts, 2008). Those who consciously or unconsciously behave outside these norms, in which the majority deem normal, may as a consequence have their legitimacy undermined. Lewis and Simpson (2008) further stated that any form of “dividing practices” through majority judgment determines whether one is a “proper” member of the social order (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). Goffman made the key assumption that the “true” or “real” attitudes, beliefs and emotions of the individual can be ascertained only indirectly, through what appears to be involuntary expressive behaviour. Denzin (2002) argues that the Goffman worked from a realist stance that presumed that staged versions or events of reality somehow corresponded to the real world (Denzin, 2002).

An organisational system is made up of individuals who interact with each other on a daily basis and look for signs that explain what others think about them (Drory & Zaidman, 2007; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). As discussed above, to contend with organisational culture while deciding when to “deploy” invisibility by choosing the impression management strategy being organized becomes crucial.

There are many strategies that exist. However, one can categorise them generally into two categories; namely assertive strategies, which are designed to establish a desirable identity. Defensive strategies involve the use of excuses to repair a damaged identity (Drory & Zaidman, 2007; Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). Impression management strategies that are found in organisational studies include, but are not limited to (Drory & Zaidman, 2007):

- Ingratiation: this is when one attempts to be liked and will include aspects such as flattery, opinion conformity, doing favours to increase likeability.
- Self-promotion: this is when one draws attention to ones achievements to appear competent.
- Exemplification: this is when one wants to be respected and admired for their integrity and moral coding.

This “front” or impression management strategy is not necessarily gendered, but through stereotypical norms will assume specific male and female behaviours (Lewis & Simpson, 2012; Watts, 2008). The “front” is further defined by the existence of the

majority group as to what is deemed normal, which in the case of being the male majority group, where the tone is set for minimum disclosure, absence of emotional talk and avoidance of vulnerability, results in a further inability for the female minority group to articulate the invisible aspects (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Kanter, 1977; Lewis & Simpson, 2012; Watts, 2008).

When one reviews the impression management consistent with the goals and behaviours of the perceived female gender role; impression management tactics such as excuses, hedging, apologising or supplication (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007) are evident. These tactics not synonymous with helping women obtain their career objectives (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007). The question that remains is how these “parts” that individuals play impacts their career progression. In this paper we propose that impressions management in an organisational setting might partially account for women’s career progression (Guadagno & Cialdini, 2007).

When looking into an organisation, certain “parts” are at play to which women and men react to at certain events or moments that affect the decisions women make on their career journey. These include but are not limited to the following:

### 2.3.2.1 *Stereotypes*

Stereotypes are shared beliefs preserved by one group of people with regard to another group of people. Stereotypes are broadly known, but over generalised (MacKie, 1973). This helps society at times cope with complex social world by categorising people into groups or types. They do not always contain negative information; however, these categorisations can become problematic (MacKie, 1973). Due to the unconscious nature of stereotypes they are often oversimplified and rarely reviewed. In the context of an organisation, through norms and values these stereotypes are regularly reconfirmed as company culture is treasured and remains un-interrogated (Schein, 1996). More importantly the question remains what are the impressions management tactics that women use and to what extent are these tactics visible or “(in)visible” during a women’s career progression.

In the past, organisations were created and moulded according to expectations that men would be the breadwinners with bureaucratic career modelling developed around the male career (Billing, 2011). Through economic empowerment women’s experiences are shifting to include aspects from “living for others” to “living a life of one’s own” (Lewis & Simpson, 2010). The reality is that even with more women

working outside the home, there are still more male managers than women (Billing, 2011). According Hakim (2002) and the preference theory, the low numbers of managerial women is due to women's lifestyle preference (Hakim, 2002). However, according to Budworth, Enns & Rowbotham (2008), social views around responsibilities of men and women in the home and in the workplace need to be reviewed (Budworth, et al., 2008). Booysen and Nkomo (2010) explained that in South Africa, black men held the strongest belief in the male definition of manager stereotype, which is concerning (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010b). These views have an impact of individual career progression regarding how people develop impression management that fit within organisational environment while having to incorporate the shared identity that comes with ones gender, partner and parental identities (Budworth, et al., 2008).

According to Budworth, Enns and Rowbotham (2008) dual career couples can explore one of three strategies, namely:

- The first strategy would be placing a limit on couples' career growth. This will include the number of hours worked to ensure adequate time is available for family responsibilities (Budworth, et al., 2008).
- The second strategy is where couples take turns in putting their career on hold. However, what has been noted is that in this strategy, women remain responsible for more tasks around the home, including childcare (Budworth et al., 2008). This results in more women contending with higher levels of conflict between work and family than males' experience.
- The third strategy is where one partner has a job while the other as career (Budworth, et al., 2008). The stereotypical roles of the husband as the breadwinner and the wife as the caregiver at times forces challenging and straining conversations within the relationship.

As organisations develop family-friendly environments and strategies, the concern is whether these are developed with the focus on the gender and spousal stereotypes rather than reviewing the central strategic policy. These policies would be developed as perks rather than notions of entitlements, which further embed existing stereotypes (Lewis, 2001). In assessing family issues as female entitlements, organisations further embed the culture of family obligations as women's responsibilities (Lewis, 2001). In reframing organisations' norms and values, concepts such as working hours or part-time employment are predominantly created

female entitlement. Both men and women would be able to create more consistent impression management for career progression (Lewis, 2001).

### 2.3.2.2 “Ideal Worker”

Another “part” that manifests within an organisational environment or events is the “*ideal worker*”. Schein (2007) noted that within the global environment the ideology of the “think manager, think male” should be examined. In earlier work done by Schein, she described the requisite for management characteristics and found that in her study both men and women perceived successful middle managers as possessing characteristics, attitudes and temperaments more commonly ascribed to men than to women in general (Schein, 2007). The concern with this thinking of managers as a male stereotype fosters a bias against women in managerial selection, placement, and training decisions (Booyesen & Nkomo, 2010; Schein, 2007).

When the current leadership models that were developed in the 1980s and 1990s are assessed, it is clear that these are still prevalent today (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). The prevalence of males as the manager roles and self-presentation or impression management of male leaders that set the base for the “*ideal worker*” can be understood (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). In a study conducted by Alimo-Metcalfe (2010) on attributes of the “*ideal worker*”, the female views searched for effective service delivery as the job priority. They believed that the working style should be people orientated and participative while working through people. They believe that decision-making should not be rushed and it is important to familiarise oneself with key aspects. Lastly, the interpersonal relationship with the team should be one of understanding people, being sensitive and empathetic while understanding different needs (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010).

Conversely, the male view was that vision and ability to package ideas for funding were job priorities; they believe that the working style should be political, forceful, high profile and flamboyant. The decision making process should be quick and action orientated while the interpersonal relationship with one’s team should be one where one provides support (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010b).

Another aspect of the “*ideal worker*” is the definition of meritocracy. Simpson, Smith and Lewis (2010), define meritocracy as the practices and process for equal opportunity, procedural fairness in the employment arena (Simpson, Ross-Smith, & Lewis, 2010). The liberal feminist view is of the belief that one should get the “best

person for the job". In the ability for one to present one's qualification and years of experience, this process is deemed fair (Simpson, et al., 2010). This view is supported by women who do not want to be singled out for special merit and desire to earn their credibility from performance (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). As noted by Kanter, this is a demonstration of tokenism, which deters women from being singled out (Kanter, 1977). Lewis & Simpson (2010) stated that while discourse of merit highlights similarities of males and females, it equally brings to attention the difference of women traits and characteristics (Lewis & Simpson, 2010). The question remains: Who defines the notion of merit and whether this practice is yet another un-interrogated corporate culture (Simpson, et al., 2010)?

### 2.3.2.3 "The Working Woman"

Hakim (2002) developed the preference theory in which she analysed the work life style preferences of women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (Hakim, 2002). She concluded with the assessment that women who seek to have a career and a family have three routes to select from, namely:

- Home centred employment is made up of 20% of women. These women place family life and children as their main priorities. They generally study for intellectual offering and are responsive to societal and family policies (Hakim, 2002). When reviewing the dual-couple strategies above, these women would potentially deploy strategy one (placing a limit on career growth of both partners) or alternatively the third strategy (choice of being the job driven partner) (Budworth, et al., 2008).
- Work-centred employment makes up 20% of the women. These women are potentially childless with the main priority in life around employment. There are large investments in qualifications and training for employment. They would be responsive to employment policies (Hakim, 2002). In the dual-couple strategies they would either be in the third strategy choosing to be the career driven partner or the second strategy where the partners take turns for career progression (Budworth, et al., 2008)
- Adaptive employment makes up the remaining 60% of the women. These women are diverse and include women who want to combine work and family and are sometimes seen as drifters with unplanned careers. They obtain qualifications with the intention of working and are responsive to all policies (Hakim, 2002). In the dual couple strategy discussed above, they could select



one of the three strategies. This strategy selected is possibly driven by the point of life journey they are on (Budworth, et al., 2008).

However, Kumra (2010) raised the concern that the preference theory contains sweeping statements of women's choices between work and non-work arenas. She noted that this theory does not take into consideration structural and social constraints and places the career progression solely in the woman's control (Kumra, 2010a). She further stated that Hakim's claim of "voluntary" and "genuine" choice is to ignore the realities of women's lives, the constraints women face and the impact of these on their choices (Kumra, 2010). What needs to be explored is whether the women in this category believe they have genuine choice and whether they are able to compete in their careers on equal terms with men without constraints (Kumra, 2010). The concern being with the notion of choice, women curtail their career ambition. They associate the move into senior roles as a choice being made between what they want and what is best for their family (Lewis & Simpson, 2010). The second concern is that by leaving the "choice" up to the woman, organisations and senior management are released of the responsibility. Therefore this allows organisational and social context to remain unexamined (Lewis & Simpson, 2010).

### **2.3.3 A Woman's Career Progression**

The definition of career success has been elusive to many who have studied it. Some have assessed it through objective measures such as compensation, promotions, job status and career path, while others explore the subjective matters such as career satisfaction (Laud & Johnson, 2012). As a broader definition, career success can be defined only at opposite ends of a spectrum from subjective to objective success criteria (Laud & Johnson, 2012). On the one end of the spectrum success is found through being content (subject success) by knowing that minimal career impact was achieved (objective success). On the opposite end of the spectrum, high job status (objective success) could be achieved while having constant internal battles about the demanding nature of the career (subjective success) (Laud & Johnson, 2012). This at times results in a post-rationalised definition of success that governs the impression management tactics adopted to achieve career success through career development (Laud & Johnson, 2012).

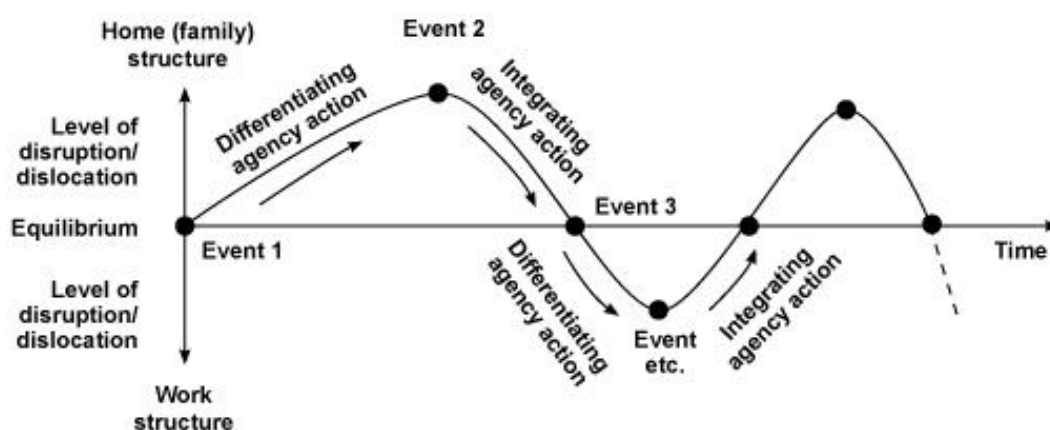
Career development can be explored as the arrangement of an individual's career design and an organisational career management process to achieve the ideal match that benefits both the individual's and the organisation's needs (Lu & Sexton, 2010).

It has been noted that the development of organisations have been developed on patriarchal foundations with impressions that reinforce the patriarchal system (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Lewis & Simpson, 2012; Watts, 2008). This supports the literature that suggests that women’s careers progress differently to men’s, which therefore motivates different career design requirements (Lu & Sexton, 2010; O’Neil & Hopkins, 2008).

Lu and Sexton (2010) extended a model based on two frameworks that were developed by O’Neil and Bilimoria (2005) on generic female career development and earlier work by White in 1995 on senior female management career development (Lu & Sexton, 2010; O’Neil & Hopkins, 2008). The joint framework analysed the career journey across four key categories namely exploration (before the age of 24), idealistic achievement (between the ages of 24 and 35), pragmatic endurance (between the ages of 36 and 45), and reinventing contribution (between the ages of 46 and 60).

Lu and Sexton (2010) developed a grounded turning point model (see Figure 4) of the decisions being made across two specific structures namely; the home (family) structure, defined by one’s birth relations, nuptials, social customs and care giving; and work structure, defined as instrumental activities that provide goods and services to support life which is governed by policies, norms and values (Lu & Sexton, 2010).

**Figure 4: Grounded Turning Point Model of Career Progression**



Source: Lu, S., & Sexton, M. (2010). Career Journeys and Turning Points of Senior Female Managers in Small Construction Firms.

Lu and Sexton (2010) noted that the concept of work-life balance is the attempt at which one achieves equilibrium of optimal balance between home and work. Further

noted is that this equilibrium is different for each individual and could change over time (Lu & Sexton, 2010). In attempting to work within the societal norms that govern the home or work structure to maintain the pre-conceived impressions without discussing the invisible aspects result in discomfort for the person attempting to achieve the balance (Lewis & Simpson, 2012; Lu & Sexton, 2010; Watts, 2008).

Efforts on either the home or work structure can either bring the person closer to the optimal (integrating agency action) point or drive them away from the optimal point (differentiating agency action) (Lu & Sexton, 2010). Lu and Sexton (2010) explained that an event would happen that would either change the path of differentiating into an integrating agency action or vice versa (Lu & Sexton, 2010). The event is characterised by a relationship between place (structure) and one's identity (decisions and behaviour) (Lu & Sexton, 2010). The current categories and findings are as follows:

#### *2.3.3.1 Phase One: Exploration*

This phase is defined as the age before 24, and is significantly determined by earlier socialisation in which aspects such as family backgrounds, role models and educational opportunities and experiences define the decisions women make around careers (Lu & Sexton, 2010).

Through an intersectional feminist theory one was able to confirm that parents were the most meaningful influence in decision-making (Lu & Sexton, 2010). This finding, however, did not explore the extent to which the parents' behaviours and norms built or destroyed the female's career at this age. This stage deserves to be explored to understand the female career path, but it will not be explored in this specific research paper.

#### *2.3.3.2 Phase Two: Idealistic Achievement*

This phase is defined as ages between 24 and 35. It commences at the point when women have transitioned from education to paid work and overtime. A portion of women experience "reality shock" and go through a phase of modification. These women are characterised as being achievement orientated; they are motivated to succeed with the desire to see their careers as an opportunity to make a difference and as paths to personal happiness and fulfilment (Lu & Sexton, 2010; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). These women might not have children but they are constantly

thinking about the decisions that come with having them (Lu & Sexton, 2010; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

In the Lu and Sexton's (2010) study, no findings were contributed to this phase of the journey, which was a factor of the focus of the study being on senior management (Lu & Sexton, 2010). The exploration of this phase could possibly improve understanding of the development of impressions management and sensitivity to the invisible factors.

#### *2.3.3.3 Phase Three: Pragmatic Endurance*

This phase is defined as ages between 36 and 45 who go through a different transition phase that still includes pressures that came with the idealistic phase, as well the beginning of making a more tangible contribution to their organisation (Lu & Sexton, 2010). Women are now characterised as being pragmatic about their careers and operate in a production mode style. These women are concerned with getting things done and dealing with things in an ordered and evolving manner (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). Women at this phase, depending on the impression management that governs their career, will begin to exhibit signs of being disengaged and disenfranchised as they attempt to deal with the many demands on their life and they will experience feelings that they have no control of their destiny (O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005). These women either have the challenges of raising children or are stressed about the biological clock with decisions around their career that require to be made. The choices are to either find their careers stalling at management levels or the equivalent of opting out, moving to a less stressful division or working part-time (Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011; Lu & Sexton, 2010; Watts, 2008); alternatively these women enter a period of early career "success" with visibility increasing as they become a minority (Kanter, 1977; Lewis & Simpson, 2012; Lu & Sexton, 2010).

Lu and Sexton broke these findings into sections, namely personal relationship context, which stressed the importance of work-life balance, the emphasis of self-belief, the impact of stereotypes; and the business relationship context which stressed the business networks, commitment and support from sponsor and access to training (Lu & Sexton, 2010). In further analysing these aspects it becomes imperative to ascertain which of these aspects cause women to either stay the course or retreat.

#### 2.3.3.4 Phase Four: Reinvent Contribution

This phase is defined as ages between 46 and 60 who view success through recognition, respect and achieving the optimal work-life balance (Lu & Sexton, 2010). These women are characterised by what they want to contribute to companies, families and communities. They begin to acknowledge others in making them who they are today (Lu & Sexton, 2010; O'Neil & Bilimoria, 2005).

A reflection of this current phase illustrated that this phase was hungry for visibility. These women no longer lose sight of who they are and they are less likely to remain in an environment that does not allow them to contribute to the change they want to see. There is merit in exploring what it is about this phase that can be replicated in earlier stages; however, this paper will not be covering this phase of the journey.

The analysis was conducted above was completed using the intersectional feminism perspective (Lu & Sexton, 2010). It is proposed that through a post-structural perspective, one could uncover hidden dimensions of gender power utilising the work done to date by Lu and Sexton (2010).

## 2.4 Summary of Literature

What is apparent is that understanding what motivates women is not only a gender issue but also one of life (age) stages. Studies have proved that decisions around careers for women are part of a larger, interconnected web of decisions for women. When an organisation admits that it wants to retain women, consideration into life stages will be vital to ensure that the correct discussions are conducted with women at the correct stage in their lives. It will also be important to delve deeper into the *(in)visible* norms and values that exist in the manner in which women are managed to ensure that the impact of these norms can be mitigated.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose of this chapter is to define the precise purpose of this research project. The existing literature has exposed different feminist perspectives. It has also reviewed knowledge of how norms are maintained and reproduced. Lastly, the literature further explored impression management strategies.

The impact of the above noted literature would either bring a woman closer to her career success goals or move those goals further away from her. The current literature does not explore what happens at these “events” that either brings women closer or further away from their career progression and how maintaining and reproducing these norms through impressions management impact women’s career progression.

In light of this, this study answered the following research questions:

### **3.1 Research Question One**

What are the visible and invisible norms that govern organisations?

### **3.2 Research Question Two**

What impression management tactics are prevalent in organisations?

### **3.3 Research Question Three**

How do women perceive their career progression?

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The summary of the literature permits the exploration of existing knowledge in the subjects of impressions management, women, career progression and the importance of *(in)visibility*. The study helps to explain the impact of impressions management on women's career progression by gaining a deeper insight into the "*(in)visible*" norms that exist.

This chapter presents and explains the research methodology selected. It includes the research design, the defined population, and sample and culminates with the data collection process and method of analysis. Lastly, the chapter emphasises the limitations to the proposed research method.

### 4.1 Research Design

The research design was a qualitative and exploratory in nature because the research design was not finalised from the outset (Saunders & Lewis, 2012; Suter, 2011). For the purpose of this study, one on one interviews were selected where data collection occurred by conversing with a person to get their explanation of some behaviour or action (Yin, 2011). Yin (2011) described one on one interviews as qualitative interviews, which follow a conversation style that pursues an interest in understanding the lived experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Yin, 2011). This method was deemed relevant, as the researcher ascertained the behaviour and norms that only through discussion were participants able to relate to.

The goal of qualitative approach is to uncover themes, patterns, insights, and understanding. The qualitative researcher is often an instrument in the research. The researcher relied on their skills to receive information in natural context and uncover its meaning (Suter, 2011). This process was deemed exploratory research and involved two of three methods, namely: searching academic literature and conducting interviews (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). The research was cross sectional, because the data was collected from participants once at one point in time, which Saunders & Lewis (2012) describe as a "snapshot" view (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

## **4.2 Population**

The population as defined in this paper is women. A population is a complete set of group members and does not necessarily need to be people or employees but rather the organisation to which the employees belong (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). In South Africa women make up 51% of the total country's population and 45% of the country's working environment, with 21,6% constituting middle and senior management (Business Women Association, 2011). When one analyses industry specific figures, women in middle and senior management constitute approximately 26% within financial and consulting services (Business Women Association, 2011) while smaller representation in industries such as oil and gas as well as healthcare can be found at around 11% (Business Women Association, 2011).

## **4.3 Sample and Sampling Method**

This study did not have access to the entire population therefore the women selected were not a random selection (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). This is described as non-probability study where various techniques can be applied when the complete list of the population is not available (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). Sampling techniques include quota, purposive, snowball, self-selection, and convenience sampling (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The sampling technique underpinning the sample selection was convenience sampling. Convenience sampling includes instances where the researcher has access to an organisation (Saunders & Lewis, 2012).

The financial organisation used in this research comprised of 739 employees of which 384 were women who represent 51% of the company and they were selected. In this paper, the sample was women in middle and senior management. Of the 384 women, 115 women are middle and senior management representing 30% of the organisation. Thirty per cent of women in middle and senior management reflect the industry, country, and world indicator of women representation in any environment. Of the 115 women, the intent is to allow the Human Resource team with no knowledge of the study through random sampling to select 10 participants from the 115 women that represent middle and senior management. The sample consisted of five middle management and five senior management participants. This allowed for equal opportunity for each participant to be selected to mitigate bias.



It is important that a valid qualitative process is applied which will result in credible and trustworthy data (Suter, 2011). The researcher conducted a pilot study with a team member from both middle and senior management. This was purely to confirm the interview schedule structure prior to the official research. A further stakeholder check was conducted to confirm interview findings. A stakeholder check can be described as the process where research participants (also known as informants) are called upon after the session to evaluate the interpretation and explanation pulled from the data (Suter, 2011). This was conducted with a team member from both middle and senior management.

#### **4.4 Data Collection**

The researcher conducted 10 one-on-one sessions that each had duration of one hour. The researcher held all the sessions at the participants' head office to limit inconvenience and ease of access to the participants. The researcher ensured that the participants felt as comfortable and at ease as quickly as possible. This was achieved by the researcher explaining to the participants who the researcher is, the purpose of their study, issues of privacy, and implored to them the importance of openness to the study (see appendix 1).

An interview schedule was developed which consisted of open-ended questions (appendix 2). An open-ended question is a data collection method that allows participants to talk openly about the topic (Saunders & Lewis, 2012). There was a Dictaphone in each session and the recordings were transcribed after the sessions. The researcher checked the transcription against personal notes taken and listened to the recording to ensure accuracy.

#### **4.5 Method of Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis has a long history in social sciences and is quoted in Stewart (2007) as a "research technique for making replicable and valid inference from text to the context of their use" (Stewart, 2007).

The transcribed data was reviewed line by line, and data divided into meaningful units of analysis (Suter, 2011). The data was then coded for meaning. Coding is the process of defining segments of data with symbols, descriptive words or category names (Stewart, 2007; Suter, 2011). An initial list consisting of 77 codes was

developed. The initial codes were sourced from the literature review and additional codes were created from the transcriptions.

To facilitate the coding, categorising and discovery of the relationships, the researcher used a qualitative data analysis programme, namely Atlas.ti (Stewart, 2007; Suter, 2011). Of the 77 codes developed, the researcher refined the set which resulted in a final list of 57 codes. These 57 codes were classified into code families or categories based on literature reviews and then placed into themes, as illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Themes, categories and codes**

Themes		FEMINISM		
Categories	Feminist views	The working women		
Codes	Liberal Intersectional Womanism Masculinity Interactional	Arrival at work Caregivers Children Extramural Family time Partner Sleep Support Leave Wake up		
Themes		INVISIBILITY		
Categories	Culture	Invisibility Vortex	Johari's Window	Unconscious bias
Codes	Climate Company Culture Team Formation	Influential People Norms Unspoken moments	<b>Window one:</b> VISIBLE to me and others <b>Window two:</b> INVISIBLE to me but visible to others <b>Window three:</b> VISIBLE to me but invisible to others <b>Window four:</b> INVISIBLE to me and others	
Themes		IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT		
Categories	Ideal worker	Impression management strategies	Stereotypes	
Codes	Leadership traits Meritocracy Think manager think male	Assertive strategies Defensive strategies Ingratiation Self promotion Exemplification	Dual career strategies Gender stereotypes Societal customs	
Themes		WOMAN'S CAREER PROGRESSION		
Categories	Career Journey	Grounded turning point	Success	The working women
Codes	Exploration Idealistic Pragmatic Endurance Reinventing contribution	Defining moments Differentiating agency actions Integrating agency actions Opting out	Objective Success Subjective Success	Adaptive Home centred Work centred Choice or Sacrifice

The researcher developed table of categories (Appendices 3 - 13). Under the theme of invisibility, culture is an example if a category. Culture, has climate, company culture and team formations as codes within the category. The tables stressed significant quotes made by each respondent based on the codes developed. The quotes were sourced from the transcripts utilising Atlas.ti. Through analysis the researcher used the most pertinent quotes in Chapter 5.

## 4.6 Research Limitations

The possible limitations in this study as are follows:

- **Selection of convenience sampling:** The researcher acknowledges that in selecting one company, it might only contribute to the inferences found rather than become a representation of the population.
- **Depth:** The richness of this study needed to be in the ability of the researcher to gain the trust and truth from the participants to ensure that leading questions were not asked, and that the participants truly exposed their experiences and feelings.
- **Cross-sectional:** Denzin (2009) emphasised the importance for social studies to be continuously reassessed to assist in understanding and explaining of empirical reality (Denzin, 2009). A longitudinal study or a similar study within a different company will be recommended to test the findings of this study.
- **Researcher bias:**
  - Denzin (2009) noted that the importance of the researcher not imposing their personal interpretation onto the study by ensuring that the content was captured from the view of those that were being studied (Denzin, 2009).
  - Denzin (2009) further noted that the researcher should have ensured that meaning was not lost due to a lack of understanding of terminology and therefore meaning (Denzin, 2009).
  - It was important that the researcher was aware of their subjectivity and preference for conversation topics. The challenge for the researcher was ensuring that conversation flowed without providing the conversation with leading content.
- **Validity of data:** The researcher ensured that anecdotal aspects were kept out of the study; all data resonated with existing theory or data.

## **CHAPTER 5: RESULTS**

### **5.1 Introduction:**

The previous chapter explored the methodology proposed and it was utilised to discover the research questions derived from the literature review in Chapter 2 and outlined in Chapter 3. In this chapter, the findings are presented. These findings are extractions from the 10 interviews held with 10 women from both middle and senior management. No additional information was sourced about the women outside of the interviews held with them. While it is unfortunate not to have had more diversity in this sample in terms of race, these women were found in an organisational context. The findings of these interviews are presented in the categories discussed in Chapter 4.

### **5.2 The interviews**

The interviews were conducted with 10 African women within one organisation. The women held different positions within the organisations, ranging from deal making through to support teams. All women were categorised as either a middle manager or as part of senior management based on internal level metrics. Six of the women were married, while eight of the women had children. The organisation has crèche childcare facilities; however none of the women interviewed used the facilities. The organisation also has a gym on the premises; however only two of the four women who go to gym use the organisational facilities. The one woman who does not use the gym made the comment that she uses the one closer to home so that she can factor in travel time into her routine as a single mother.

### **5.3 The Women**

The core working hours for all the women were from 08h30 to 16h30. It was noted that the women with children who have no domestic support started their work days much earlier than the women who have help with their children or the single women. It was further noted that single women had the free time to meditate or go to gym as way of relaxation in the mornings or evenings while most women with children spent their free time with family responsibilities; this was not particularly age specific. This was the first indication that while women are exposed to the same work environment as their male and female counterparts, their personal lives are very different before

and after work, which indicates different support requirements. The Women's routines are summarised in Table 2.

**Table 2: The woman's routines**

No.	Name	Family	Wake up	Arrive at work	Leave work	Sleep	Personal time
1	A_Senior	Married with children	04h45	08h00	17h30	21h30	Masters
2	B_Middle	Single with children	04h30	08h30	17h00	22h30	Meditation, gym, study for career progression, personal business projects
3	C_Middle	Single with children	05h00	08h30	17h30	21h00	Church activities, community groups, studying for career progression
4	D_Middle	Married with children	06h00	08h30	18h00	22h00	Studying to realign personal career goals
5	E_Senior	Single no children	06h30	08h45	18h00	22h00	Meditation, additional work hours
6	F_Middle	Married with children	07h30	07h30	17h00	22h30	Meditation, gym, internet surfing, interesting activities, PHD in the future
7	G_Senior	Married with children	05h00	06h00	18h00	23h00	Reading the paper, additional work hours
8	H_Middle	Single no children	05h00	07h30	18h00	00h00	Meditation, gym, additional work hours
9	I_Senior	Married with children	05h00	08h00	18h30	20h30	Gym, additional work hours
10	J_Senior	Married with children	06h30	09h00	17h00	20h00	n/a

In responding to the eleven interview questions, it was noted that the perspectives of nine of the women's feminist views were strongly driven by womanist theory outlooks with regard to their society, the organisation, their family structure and personal life philosophy. The comments below illustrate the way women chose to respond to questions asked:

*P 6: F\_Middle: "It is my responsibility to fix things and it is not necessarily fixing it because I want to fix myself but it is my responsibility to change the situation..."*

*P 10: J\_Senior: "... it all goes back to the internal understanding of yourself and what you want out of your life."*

The first interview question explored the women’s daily routines. The question asked in the interview was “Give me an idea of what your day is like? From the time you wake up to the time you get back into bed?”

From the responses it was noted in Table 3 that the women’s views were varied. The working women’s style reflected six adaptive women, two work centred and two home centred women. This observation linked to career life stages and for the married women, their personal selection of dual couple strategies. It was also noted that only three of the women do additional organisational work in their personal time.

**Table 3: The women’s view**

No.	Name	Family	Wake up	Arrive at work	Leave work	Sleep	Personal time
1	A_Senior	Married with children	04h45	08h00	17h30	21h30	Masters
2	B_Middle	Single with children	04h30	08h30	17h00	22h30	Meditation, gym, study for career progression, personal business projects
3	C_Middle	Single with children	05h00	08h30	17h30	21h00	Church activities, community groups, studying for career progression
4	D_Middle	Married with children	06h00	08h30	18h00	22h00	Studying to realign personal career goals
5	E_Senior	Single no children	06h30	08h45	18h00	22h00	Meditation, additional work hours
6	F_Middle	Married with children	07h00	08h30	17h00	22h30	Meditation, gym, internet surfing, interesting activities, PHD in the future
7	G_Senior	Married with children	05h00	06h00	18h00	23h00	Reading the paper, additional work hours
8	H_Middle	Single no children	05h00	07h30	18h00	00h00	Meditation, gym, additional work hours
9	I_Senior	Married with children	05h00	08h00	18h30	20h30	Gym, additional work hours
10	J_Senior	Married with children	06h30	09h00	17h00	20h00	n/a

#### 5.4 Research Question One: Visible and (In)visible Norms

The next research question related to visible and invisible norms, specifically “What are the visible and invisible norms that govern organisations?” The visible norms were noted as being the ones that were repeated most often by the women and

described as public knowledge. The *(in)visible* norms were noted as the norms mentioned by a few women or indicated as personal views that might not be visible to peers. The commentary below comprehensively explains the categories discovered.

#### 5.4.1 Culture

The respondents were initially asked to define success. The follow up question asked them to define how this view differed from their colleagues.

- *“How does this differ from the colleagues around you?”*

The crucial and most visible response of how they viewed their colleagues' perceptions of success was determined by monetary driven incentives. These respondents had the following to say about their colleagues:

*P2: B\_Middle: “I think majority of my colleagues view success as being able to mobilize, advance, it has to be monetary, for example they will say things like I need to be earning this much, I have to be a senior, I have to advance further, and I have to be driving this car.”*

*P6: F\_Middle: “I think a lot of people define success in terms of money; that is obvious. Success is not celebrated here, promotions don't get announced. You know that somebody has been promoted, because you get a telephone list and it's got a new position.”*

*P7: G\_Senior: “A lot of people, their definition of success is monetary, is material things I guess.”*

*P8: H\_Middle: “A lot of people define success in answering the following questions. How many deals did I do? How big is my bonus? Who am I in touch with?”*

In responding to the same questions, some of the respondents made reference to the visible HR career progression model in place which was understood as a driver of success for their colleagues. Below are quotes relating to organisational structures in place that enables success.

*P5: E\_Senior: “Within the context of the organization I think success is being able to move from point A to point B in as far as your career path is concerned. So if you*



*came in at business analyst level and you are now a senior account manager or an executive that for me would define success within the context of the organization”*

*P4:D\_Middle: “One will find that there is technical discipline, there is a financial discipline and there is marketing discipline. So in total there are three, so progression is very clearly defined. So you need do your core discipline, my core discipline is financial but I have been cleared for my technical discipline, so I can do technical as well.”*

In responding to the questions described above, some of the respondents made reference to comments that resonated positively with the visible climate of the organization that facilitates success from a personal point of view. The women had the following to say:

*P7: G\_Senior: “The company is a perfect mix between civil service and private company cultures.”*

*P1: A\_Senior: You don't have to sacrifice your family time; people understand that you can do the work at home. So I don't have to be here at 7h30 and leave at 18h00, its okay because I am delivering. It works much better for me in comparison to where I was at my previous company. I am getting the work, life balance and being enabled to succeed.”*

This view was contradicted by some respondents through the unstructured interview process who referred to the *(in)visible* impacts of the climate of the organization and expressed them as dis-enabling success from a personal perspective. They described the environment as rigid and not progressive and had the following to say:

*P 6: F\_Middle: “Yes the culture is very rigid and I feel like after a while of being rigid led, I will probably look for something else.”*

*P10: J\_Senior: “It is very old school and on paper we've got this shiny finish, I don't know, if you walked in the building we've got these pull up banners that are an irritation. It is all a show, once you take that away and you see the real everyday interactions of executives.”*

To further understand the company culture and climate, the next interview question was asked:

- *“How are teams formed? What are the criteria used?”*

It was observed that all respondents were familiar with the visible processes in place in which the head of the unit would select candidates on projects. It was apparent that candidates were selected based on the level of skill, the experience on similar projects and the capacity to deliver results.

*P7: G\_Senior: “Depending on the nature of the project I will try to find somebody who’s got the relevant skill, experience, knowledge to lead that project.”*

*P6: F\_Middle: “He will look at the strengths and weaknesses of individuals according to what kind of project is being undertaken, so predominately it will be experience of individuals.”*

However, in responding to the abovementioned question and through the unstructured interview, a few participants were able to present unspoken aspects that dictate team formation.

*P4: D\_Middle: “I think the executive committee is very conscience of females so we don’t let teams be all male. Put it this way; we try to put at least one woman in but when it is all female no one notices.”*

*P8: H\_Middle: “On paper you will find that the processes are followed, but in reality it is not like that. Do I like it, yes, because it works for me! If I was the next person that was more shy to go up and say, hey I need a deal, I would probably hate it.”*

#### **5.4.2 (In)visibility vortex**

With the objective of gaining a better understanding of the unspoken moments that preoccupies women’s thoughts and influences their actions, the respondents were asked:

- *“What are some of the major turning points in your life that resulted in you getting to this point in your career?”*

The most visible and significant contributor to the moulding of career choice was associated moments or contributions made by their parents. This was followed by contributions made by the teachers and career councillors. The women had the following to say:

*P 7: G\_Senior: "It was just a love of accounts from high school and also motivated by my parents and teachers."*

*P 1: A\_Senior: "Dad made sure that all his girls were well educated, and he encouraged us."*

When describing her personal turning points, the unstructured interviews lead one respondent to ponder and question the lack of women in strategic roles within the organisation, and this respondent felt it was discouraging.

*P 8: H\_Middle: "...also there is no women in hard positions, the women are in the soft positions, marketing was a lady and then another lady is HR. I think we probably need more ladies, and not to say that HR or marketing are lesser but we need women in far higher decision making."*

To further understand the unspoken moment that preoccupies women's thoughts and influences their actions, the women were asked:

- *"What keeps you up at night or preoccupies your mind when you are driving alone?"*

Almost all the women with children as part of their response brought up memorable child rearing moments as important drivers that influence their working or home actions.

*P1: A\_Senior: "I do kids' homework, because I feel really bad about my kids, working mom, it's like you have to, personally I feel I have to take personal responsibility for my kids so I do the homework with them myself. This is also because I like it, I can catch up and I know what's going on in their lives and I get to see whether they understand things or not."*

*P2: B\_Middle: "Sometimes I am lucky to bath them, it doesn't happen often, sometimes I will find them bathed and I will just dress them in their pajamas and thereafter we eat."*

*P5: E\_Senior: Bathing my baby is my time to connect, so daddy and I will do it together so it is just time to catch up on the day and bond with the baby."*

*P7: G\_Senior: "You end up taking work home most of the time. Then I don't play with my sons anymore. So now and then I have to reflect and ask myself if I am still spending enough time with my sons and if I am still tucking them into bed or if I would rather go and finish up with the policy that I am busy with. Those moments have been challenging I must say."*

To the same question, women without children or who have older children were preoccupied with work orientated moments.

*P 8: H\_Middle: "I always wonder if I am doing a deal for the right reasons, especially when it comes to the end of the year, my target is 12 deals and I am sitting on 8, I always wonder how objective I am. So that worries me a lot."*

*P 3: C\_Middle: "When I need to take on a very difficult discussion with someone it keeps me up at night because I don't want to leave it. I believe in having that frank discussions and I go through what I would say in my mind. How do I bring the message across? Will the message be heard and not the emotions? How best can I be objective about what I need to tell you for you to understand that I am approaching you on what was done and not about you as a person?"*

However, it was noted by one respondent who is a working mother that her unspoken moments were work oriented. This is an indicator of the existence of various types of working mothers.

*P4: D\_Middle: "Work, the stresses of work and the client's wants money; I think that is what preoccupies me. It is mostly just work."*

To further understand the impact of the unspoken moments that preoccupies women's thoughts and influences their actions, the respondents were asked:

- *"Based on your experience, what have been the challenges in achieving the success as previously described?"*

The most prevalent challenge was the company climate that drives a combination of the importance self-promotion, life-stage based career decisions and lack of acknowledgement of success. The respondents mentioned the following:

*P 1: A\_Senior: "What I found works here at the company is that you have to volunteer yourself, people normally won't tell you do this or do that. If you tell your*

*boss, that you see that something is not working well, and you do it. You come back to them and report to them, you find that people might look to you a lot more often.”*

*P 2: B\_Middle: “At the company you will find that there are colleagues that have achieved certain positions, their children are grown up or whatever, they don’t want to aspire any further and they are content with what they are doing. Then I would find that I probably have younger colleagues who are in some sort of rat race, they want to earn more, they want to do more, and they want to be more.”*

*P 6: F\_Middle: “The culture is one of keeping matters hidden and not to make too much noise. I don’t think it is a question of people not wanting to celebrate each other’s success. I think that people just don’t acknowledge it; the culture is one of not driving success. That is average person at the company.”*

Supported by the unstructured nature of the interviews, the existence of unconscious bias was made apparent. This unconscious bias was used to rationalise challenges and defend existing norms that were retained or reproduced in the organisation. This was done through encouraging self-promotion regardless of the personal impression management strategy preference. They also were accommodating of the impact of gender stereotypes and business networks. The respondents were noted as stating the following:

*P10: J\_Senior: “Career progression plan is almost like it is dictated to you but you have to draw attention to yourself by volunteering yourself to do stuff.”*

*P 3: C\_Middle: “What will be said is that you can’t put that one in that position because she’s got too many family issues or there is a sick husband, so I find the ladies don’t just generally share. I find that women won’t tell you how hectic it is at home and how they you are, you keep your private life, very private you don’t want it to be used against you in the work.”*

*P 5: E\_Senior: “As a new mother and now that I am on the other side I see things a lot differently. I just constantly ask for forgiveness for things I said out of sheer ignorance, it is only the beginning and it is going to get more complicated.”*

*P 6: F\_Middle: “I know a lot of the gender specific things that I have heard my team or my colleagues complain about and I thought that is not a gender thing but that it is a personality thing.”*

*P 8: H\_Middle: "My boss, he prefers to have discussion with boys, I think. I don't know how else to put that. I think he makes more of a social effort with them, the boys."*

*P10: J\_Senior: "You know what, the business network system I think that is the biggest problem. So if your boss is a male you are the only woman, this might be a limitation that you have but again you don't fight that because there other battles to focus on to get what you want."*

### **5.4.3 Johari's window**

Through the nature of the unstructured interview process a few personal perspectives were noted about the participants about how they view themselves, that were not directly linked to an interview question, namely:

- Window one: These were aspects that were visible to the women and expressed as visible to their colleagues around them. The women were either very content with these aspects of themselves regardless of what others thought or they were on a visible personal growth journey around these aspects. The women had the following to say:

*P 1: A\_Senior: "What I have noticed is I happen to be, probably, more outspoken than I should be and I happen to be probably more assertive than I should be."*

*P 9: I\_Senior: "If you are part of the succession plan at the company, if something happens to boss today or if he resigns; yes, the executive role is a possibility."*

- Window two: These were the aspects that were *(in)visible* or remained *(in)visible* to the women at a particular point however they were visible to others as opportunities for development or acknowledgement. The women had the following to say:

*P7: G\_Senior: "I was not aware that I was one of the people that he would nominate for this position but I was surprised when he did."*

*P 2: B\_Middle: "At the company, there was a colleague that I used to work with; he picked up that every time I do presentations I get nervous. One day he said to me, we need to take out this nervousness in you. He encouraged me and explained that all I need to do is just understand my subject and don't think about what others are going to think while I'm presenting."*

- Window three: There were some views that were visible to the women, that they believed were *(in)visible* to their colleagues. The women had the following to say:

*P 1: A\_Senior: "I am at a point where I don't know, there are certain things that are so important to me, like spending time with my family, spending time with my children."*

*P 6: F\_Middle: "I am self-driven but I am not an entrepreneur. The environment needs to challenge me. So I make sure that I am given the kind of work that challenges me as opposed to just sort of work."*

- Window four: These matters were *(in)visible* to both the women and their colleagues. These challenges were only dealt with when they became a visible concern. The women had the following examples to support this:

*P 2: B\_Middle: "When I relapsed neither the company, nor I saw it coming. When I left work I was fine but when I got home that's when everything started, I collapsed, and it was depression as well as burn-out."*

*P 4: D\_Middle: "With regards to having to ensure that we have one woman in each team within our unit, I haven't heard any of the guys grumbling about it because there is more than enough work to go around. In any event I think in teams where there is not enough work it might be an issue but with us there is more than enough work to go around."*

The first question was concerned with visible and *(in)visible* norms that govern an organization. The interviews indicated that these visible norms existed in the company culture, company climate, team interaction as well as in personal preferences. The unstructured interviews aided in identifying the advantages and disadvantages in the more *(in)visible* aspects of the company culture, company climate, team interaction and in personal preferences.

What was also discovered was the existence of unconscious bias in the norms that were maintained and reproduced in the organization. Some women further retained and did not question these norms, regardless of their personal impression of management choices.

## 5.5 Research Question Two: Impression Management

The second research question related to impression's management and specifically *"What impressions management tactics are prevalent in the organisation?"* The interview question was:

- *"Give me an idea of the hardest career decisions you've made at different stages of your career journey and what are some of the outcomes of those decisions?"*

The responses discussed included challenges around stereotypes, the notion of the *"ideal worker"* and the *"working woman"*. It was noted that self-promotion and exemplification were the more prevalent impression management tactics being applied. Exemplification was mostly used as an assertive strategy. Some of the respondents had the following to say:

*P 5: E\_Senior: "Some people just don't greet so I have learned over time to not defer or pull the race card automatically and rather hold your assumptions and test those assumptions. I give people the opportunity to address and unpack an issue. This is in order to help me test whether their assumption is correct or not."*

*P 2: B\_Middle: "I try to maintain the notion that you are always professional at work. Therefore you must always show this lively person, you are always positive. For example, we haven't been paid bonuses now and my colleagues were so devastated so I had to speak positively and say guys let's look at this positively."*

In responding to the question above, self-promotion was associated with defensive strategies. This was noted in comments made by the respondents, as stated below:

*P 1: A\_Senior: "I mean I have some of my male counterparts, sitting at EXCO arguing to the hilt and when I argue my point to the hilt it's like I am being, I don't know, defiant or whatever but it's exactly the same behavior, put it on a woman, it's seen as negative, put it on a man it's seen as positive."*

*P 3: C\_Middle: "I think the challenge for me is that people need to recognize what you are doing. So in the roles that I have had, if somebody hasn't recognized the good work that you have put in, you will not progress."*

### 5.5.1 Stereotypes



To further understand impressions management and how it effects women's decision-making processes, a follow-up question to how teams are formed was asked:

- *In relation to your male counterparts how do you feel you are treated?*

Most of the women felt they were equals within the organisation. This was articulated by:

*P 7: G\_Senior: "I would say the company is different, I don't feel any discrimination. Where I come from, the commercial banks, it was obvious that the men had more say and the commercial banks had more faith in the men but things are different at the company."*

*P 6: F\_Middle: "I don't feel like I am prejudiced or unfairly treated. However, I must say that when I speak to other ladies in the team, they acknowledge its presence. Personally it's a little bit difficult to see it or maybe I am just oblivious to it."*

Through the unstructured nature of the interviews it was uncovered that gender stereotypes and to lesser extent societal customs still exist in the organisation and more specifically the impact of African male was still prevalent in the organisation.

*P 5: E\_Senior: "I think issues of diversity in any organization are elusive. It is a difficult challenge. People I think ordinarily refer to their comfort zones and subliminal practice or preferences without sometimes even thinking."*

*P 2: B\_Middle: "I have to behave in a respectful way and what I mean by that is that, I am an African woman so I know how the African culture works. When a man talks you need to wait for them to finish whatever they are saying. I have also seen this dynamic play out in my team. I guess because of employment equity, advancement, the qualities that women are bringing into the world of work, men are also starting to realize that these people, women, are also capable, as much as we are. It's just a matter of giving them a chance, however the domineering aspect of African men, I don't think that will go away."*

In responding to "how are you treated in comparison to men?" some married women introduced the partner support in a home environment that creates an enabling environment for the women to be equals at work. Some of the comments made were:

*P 3: C\_Middle: "I am a bit spoilt I think, or fortunate in that I don't have to cook every day because my husband work shifts he generally takes care of the cooking."*

*P 9: I\_Senior: "My partner takes my son to school at half past seven and works from home. So I do rush home to ensure that I am home to relieve him and the helper."*

It was also evident that a few married women attempt to have the balance of both partners having equal careers; however this presented a possibility to creating discourse in the home environment.

*P 1: A\_Senior: I have been very clear to my husband that my career is very much up there in terms of my priority. I am not about to give it up just to keep my marriage happy. He has always complained about it when I used to travel and stuff but I told him that I didn't go to university for nothing or for him to make decisions for me. I went to university so that I would have a career for myself. I explained to him that I am first and foremost a career woman, that is me, so if he can't accept that, maybe we should quit marriage sooner rather than later. I will never quit my career to make this marriage happy. I will sacrifice, I will make sacrifices here and there but I won't let him decide what I do. You have to trade off your marriage to get your career, off the ground, that is the feeling that I get, I think the older I get harder it gets if you want to make decisions for yourself as an individual".*

Only one woman was comfortable with placing a limit on her career growth due to domestic, relational agreements and noted a difference in the way men and women are treated. She had the following to say:

*P 7: G\_Senior: "I am a career woman however my family is more important than this. If I am going to go on a trip, I will check with my husband if he is going to manage on his own without me, then I will get his, not his approval in a sense... His support."*

### **5.5.2 "Ideal Worker"**

In trying to understand what the impression were that existed and the impact of that on the women's decision making process, the next question reviewed women's views on leadership. The question was structured as follows:

- "What is your biggest desire for those women who will come after you?"

There were mixed views on what leadership should look like. According to some of the women interviewed, the “*ideal worker*” should be confident, technically strong, and vocal. This view was well articulated by:

*P 3: C\_Middle: “People need to see you as being confident. You need to be technically strong so you need to know your job and then I think you need to be confident. You need to be able to speak up. You can’t be that mousy person in the corner that says nothing in a meeting.”*

It was evident that some women believed that the “*ideal workers*” should develop quiet leadership and build teams that are supportive of each other. The respondents had the following to say:

*P 7: G\_Senior: “I believe in being a servant leader or leading from behind. In my team structure, my team has more say in how they want things to be done. They must take charge because we tend to undermine our capabilities and ourselves.”*

*P 2: B\_Middle: “Being a leader doesn’t mean that you assume full responsibilities of taking care of others, it’s about awakening their leadership resourcefulness.”*

Within the population sample, there were a few respondents who believed that women should push boundaries of the current definitions of what the “*ideal worker*” is. The women had the following to say:

*P10: J\_Senior: “I want women to become business people; I want a class of women who get their hands busy in a proper business. By this I am not talking about being in some investment funding structure but rather let’s have women running businesses. Let’s get women out of the job mode of thinking and let’s create a class of black women entrepreneurs.”*

*P 4: D\_Middle: “You must just push all the time, just push the boundaries every time. Especially South African Women, don’t take things for granted, things are not so rosy in the rest of the world.”*

However, there were other respondents who desired leaders that would be more conscientious to women’s specific matters. These women had this to say:

*P 5: E\_Senior: “I am just finding that I am recalibrating quite hectically with regards to leadership. Being in this situation now—a new mother--I am a lot more empathetic*

*and understanding of others. I used to would work here till nine o clock and I would take offence if someone needs to leave at four because they need to fetch someone. What has become apparent to me is that very few women go out of their way to use the opportunities and privileges they have developed or given to them to help others move up.”*

*P 6: F\_Middle: “I am not a mother and I am not married, but I imagine if I was a mother or I was living a married life, things would be very different. In terms of how I would experience the work place because I find that generally the work place isn’t very tolerant towards mothers. So while it is not my experience right now, what I would wish for is an environment that allows people to choose to be mothers freely without the thought of the burden. Without it being a bad thing.”*

Most of the respondents made mention of merit in the organization, most women were guided by the un-interrogated idea of merit based structures as being positive. The women had this to say:

*P 1: A\_Senior: I think the exposure is very fair, if you show willingness and you put in the time and the effort, things will come your way and if you also show delivery, more will come your way and you don’t have to sacrifice your family time. Go the extra mile is, to get ahead in life you have actually got to put in the hours so even though you leave the company, I mean the company you can leave at 5pm and actually literally not do anymore work. However I think, well personally whenever I have wanted to get ahead, I will work extra, I will put in time and I will give up my weekends.*

*P 8: H\_Middle: “My view is this, if you have written 20 deals and I have written 10, I will explore the percentage difference in performance between you and me. But if you have written 4 and I have written 15, can you really turn around and tell me that you are better than me?”*

### **5.5.3 The Working Woman**

No specific interview question was asked; however through the unstructured interview process, the majority of the respondents were identified with the adaptive women ideology.

*P 3: C\_Middle: “I think we just personally manage our own personal life balance right now, you have to have your own mechanism at home. I experience this from this*

*point of view; everybody just has to do what they need to do at home to make sure that they can comfortably carry out their jobs at work. You have to manage your private life, your work life, your children's schooling and your social life. You have to manage everything. You have to be in control of it all."*

*P 4: D\_Middle: "I get home and I will pick my baby up I will play with her for a while. I will cook, dish up, watch some TV. She sleeps with a nanny so I don't do any of that; otherwise I won't be able to function."*

There were, however, a few respondents who showed identification with the work centred woman.

*P 8: H\_Middle: "Every Monday, as I explained to you, I do my admin. Part of my admin is going to speak to the peers and find out what deals have come in and which have not been allocated. Do I pick my deals? Yes. I'll speak to my boss and I will speak to the senior account managers, and I'll speak to the PM and I will say to her what deals have come in, sort of get an idea of them and see what deals are doable. I mean I am at the office at 6 o'clock when the boss is walking in. He will then drop me an email to ask my availability of a selection of new projects, I will make my personal preference selection and it's a done deal. So yes, the official structural process is their process. But by the time there is an open discussion about it, it is pretty much in the bag, and we continue on the deal. And that is how I get it done. There has been a bit of resentment from some of my colleagues; are not happy that I get given all the deals. But the issue is, if you are not going to go up and ask for them, I think people are more inclined to give someone who shows initiative and hunger than one person that doesn't. "*

*P 6: F\_Middle: "You work like crazy for a week or two and then it is quiet, I mean it is very quiet. I suppose coming from a consulting background where it was like that all the time. All the time you being pushed for something, there was always deadline that needed to be met. So I suppose coming from that kind of environment, I got used to putting in the hours."*

The minority of the women interviewed displayed an affinity for home centred woman's ideology.

*P 7: G\_Senior: "Now and then I will think of my twins and I will smile but I guess I am doing this for them, they are the reason why I am pushing myself hard because I*

*want the best for them. For me it starts with the family and it follows with the community and then my work here at the company. I constantly question if I am adding something to the people of SA. Am I doing something differently, am I contributing to the job creation, is my helper happy?"*

*P10: J\_Senior: "I believe I have served the company well you know. Unless the request is really urgent because sometimes we are hard-pressed by our main shareholder, so those are the only types of requests that I entertain. Even with those requests I have decided to draw the line somewhere because if you don't, they will want something once every month, then it becomes once every week and I know if you allow it, it will become once every day. This philosophy of life is about understanding yourself and what you want out of your life. I suppose I was fortunate I had my children when I was older, which has allowed me to learn to set my boundaries."*

It is imperative to mention that all the women that mentioned the notion of choice, used the expression inter-changeably with sacrifice.

*P 5: E\_Senior: I wasn't at the office yesterday because my baby was ill and has been ill for the last week. You know it was hard, it was a hard call to make but I decided my baby needs me. It is just negotiating that for me it is still early it has been a single fundamental shift."*

*P 3: C\_Middle: "I think depending on their family life cycle, colleagues might opt for bigger positions where there are more staff involved or more complex structure. Sometimes when you have younger children it is not easy to just travel and pack your bags and be on the road and live out of a suitcase all of the time. If you have older children, they manage that, it is more flexible."*

The second question sought to understand what impression tactics were prevalent in an organization. What was noted is that the women agreed that the company encourages equality of men and women and that discrimination is not openly encouraged. However, through the unstructured interview process, the existence of stereotypes existed and impacted how women behaved. It was also noted that the impression of how the "ideal worker" should behave strongly governs how women behave in the work place. These behaviours are not questioned and are understood as the playing field requirements. However through the unstructured nature of the interviews, the women's desires presented impressions that would allow the "working

women” to function in a more accommodating environment, which caters to different types of working women.

## 5.6 Research Question Three: Career Progression

The third research question related to how women perceive their career progression? The definition of success was explored; factors that keep women building on their careers or factors that derail women’s career progression, as well as whether opinions differ at different career stages were captured through the interview process. In the interview the women were asked the following question:

- *Based on your experience, how would you define success?*

Half of the women were objective in their view of success. The women had the following to say:

*P10: J\_Senior: “I see my life differently. It is about achieving certain things that I set out when I was nineteen years old as a student. I had a twenty year plan for my life so that is how I define my success. It’s about ticking off the things that I wanted to do.”*

*P 4: D\_Middle: “I think success for me would be about setting goals for oneself and achieving goals or even better, surpassing them.”*

The remainder of the respondents had a more subjective view regarding success. The women had this to say:

*P 1: A\_Senior: “I think at the end of the day success is about achieving what you want to achieve. Personally for me I think it was about feeling fulfilled, for me I really think my definition of success is being fulfilled, happy, with what you have achieved and everything you have done.”*

*P 3: C\_Middle: “For me success is being able to provide a service to my organization but also to have some challenge in that role that I am fulfilling so at the end of the day if the company is achieving objectives that they set out and I am able to fulfill those objectives for and on behalf of the company, I feel that, that’s success. So you will find that there are colleagues that have got to a certain position, their children are*

*grown up or whatever, they don't want to aspire any further and they are content with what they are doing."*

*P 5: E\_Senior: "Your ability for me to increase your sphere of influence and use the platform for the good not only for self but to help other along."*

On closer observation, the women who had subjective views to success were able to acknowledge the existence of the objective view taken by their colleagues.

*P 2: B\_Middle: "I think majority of my colleagues, they view success as being able to mobilize, advance, it has to be monetary. For me it's more than that, it's about living your purpose, about being content, going beyond the call of duty, giving your best to an organization, giving it your best."*

*P 9: I\_Senior: "I find that my colleagues are very much about, and rightly so I guess; they are very much just about fulfilling their mandate roles."*

Through the unstructured interview process and reviewing the circumstances that allowed women to either advance or retract from their career journeys, the following question was further interrogated:

- *What are some of the major turning points in your life that resulted in you getting to this point in your career?*

The responses provided were categorised as follows:

- Integrating Agency Actions

The most integrating agency action noted when women were specifically provided support by the organisation.

*P 1: A\_Senior: "I am giving too much kudos to the company, however this is a fabulous institution, I think there has been a lot of assistance, I mean I have been sent for coaching and I have had all sorts of assistance that other institutions would not allow."*

*P 4: D\_Middle: "Every time I think of going out there, then I remember this it is the private sector, the white same story. I think that is why and I've been here for five years now. That is one of the reasons why I have stayed here this long."*



Only one woman was noted as having the desire to work towards executive level within the organisation.

*Researcher: "And are you gunning for Executive role within the organization?"*

*P 9: I\_Senior: "I was working so hard to get to this point, if the opportunity presents itself I will, but yes."*

- Differentiating Agency Actions

The most differentiating agency action noted by women specifically about the organisation was its flat structure, which was a limitation to growth. The respondents had this to say:

*P 5: E\_Senior: "Because the company is flat the scope for rapid upward mobility is limited. So that in itself presents a challenge because there are only so many head roles one can occupy."*

*P 4: D\_Middle: "The reason I would leave the company is that it has a very flat structure, it is very flat for example in my unit there is middle management level, there is senior management level. You all report to the same person; you all pretty much do the same work. The only difference is how long have you been here and how much experience you have."*

- Opt out

Through the unstructured nature of the interviews the women reflected about the reasons why they opted to move away from their previous employment. The responses included career development, fiduciary and limiting "old boys club networks". The women described this by saying the following:

*P 1: A\_Senior: "At Competitor A, I know there were deals that were left for some special people and I wasn't one of those special ones. You had to be at work physically, doesn't matter how well you are delivering. However at the company as long as I deliver what I need to deliver, I can do it at home, so it's about that and I do think we do get recognized for what we do."*

*P 2: B\_Middle: "I needed a change, I planned for a long time, and it was 9 years so I needed the change in environment."*

*P 9: I\_Senior: "At Competitor J, it was my salary that was the only reason I left."*

Through further inquiry it was also noted that "opt out" options existed within the organisation. The women supported this by stating the following:

*P 5: E\_Senior: "At the company what you will find is that we have something called the post investment function. This is a support function so once the deal has been approved you will find some dealmakers who don't enjoy the environment of the deal making function might move to post investment. The post investment is our monitoring and evaluation kind of unit so they would use their skills in that function as opposed to day-to-day deal making."*

*P 8: H\_Middle: "The company will have an account manager and senior account manager and the support roles all on the same level and remuneration structure as the deal making function. Whereas if you move to other banks, deal making is completely different to support, support is exactly that, its support. So when you look at the pay bands, they are very different. In the company you could for example, tomorrow decide that you don't want to travel any more, you don't want to do pre investment assessments anymore which require onsite company visits regardless of company location. You decide you don't want the stress any more, what you find is that the same salary, you will get moved to HR, marketing, posting investment or, whatever. So when people start families, after coming in young from the training programme, you start a family, you make a decision at home, to say look for the same amount of money you can do less work, a lot less work. You have the benefits of less time pressure, less work pressure, so you consider moving to another division where you don't have to travel every year, you don't have to be a deal maker and you don't have to write reports. So I think, I'm not saying that deal makers must be treated like gods, but I think there needs to be a very distinct, rule and remuneration policy with regard to the deal makers and support staff."*

While responding to the above question, the researcher observed whether the career life cycle had an impact on women's thoughts. It was evident that there were more women in the pragmatic endurance life stage than in the idealistic achievement phase. A clear differentiation between the older and younger groups of people with the organization was observed.

- Idealistic achievement views expressed were as follows:

*P 6: F\_Middle: "I find that the more senior you get in corporate you are no longer making business decisions you are making management decisions. So you end up spending your day on allocation of resources of what you are doing rather doing."*

*P 8: H\_Middle: "I think it is also a sense with older colleagues that, these younger guys, what do they know, they think they are smart, and yes, we think we are smart, young, we think we have done it, we have proven it. You can't tell me that you are better than me, by virtue of the fact that I have not been at the company 17 years."*

- Pragmatic endurance views expressed were as follows:

*P 1: A\_Senior: "I don't care what people say. Frankly, I really don't care. So they can insult me, they can say what they want, I don't care, at the end of the day I will make decisions for myself. Its' not that I won't take into account what people are saying but I will make decisions for myself. I will not necessarily try to please other people and try and necessarily become overtly friendly with them. So if you don't like the fact that I speak my mind, fine that's your choice, if you want to keep quiet and just shut up and let everyone else have their say, that's your choice and you are going to have to deal with it when you have to live with everyone else making decisions for you for the rest of your life."*

*P 2: B\_Middle: "I am also being coached and one of my coaching needs is to improve in that control aspect so the courage to say "you know what? I have got this day and I am open to anything that can happen". It's about being open, which sometimes is difficult and I mean open - even when you are engaging people, give people an ear, not force, I also like to force my point of view but I have learnt to listen to other people's perspective because you are also willing to learn, and since I have started to have that open mind I am learning a lot."*

The third question sought to understand how women perceive their career progression. It was clear that women can either be driven by subjective or objective views of success which are not age or management level specific. It was also noted that when the organization supported the women they acknowledged it and attributed this to their growth. It was also noted that "ideal" worker traits were the significant motivators of leaving competitors or maintaining the women at the company. What was noted was that women have found a way to deal with personal pressures without making it visible to the organization by choosing to move across to less

demanding roles as this choice does not impact them negatively, from a financial perspective.

## 5.7 Conclusion of Results

This chapter presented the findings that emerged from the unstructured interviews of 10 women in an organisation. These findings noted visible and *(in)visible* norms that govern company culture and the environment in which women interact. The women would consciously or unconsciously abide by the culture presented. When unpacking these norms through the assessment of the impressions management that were retained or reproduced, it was noted that the retained impression maintained the organisation's *status quo*. Further inquiry uncovered that the desired impressions that the women sought were more *(in)visible*. Along a women's career progression, it was noted that "events" that either brought women close to their description of success, while some "events" derailed this ambition. The next chapter discusses the findings in relation to previous research on *(in)visibility* and how impression's management impacts women's career progression.

## CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results from the research process, in which three research questions were posed through unstructured interviews of 10 women from an organisation. This chapter discusses the above-mentioned findings in relation to the literature review completed. This chapter infers recommendations concerning the impact of impression management on women's career progression. The objective of this study was to delve deeper into the *(in)visible* norms and values that exist and determine whether these norms can be mitigated.

The work completed by Lewis & Simpson (2012) dealt with the *(in)visibility* vortex which encourages discourse of norms through interrogation of the preservation and concealment of organisational norms and culture (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). Further interrogation of these norms makes it evident that there is a point termed "the event" by Lu and Sexton (2010) or as referred to by Goffman (1959) as "moments" in the "parts" which women play through the "front" they present during a woman's career progression (Goffman, 1959; Lewis & Simpson, 2012; Lu & Sexton, 2010). According to Lu and Sexton (2010) these "events" either form an integration or differentiation agency actions during a woman's career progression (Lu & Sexton, 2010). The findings were concurrent with the literature on many levels, while bringing a different perspective to existing findings. The research questions are discussed separately with connections to the theory presented in Chapter 7.

### 6.2 Discussion of Research Question One

The first research question relates to visible and invisible norms, specifically "*What are the visible and invisible norms that govern organisations?*"

In Chapter 5 of this research project, company and personal norms were identified from the women's perspective.

Schein's (1996) three levels of culture were visible in the findings with visible artefacts such as career path planning process, money and bonus structures that were in place and clear team formation processes to ensure fair distribution of available work (Schein, 1996). The challenge that existed, as supported by Schein

(1999), was the fact that organisational climate aspects had influenced the organisation's operation (Schein, 1999). This is described by Schein (1996) as the basic underlying assumptions or, as defined by Lewis and Simpson (2012), the preserved or concealed norms (Lewis & Simpson, 2012; Schein, 1996). Examples of some of these norms were the feelings of the participants, as stated by participant P10, J\_Senior: *"At the company, It is very old school"* or P6, F Middle: *"At the company success is not celebrated here, promotions don't get announced"*. As described by Drory and Zaidman (2007), this is also revealed in the existence of business networks that encourage self-promotion (Drory & Zaidman, 2007). This was well articulated by participant P8: H\_ Middle: *"On paper you will find that the processes are followed, but in reality it is not that. Do I like it, yes, because it works for me."* The challenge with self-promotion is that if it is not natural to the woman, it may become additional emotional work which remains *(in)visible* (Watts, 2008).

Linked to business networks and organisational climate, another aspect that was apparent was the existence of organisational sub-cultures (Schein, 1999). It was evident from the routines of the women that the artefact of working hours was maintained with only a few women working from home after hours. What was apparent was that this artefact is not maintained across the organisation. However some women felt that this was more dependent on one's personal life, as evidenced by P3:C\_Middle's comment: *"Sometimes I look at things from their age perspective and where their family is in their lifecycle."* Other women who were interviewed believed this was an important aspect to get ahead P1: A\_Senior: *"I mean at the company you can leave at 5pm and actually not do more work, but I think, well personally I have wanted to get ahead, I will work extra, I will the put in the time, I will give up my weekends"*.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the subsequent aspect that is distinct was that women have different considerations. Working mothers treasured special child-rearing moments while women without children tended to be more work orientated. This supported Lu and Sexton's belief that women have different considerations at different career life stages and cannot be treated identically (Lu & Sexton, 2010).

The final aspect that was vital was the unconscious biases that were notable. Unconscious knowledge is described as knowledge that humans are exposed to which leads to auto pilot thinking (Chesler, et al., 2010). This behaviour is displayed by both men and women (Chesler, et al., 2010). The women did not acknowledge

the unconscious traits as a personal or organisational challenge. Some of the unconscious behaviours included, but were not limited to:

- Encouragement of self-promotion, which is associated with male leadership traits where one should be high profile or flamboyant (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). This was also linked to the meritocracy culture of the organisation.
- Gender stereotypes were still prevalent but some of the women did not believe that this challenge exists; as explained by P9: I\_Senior: *“We don’t have an issue with male versus women. This organisation has enough work to ensure that this is not a key focus.”* The accuracy of the statement above could only be tested if this impression was made more visible. Unconscious bias was visible and displayed by P4: D\_Middle who noted the following when asked about how the males in her team felt about the minimum requirement of one woman per team espoused value that is being driven by the company: *“The guys in our unit, I haven’t had anyone grumbling about it because there is more than enough work to go around in any event. I think if there was not enough work it might be an issue but with us there is enough work to go around.”* This challenge supports the interactional feminists who believe that for more sustainable change, discourse of current structures needs to be completely reviewed (Bristor & Fischer, 1993; Broadbridge & Simpson, 2011).
- Another crucial aspect that was noted was Womanism that draws on inner structures that ignore externally based identities and embrace internally based individuality (Moradi, 2005). This was made visible by P10: J\_Senior who said the following, *“You are going to come across bankers who don’t believe in you, people that tell you can’t do it. I’ve got an idea of what I want and I will make it happen with or without you”*. This unconscious bias that reinforces stereotypes is understood from the “accepting” and “excusing” of existing norms, which was displayed by P2:B\_Middle when she stated that, *“I have to behave in a respectful way and what I mean by that is that, I am an African woman so I know how the African culture works. When a man talks you need to wait for them to finish whatever they are saying.”*

### **Johari window (personal norms)**

When reviewing the existing personal norms that women experience, Johari’s window was used to determine the women’s awareness of self (Luft & Ingham, 1982).

- The first quadrant that is described in Johari's window is the area of free activity (Luft & Ingham, 1982). One could note assertive strategies, which are described by designing a desirable identity (Drory & Zaidman, 2007). These were driven by a strong emphasis on self-promotion and exemplification (Drory & Zaidman, 2007). P2: B\_Middle supported this by saying when responding to how she dealt with challenges; *"I try to maintain the notion that you are always professional at work. Therefore you must always show this lively person, you are always positive. For example, we haven't been paid bonuses now and my colleagues were so devastated so I had to speak positively and say guys let's look at this positively."*
- In the second quadrant which is described in Johari's window as the blind area (Luft & Ingham, 1982), women were personally unaware of how they are viewed by their peers. P5: E\_Senior responded to the question about *"how do colleagues view your success?"* by saying *"I don't know, do they even perceive my progress as success?"* Alimo-Metcalfe (2010) emphasised that when reviewing female leadership traits it is noted that being sensitive and empathetic while understanding different needs is an important strategic aspect for women (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). This is supported by the comment by P1: A\_Senior who noted a junior colleague with a blind spot, *"...I was giving her real advise which maybe she might not have gotten from anybody else and I was trying to help her, if we can do that for each other we can help each other go the extra mile."*
- The third quadrant is described in Johari's window as the avoided or hidden area (Luft & Ingham, 1982). When questioned about their next career move, most women mentioned the idea of opting out of the company for various reasons. The most discernible mention was the flat structure of the organisation from P5: E\_Senior: *"Because the organisation is flat the scope for rapid upward mobility is limited so that in itself presents a challenge because you can only have so many heads"*. This is further supported by Zanoni *et al* (2010) who noted that further studies are required to understand the aspects that are not resolved by policy (Zanoni *et al.*, 2010).
- Window Four exhibits no clear pattern of aspects that were invisible to the women, however the above-mentioned unconscious biases and historic company artefacts and assumptions from women would constitute the unawareness that they maintain and recreate (Chesler, *et al.*, 2010).



When reviewing the company and personal norms, it became apparent that all the existing norms can be categorised into one of the above quadrants. The ability to understand what norms and challenges exist provides greater awareness to create opportunities (Stead, 2013). Through an intersectional frame and observation of how women operate in an organisation, certain visible and invisible norms were identified that could be classified in one of four quadrants (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011; Luft & Ingham, 1982).

### 6.3 Discussion of Research Question Two

The second research question related to impressions' management and specifically *"What impressions management tactics are prevalent in the organisation?"*

As mentioned in Chapter 5, this research project explored different women's views using three predetermined 'parts'. It was noted that self-promotion and exemplification were the more prevalent impression management tactics being applied (Drory & Zaidman, 2007). Exemplification was mostly used as assertive strategies, while self-promotion was associated interchangeably with defensive and assertive strategies.

According to Drory and Zaidman (2007) self-promotion should be used to build one's desirable identity. However what was noted was that the women predominately used self-promotion to repair damaged identities (Drory & Zaidman, 2007). According to Kanter (1977) this is the impact of majority/ minority dynamics (Kanter, 1977). When reviewing the commentary made by the women across the different parts in Chapter 5; the comments could be placed in one of the four quadrants described in the Johari's window. When reviewing the "parts" explored, the following was noted:

- Stereotypes: These are built into the organisation artefacts and espoused values of diversity management with the notion of fairness and equality through policy creation and executive support. This is supported by P9: I\_Senior, *"We don't have an issue with males versus females"* and P4: D\_Middle, *"I think the executive committee is very conscience of females so when it is all male we don't let teams be all male."* The challenge to the structures created by the organization is the climate as described by Schein (1999), "how people feel about the organisation, the authority system, and the degree of employee involvement and commitment, the "soft stuff" (Schein,

1999). This was supported by P 5: E\_Senior; *“I think an issue of diversity in any organization is an elusive one. It is a difficult challenge people I think ordinarily refer to their comfort zones and subliminal practice or preferences without sometimes even thinking.”* Therefore what has been noted is that the impact of stereotypes is noted by women and not visible to others while other stereotypical behaviour remains *(in)visible* to both women and men through unconscious biases and characterised in window four (Chesler, et al., 2010; Lu & Sexton, 2010).

- The *“ideal worker”* aspects that were visible and noted were that to some women; leadership traits were associated with male characteristics. According to Alimo-Metcalfe (2010) the male view was that vision and ability to package ideas for funding were job priorities; they believe that the working style should be political, forceful, high profile and flamboyant (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). This confirmed the unconscious bias literature that stated that this behaviour is driven predominately by male behaviours as strategic drivers of leadership traits (Chesler, et al., 2010). However, for some their desires for leadership traits were noted as *(in)visible* to others and were characterised by strategic female leadership characteristics. P2: B\_Middle described it in the following manner: *“Being a leader doesn’t mean that you assume full responsibilities of taking care of others, it’s about awakening their leadership resourcefulness.”* Alimo-Metcalfe (2010) attributed the *“ideal worker”* from a female’s perspective as providing effective service delivery as the job priority; a working style should be people orientated and participative while working through people. The women in Alimo-Metcalfe’s study believed that decision-making should not be rushed and that it is important to familiarise oneself with key aspects. Lastly, the interpersonal relationship with the team should be one of understanding people, being sensitive and empathetic while understanding different needs (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010). These findings are supported by Lewis and Simpson (2010) who stated that while aspects such as merit emphasise similarities in men and women’s leadership traits, it also equally emphasises the differences in men and women (Lewis & Simpson, 2010).

**Table 4 The “working woman”**

<b>Work Centered women</b>	“I mean I am at the office at 6 o'clock ... by the time there is an open discussion about it, it is pretty much in the bag”
	“You work like crazy for a week or two and then it is quiet, I mean it is very quiet.
<b>Adaptive women</b>	“She sleeps with a nanny so I don't do any of that... otherwise I won't be able to function.”
	“I think we just personally manage your own personal life balance right now, you have to have your own mechanism at home.”
<b>Home- Centered women</b>	“...then I will think of my twins and I will smile but I guess I am doing this for them”
	“...I have decided to draw the line”

- The “working woman”: According to Hakim (2002); the “working woman” fall into one of three categories, namely home centred, adaptive, or work centred (Hakim, 2002). Table 4 indicates some significant quotes that categorised the respondents. Through the unstructured interview process it was noted that from the 10 women interviewed, two were affiliated with home centred, six were identified as adaptive and two were considered as “working women”. This confirms Hakim’s perspective that the percentage criteria exists (Hakim, 2002). Furthermore, Hakim noted that women have a choice to be one of the three types of working women. However, what was noted in Appendix 10 was that women spoke of choice and sacrifice interchangeably. In most comments, P 1: A\_Senior asks herself the question “*Am I prepared or am I not prepared to pay this price, but once I have made up my mind that okay I am now doing this.*” While P 7: G\_Senior questions, “*Am I still tucking them into bed or if I would rather go and finish up with the policy that I am busy with, that has been challenging but I must say.*” These comments support Kurma(2010) who argued that Hakim’s preference theory is a sweeping statement which does not take into consideration structural and social constraints and the claim of “choice” in women’s career progression is not fully considered (Kumra, 2010).This is explained by Moradi (2005) as the womanist identity’s inner structure that ignores externally based identity and embraces internally based individuality (Moradi, 2005). Lewis and Simpson (2010) emphasised how this curtails women’s ambitions and absolves organisations and corporations from being involved in the conversation (Lewis & Simpson, 2010). As stated by P 3: C\_Middle, “*I think we just personally manage your own personal life balance right now ... I don't see personally that the organization goes out of their way.*” to provide any kind of support other than the crèche”. This indicated that the current types of

women are unknown to all, and through exploration of the definition of “choice” additional types should be categorised.

When reviewing the (In)visibility of impressions management the following questions should be asked when engaging with women: *“What are the impressions management or ‘parts’ that are guiding her current career progression?”* With an understanding of which aspects are visible or *(in)visible* to women it will be easier to ascertain the impact of impression management on her current career progression.

#### **6.4 Discussion of Research Question Three**

The third research question related to how women perceive their career progression. It was pertinent to understand how women determine success. This question also gained insight into what were some of the organisation’s cultural norms and personal norms that move people further (differentiating agency actions) or closer (integration agency actions) to their ideal career success goals.

Through the unstructured interview process and through the review process the following was illustrated: Whether there was a difference in thoughts from a career life cycle perspective it was indicative of a more pragmatic endurance in the life stage than idealistic achievement. It was noted that it was not specific to child rearing or feminist beliefs or management levels but had a bearing on the age spectrum of the women interviewed (Lu & Sexton, 2010). In support of the redefinition the working women discussed above, it would be important to assess how these elements engage the women within their career planning (Kumra, 2010; Lewis & Simpson, 2010). What was apparent is that there was a clear appreciation for different approaches in the organisation, which would suggest different approaches to women in different career life cycles.

It was apparent that the idealistic achievement was characterised, as discussed above, by unconscious bias towards male leadership characteristics (Alimo-Metcalfe, 2010; Chesler, et al., 2010). Described by the liberal theorists, these idealistic achievements purported that women and men are not different; stating that any changes noted are differences in socialisation (Bristor & Fischer, 1993). P 8: H\_Middle describes it when she stated that *“I think it is also a sense of, all the guys, there is a sense of he is the younger guy, what they know, they think they are smart. We think we are smart, young, we think we have done it, we have proven it. You*

*can't tell me you are better than me, by virtue of the fact that you have not been at the company 17 years".*

Conversely, the pragmatic endurance woman encouraged the male leadership traits that were described. However, they also had a stronger desire for female leadership traits that were previously discussed. These women experienced the "choice" dilemma discussed above and within this organisation there was a strong affiliation with womanist theorists (Moradi, 2005). P 3: C\_Middle explains it as *"...my older colleagues, they are content they are happy with the organization, they like what the organization stands for and they stay. The older ones are more aware of having to put the effort."*

As discussed in Chapter 5, there was equal weighting of objective and subjective interpretations of success. What was noted is that subjective views were associated strongly with the idealistic achiever and not necessarily specifically middle management women. As noted by an older middle manager, P 3: C\_Middle *"...but my younger colleagues are continually wanting to advance themselves and progress themselves and looking for the next."* As the spectrum of success ranges from contentment (subjective success) to high job status (objective success), it becomes essential to understand the impact of the integration and differentiation agency actions (Laud & Johnson, 2012).

It was observed that the agency actions related to Schein's three levels of culture (Schein, 1999). The integrating agency actions were related to support provided by the organisations which were visible to all, while the differentiating agency actions noted were unspoken moments that were visible to some women but not to all.

According to Gist and Mitchell (1992) self-efficacy can be described as the extent to which a person has confidence in their ability to achieve a goal or target (Gist & Mitchell, 1992). When the company is able to achieve subjective and objective success, career progression was noted (Laud & Johnson, 2012). As described above the company's policies and structures are set with the intent of improving diversity management and women's career progression. Where these efforts are visible, women acknowledge career progress. P 1: A\_Senior remarked that *"I am giving too much kudos to The Company this is a fabulous institution, I think there has been a lot of assistance, and I mean I have been for coaching and had all sorts of assistance that other institutions would not allow."* P 9: I\_Senior's response to executive

aspiration was; *“There is if you are part of the succession plan there is, if something happens to Peter today if he resign yes that is a possibility”*.

The differentiating agency actions noted were not significantly gender specific. However three key actions contributed to the *(in)visibility*.

Regarding the differentiating agency actions, as previously discussed, the main contributor was the flat structure of the organisation. This cannot be contributed to women’s challenges. However, because the women in management are a minority (Kanter, 1977) it becomes an important aspect to note as P 4: D\_Middle stated *“...we don’t let teams be all male, put it that way we try to put at least one woman in but when it is all female you can’t tell”*.

Another differentiating agency is in the internal structure, the organisation has created an environment that allows employees to move horizontally without financial impediment. P 5: E\_Senior explained that *“Some is just really fatigue and maybe it is just that wanting to be the different side of the business some just don’t enjoy the pressure associated with the deal making and would rather be in a pre or post investments function it is different reasons for different people those are the two main ones.”* This supports the intersectional innate culture of situational analysis which encourages re-evaluation of policies. This ensures that existing policies are the most operationally efficient and aligned to the espoused values of the organisation (Schein, 2003).

This requirement is noted again in the last differentiating agency action of business networks. Under the auspices of equal treatment for all, self-promotion was a crucial driver for career progression. The concern with this aspect was that the women interviewed predominately used exemplification as assertive strategies with self-promotion as defensive strategy. This would then indicate that self-promotion as a prerequisite for business networks is emotional work for women and therefore a differentiating agency.

In order to understand women’s perspectives regarding career progression, it is important to ascertain the following about each woman:

- Is she governed by objective or subjective success criteria?
- What career life stage is she in (exploration, idealistic achievement, pragmatic endurance or reinvent contribution)?

- What are her thoughts on the existing integrating and differentiating agency actions of the organisation?

## 6.5 Summary of Discussion of Results

For most of the women interviewed, at an “event” each woman could be assigned to one of the four quadrants when trying to understand what is *(in)visible* in their space. This impacted which impression management tools they opted to use and the norms of the “parts” that were associated with maintaining the preferred “part”. The reality of these impression management tools is that depending on how they were used, they achieved results such as succession planning or opting-out in some cases. There was a display of the emotions driven that were compelled by the impressions that are required by the organisational structure rather than intuitively felt responses to “events” which could either bring participants closer to their career goals or move them further away (Watts, 2008).

## **CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Introduction**

Chapter 1 of this research report reviewed a business problem referred to as the challenges characterised by both a war on talent and the underutilisation of female potential. On the base of this challenge, the problem was formulated as the impact of impression management on women's career progression. Specifically the goal, was to ascertain the visible and *(in)visible* norms that exist in impression management and how this impacts women's career progression.

In chapter 6 the research report discussed the research findings in the context of existing literature on the visible and *(in)visible* norms in impressions management and how this impacts women's career progression. In particular the research findings identified the visible and *(in)visible* norms that govern an organisation. The research findings also identified which impression management tactics were prevalent in an organisation. Lastly, the research findings provided some insights into how women perceive their career progression.

This chapter briefly reviews the background to this particular research problem and the objectives that were set at the beginning of this research project. The first sub-section serves as a preamble to summarising the main findings, detailing some recommendations to business, considering the limitations of the research and the implications for future research and finally providing a conclusion to the research report.

### **7.2 Research Background and Objectives**

Organisations are being tasked with resolving sustainable career progression approaches to retain women within organisations. In order to achieve this Carter and Silva (2010) proposed that organisations need to review their systems and processes in order to assess where and why women settle in their organisations (Carter & Silva, 2010).

This approach is supported by the interactional feminists who are more concerned about how men and women engage in their everyday interaction to reinforce gender stereotypes (Beddoes & Borrego, 2011). In order to assess these everyday



interactions it becomes important to review, through an interactional feminist thinking, how current norms are reproduced and retained (Lewis & Simpson, 2012). According to Goffman (1959) these norms exist in the impressions that occur in individual identity or group dynamics and are converted into generally everyday socially accepted interactions or “parts” (Goffman, 1959).

When reviewing career development literature it became evident that organisational and individual career management processes have been modelled around patriarchal foundations resulting in male based “parts” (O’Neil & Hopkins, 2008). As women play these “parts”, Lu and Sexton (2010) introduced notion of “the event” as a catalyst to either bring women closer or further away from their intended work-life balance (Lu & Sexton, 2010).

Through understanding women’s definitions of success, the objective of this research report was to explore the visible and *(in)visible* norms that exist in organisational and personal standards that impact impression management along a women’s career progression. Broadly speaking, all the norms or impression management tools could be classified as visible to the person and others; *(in)visible* to the person but visible to others; visible to the person but *(in)visible* to others and *(in)visible* to the person and others (Luft & Ingham, 1982). Depending on the “event”, these impression management tools would bring one closer to career progression on the end of the spectrum or result in them opting out of an organisation at the other end.

### 7.3 Findings

Research Question One: “What are the visible and invisible norms that govern organisations?”

When reviewing the organisation and personal norms, it is apparent that all the existing norms can be categorised as follows

- The “*ideal*” company worker as characterised by the respondents was required for career progression. It was apparent that the more visible a norm is, the more career progression is evident. The concerning factor however was that the “*ideal*” worker presented more male characteristics than female characteristics.
- The women were unaware of what others thought about them and the potential room for improvement that was distinguished by others that could

assist in developing women along their career journey. What was concerning was that peer recognition was noted as important to some women, while other women had no real sense of visible peer recognition. This indicated an opportunity for the organisation to make this more aware to the women so that it can help them to move them along their career journey.

- There were aspects that were visible to the women but not visible to the organisation. These were categorised as unspoken or defining moments and revealed that in this “moment” the female leadership traits were more visible. It was evident that women had the desire for these norms to be more visible and in their ability to be more visible women would be able to progress with less emotional work.

Research Question Two: “What impressions management tactics are prevalent in the organisation?”

- What was noted was that exemplification was used as an assertive strategy while self-promotion was used in defensive strategies when the women were abiding to the “ideal” worker mould.
- There was a prevalence of adaptive women although work centred and home centred occurred with a few women.
- The married women opted for strategy two (where couples takes turns in putting their career on hold) and three (where one partner has job and the other has a career) while one of the home centred women was described as utilising strategy one (where the couple jointly place a limit to their career growth).
- The women used the womanist identity theory to deal with stereotypes and emotional work experience.

Research Question Three: How do women perceive their career progression?

The review of the integration agency actions and differentiation agency actions revealed that the aspects were visible to all or visible to others but not visible to the woman; career development and career progression were noted in the women’s experiences. When aspects were invisible to the others or only visible to the woman, it typically resulted in either stagnation in career progress or the loss of women physically or mentally in the work environment.

### **7.3.1 Conclusion of findings**

Based on the results in Chapter 5 and the discussion of the results in Chapter 6, this research concluded that at the point where an “event” is visible to both women and other people, career progression is generated for women. It was further revealed that there were aspects that were *(in)visible* to women but visible to others who had the opportunity to develop the woman’s career. Subsequently, when aspects were visible to her but not to others, the thoughts of misalignment to the woman’s career within the organisation were noted. Lastly, where aspects were *(in)visible* to the organisation and the woman, her career and challenges remained stagnated or unresolved.

### **7.4 Recommendations to Stakeholders**

The objective of this research was to review the impact of impression management on women’s career progression by reviewing the visible and *(in)visible* norms that exist in an organisation.

Through the practice of self-efficacy this research paper proposes that organisations review the “moment” or “event” that takes place throughout a women’s career progression through this following process:

- Firstly, the following questions should be answered:
  - What are the current impressions’ management strategies that guide her current career progression?
  - What career life stage is she in (exploration, idealistic achievement, pragmatic endurance or reinvent contribution)?
  - What are her thoughts on the existing integrating and differentiating agency actions of the organisation?
- Secondly, with this information at a “moment” or “event” a manager can create an environment that:
  - Will result in career progression when they use the “event” as an integrating agency action which is visible to both a woman and to themselves.
  - Through better understanding of a woman’s responses to the above questions that might result in differentiating agency actions, a manager can convert these to career development opportunities or

“moments”. This will result in positive integrating agency action that will assist the women progressing in her career.

- The manager must understand that there are aspects that a woman knows and might not be sharing. This is an opportunity to re-engage the questions stipulated above to encourage openness. This will improve and reduce the differentiating agency actions that will result in woman opting out physically or mentality from the work environment.
- The manager may also choose not to engage the woman who is unaware of the reasons behind her challenges and the *status quo* will be maintained and career progression may not be achieved.

## **7.5 Recommendations for Future Research**

As stated by Schein (1999) the fundamental assumptions that exist in culture, specifically organisational climate, influence the impression management tools that are being used within an organisation. In order to further understand the impact of these impressions’ management and with recent work conducted in unconscious bias, there is a case to explore the topic further.

### **7.5.1 Redefining the implementation of merit in corporate culture**

There remains a number of issues that remain unknown to companies and women are protected by not only *(in)visible* norms but more concerning unconscious bias. Merit is one such aspect which is currently perceived as the “*ideal worker’s*” behaviour. The opportunity exists to redefine what merit should look like and how it should be measured.

### **7.5.2 Defining the types of women that are represented as the “*working women*”**

Hakim’s (2002) preference theory introduced the notion different types of women have the choice to select a path that best suits them. Through an interactional feminist perspective and with a closer exploration to the *(in)visible* norms that exist, a more detailed list of women could be developed that would make Hakim’s preference theory more relevant to interactional feminists.

### **7.5.3 The family unit and the caregiver**

It was noted that almost all the women interviewed had a caregiver who played a crucial role in the raising of their children. It was also noted that the women were influenced by their parents during their own child development. Therefore, a study on how having a caregiver raise one's children impacts the children's development would be useful to the modern day career-orientated family unit.

### **7.5.4 The impact of impression management of women's progression in multiple organisations**

This study was conducted in one organisation. It is recommended that the study be conducted with women from multiple organisations to assess similarities and differences in the visible and *(in)visible* norms.

## **7.6 Conclusion to Research Project**

The underutilisation of women will remain a constant challenge in organisations for the foreseeable future. This means that organisations will have to be in a better position than their competitors in understanding the impact of impression management on women's career progression. This will result in an improvement in the utilisation and retention of women.

This study provided some understanding in how women utilise impressions management to maintain and reproduce norms in the work environment. Through unstructured interview processes, the study also revealed some *(in)visible* norms that women maintained and reproduced as the women attempted to maintain the "ideal" worker impression. The study also revealed the existence of discourse between what the women desired for themselves through assertive impression management strategies and the realities of the use of defensive impressions management strategies in maintaining the *(in)visible* norms. This discourse will allow a woman to achieve career progression, career development, opting out or maintaining her current environment.

This research adds value to the body of knowledge in the field of *(in)visible* norms. Given this information, organisations are well positioned to direct their efforts to the evaluations of norms in their organisations. The analyses of these norms presented impression management tactics that are prevalent in the organisation. The study has

identified certain aspects that will assist organisations in limiting the impact of impression management on women's career progression.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview Schedule

*“Thank you for joining me today. The objective of this discussion is to get a better understanding of what women think? What I mean about that is I want to understand the conversations you have with yourself when no one is around and at times with your closest friends*

*I also want to highlight that your company has been selected but that I am more interested in your personal journey about how you got here in relation to the company that you work for and less about the operational challenges of this company*

*I would also like to highlight that these conversations will be recorded for transcribing purposes only and will be kept safely for my studies only. The name of the company will not be used in my study and all personal information shared in this room should be respected and not repeated. I will also request that you please sign the attached consent letter that states you are voluntarily participating. The raw information gathered in these interviews will not be shared with the company however the final report will be available in the public domain and provided to the executive who has provided me access to you today.*

*Thank you again for assisting me. This should be a fluid discussion and hopefully fun and to get things going, please can I ask that you fill out the consent form and demographic form.”*

# Gordon Institute of Business Science

University of Pretoria

## Consent Form

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

I am conducting research on the impact of impressions management on women's career progression in an organization. My research is interested in the view of women in middle and senior management. The interview will be in a form of one on one interviews and will last for about 1 hour – 1,5 hours to help me understand how impressions management has affected your decision making process. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at anytime without penalty. Of course, all data will be kept confidential. If you have any concerns, please contact my supervisor or me. Our details are as follows:

Researcher: Bonolo Sekhukhune

Researcher Supervisor: Mandla Adonisi

Email: [Bonolo@gmail.com](mailto:Bonolo@gmail.com)

Email: [adonisim@gibs.co.za](mailto:adonisim@gibs.co.za)

Phone: +27 72 518 6075

Phone: [+27 11 771 4155](tel:+27117714155)



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Signature of Researcher:

---

Signature of Participant

## Demographic Form

1. Name:

---

2. Job title

---

3. Married or single

---

4. No. of dependents

---

5. Current age and business level

- a. 25-35 middle management
- b. 25-35 senior management
- c. 35-45 middle management
- d. 35-45 senior management

Thank you

Bonolo Sekhukhune



## **Appendix 2: Interview Schedule**

1. Give me an idea of what your day is like?
2. What are some of the major turning points in your life that resulted in you getting to this point in your career?
3. Based on your experience, how would you define success?
4. How does this differ from the colleagues around you?
5. Based on your experiences, what have been the challenges in achieving your success as previously described?
6. How are teams formed? What are the criteria used?
7. In relation to your male counterparts how do you feel you are treated?
8. Give me an idea of the hardest career decisions you've made at different stages of your career journey and what are some of the outcomes of those decisions?
9. What keeps you up at night or preoccupies your mind when driving alone?
10. How do your colleague's perceive your successes?
11. What is your biggest desire for those women who will come after you?

## Appendix3: RQ1\_Culture

What are the visible norms and invisible norms that govern the organisation						
Culture	Company Culture	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		My colleagues at work, I think what I have found is that these people have similar values actually, I find that a lot of, and I think that's why a lot of u probably are still here	I think majority of my colleagues they view success as being able to mobilize, advance, it has to be monetary, I need to be earning this much, I have to be a senior, I have to advance further, I have to be driving this car	There is a culture in the organization we are grateful for what we receive	There is technical there is financial there's marketing so there is three, so progression is very clearly defined right so you need to so you need your core discipline, my core discipline is financial but I have cleared my technical so I can do technical as well.	Within the context of the organization I think success is being able to move from point A to point B in as far as your career path is concerned so if you came in at business analyst level and you are now a senior account manager or an executive that for me would define success within the context within the organization
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior	
	I think a lot of people define success in terms of money that is obvious, Success is not celebrated here, promotions don't get announced so how do you know that somebody has been promoted, you know because you get a telephone list and it's got a position	A lot of people their definition of success is monetary, is material things I guess	A lot of people define success in the number of deals that I do, how big is my bonus, who am I in touch with, because you must remember at the THE COMPANY, you have been in touch with the CEO of a multi listed company tomorrow	They want higher salaries, bonuses if you were caught sitting in your corner and nobody knows you are working here, nobody is going to pay attention to you so when it comes to looking at those things		
	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior	
	You don't have to sacrifice your family time, people understand that you can do the work at home, so as long as I am here at 7h30 and I leave at 6pm or whatever, it's okay because I am also delivering so it works much better for me in terms of where I was at, getting the work life balance and being able to succeed	Subject matter experts that they have sufficient experience in their jobs, they got life experience as well so I think that brings out that confidence in them and they are not wanting to aspire to much higher levels, especially if they are happy with the organization	My view is though and having discussions with other people, often they find if you do phone the helpline it is seen as a weakness, you are supposed to manage everything so I haven't used it and I don't know of anybody else that has used it, but I know that we have that as one of the facilities.	Middle management there is Senior management you all report to the same person you all pretty much do the same work the only difference is how long have you been here and how much experience you got	That said, THE COMPANY is a very complicated business I am still learning it I am still figuring my way around it, it is a complex business, multi sectoral focus and it is fascinating in that respect.	
P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior		
Yes the culture is very stiff and I feel like after a while I would be very stuff led and probably I will probably look for something else.	But THE COMPANY was a perfect mix between civil service and private.	But nobody says to me, be at work at such a time and leave at such a time, do this and don't do that, you just don't do that. And I don't feel like anyone is being heavy handed in anything that I do. The mistakes that I have made at the THE COMPANY have been appreciated as lessons		It is very old school and on paper we've got all this gloss, I don't know if you walked in the building we've got these pop up things that are an irritation in the building you know then you've got, it is all flash, once you take that away and you see the everyday interactions of executives		
P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior		
The head will make the final decision but what normally, what I was talking about the complete transparency, normally there's more deals than there are people, What I have learnt is that certain institutions promote certain groups, so when I was at Competitor A, if you weren't Jewish you didn't stand a chance, doesn't matter how hard you worked or whatever	You would need someone who is a specialist in that area, and then you also look at people who aspire to grow in that particular project	I think what I have experienced is we bring in the skill that we need in the team, if you are a manager and you have a team and you look around and based on your projects	I think the executive committee is very conscience of females so when it is all male we don't let teams be all male, put it that way we try to put at least one women in but when it is all female you can't tell.	It is different I think sometimes it is just time and availability sometimes I think people cluster themselves together and at times your SBU head will probably look at the strengths of the individuals before he allocates a team		
P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior		
He will look at the strengths and weaknesses of individuals according to what kind of project is been undertaken right, so that will be experience of individuals	Depending on the nature of the project I will try to find somebody who's got the relevant skill, experience, knowledge to lead that project	On paper you will find that the processes are followed, but in reality it is not that. Do I like it, yes, because it works for me. If I was the next person that was a bit shier to go up and say, hey I need a deal, I would probably hate it.	It is just capacity and at times expertise and it also depends on how strategically important this transaction is and who I can trust to deliver	The head would decide who would be allocated there are various ways, the one is for certain teams they allocate certain people in that unit to work with certain BUSINESS UNIT's. It is availability it is level of experience but also we tend to find that people develop interest or specialization in certain subsectors		

**Appendix4: RQ1\_(In)visibility**

What are the visible norms and invisible norms that govern the organisation						
<b>Invisibility Vortex</b>	<b>Influential people</b>	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
		Dad made sure that all his girls were well educated, and he encouraged us.	At the college they had career counsellors and she picked up that I liked working with people, I like working with people, good interpersonal skills and I can relate well, I have got this humanity principle	I set high goals for myself and I would've stayed in the teaching environment, my father was an ex school principal, he was quite devastated when I decided to leave but when I realize that even financially what I wanted to earn it was not going to give it to me in teaching	I mean I don't come from a wealthy family but my parents they were just trying very hard all the time and I think at some point I realize the whole BEE thing, so I realized that it is a wind of opportunity and let me use it.	
	<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>	
		It was just a love of accounts from high school and also motivated by my parents and teachers	Also there is no women in hard position, the women are in the soft positions, so marketing was a lady, she has since left and then another lady is HR. I think we probably need more ladies, and not to say that HR or marketing are lesser but we need women in far higher decision making.			
	<b>Unspoken moments</b>	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
		I do kids homework, because I feel really bad about my kids, working mom, it's like you have to, personally I feel I have to take personal responsibility for my kids so I do the homework with them myself, because I like it, I can catch up and I know what's going on in their lives and I get to see whether they understand things or not	sometimes I am lucky to bath them, it doesn't happen often, sometimes I will find them bathed and I will just dress them in their pyjamas and thereafter we eat,	When I need to take on a very difficult discussion with someone it keeps me up at night because I don't want to leave it I believe in having that frank discussions and I go through what I would say in my mind and how I would bring the message across where the message is going to be heard and not emotions how best can I be objective about what I need to tell you for you to understand that I am approaching you on what was done and not about you as a person.	Work, the stresses of work and the client's wants money, I think that are what preoccupies me it is mostly just work.	Bathing my baby is my time to connect, so daddy and I will do it together so it is just time to catch up on the day bond with baby. I wasn't at the office yesterday because my baby was ill and has been ill for the last week you know it was hard, it was a hard call to make but I decided my baby needs me. Why are you conflicted about this because you are not a poor performer, you are not unreliable you are committed? For me you are the problem I think it is managing what people are going to think rather than how do I put it if I am at peace with the decision I made then all is well
<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>		
I almost feel like women second guess themselves before anyone else does, so it's just a chip on the shoulder and I think that needs to go and I don't think any of us got it right I think there is very few women that I meet and I think she has got that and the more of us who get there the better,	you end up taking work most of the time, then I don't play with my son anymore so now and then I have to reflect and ask myself if I am still spending enough time with my son and if I am still tucking them into bed or if I would rather go and finish up with the policy that I am busy with, that has been challenging but I must say	I always wonder if I am doing a deal for the right reasons, especially when come the end of the year, my target is 12 deals and I am sitting on 8, I always wonder how objective I am. So that worries me a lot	Competitor J. He said that he was informed by his advisors that is was market related, but I said how is it market related that I am a manager and my team is earning much more than I am and I am doing twice the work that they are doing and you have other manager that is in the same department that are earning more than I am so how can that be market related.	That is why I say it's about it all goes back to the internal the understanding yourself and what you want out of your life		
<b>Norms</b>	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>	
	What I found works here at The Company is if you volunteer yourself, people normally won't tell you do this, do this, do that, but if you tell your boss, oh you see that's not working well, and you will do it and you will come back to them and report to them, you find that people might look to you a lot more than, that way you will draw attention to yourself,		So you will find that there is colleagues that has got to a certain position, their children are grown up or whatever, they don't want to aspire any further and they are content with what they are doing, and then I would find that I have probably younger colleagues who are in that sort of the rat race, they want to earn more they want to do more, they want to be more.	Whoever is available, but sometimes you obviously you can't always put people on because they are not available because I think our SBU head is very conscience that there is at least one women in a team		
<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>		
The culture is one of keep it hush-hush and don't make too much noise. I don't think it is a question of people don't want to celebrate each other's success I think that people just don't acknowledge it, the culture is not one of acknowledging good work as such and celebrating good work				career progression plan is almost like it is dictated to you but you are not driving it yourself that is your average THE COMPANY person		

## Appendix5: RQ1\_Johari's Window

What are the visible norms and invisible norms that govern the organisation					
Window one	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
	I am very structured, I like it, and it might not suit everyone but that's the way it is	I was very controlling, what helped me was to stop my controlling because when you want to control you want things to happen your way, I am going to present I am not going to get a lot of questions so what I have learnt to do now, when I do a presentation I do it with an open mind, whatever happens I will be able to handle it, I don't have to be correct, I am also a student,	I think for me it was sad that the other managers I had approached did not see the value that I added in that role that I was, but the CEO was able to give me the opportunity to come and then obviously be involve in this project right now		
Window two	<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>
		How do your colleagues perceive your success? I am getting support, people are happy for me but you get a lot of advice from everyone	How do your colleagues perceive your success? I'm not blind to it; there is a lot of resentment. Envy perhaps? The people that I work with, that we push one another, so typically the younger guy, the hungrier guys are, we push each other more, rag each other and we, you know, we try and enjoy it, and try and create an investing environment at the THE COMPANYY	If you are part of the succession plan there is, if something happens to Peter today if he resign yes that is a possibility.	
Johari's window	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
	How do your colleagues perceive your success? Frankly I wouldn't really say I am that successful, I think I am okay, so I am not even sure how they perceive it.	The woman from Competitor B she instilled positive values in me so I was lucky to be surrounded by very strong professionals who instilled positivity and possibility, they spoke life unto me, they encouraged me to do my best and to study	How do your colleagues perceive your success? I think there is a surprise, I think there was a surprise obviously when I came back in from a very senior position to a very subordinate position	How do your colleagues perceive your success? I don't know, I really don't know	How do your colleagues perceive your success? I don't know, do they even perceive it at success
Window three	<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>
		somewhere along the way the boss decided I could do what the senior management were doing I was the only middle management then, I was also somehow promoted. I was not aware that I was one of the people that he would nominate for this position but I was surprised when he did but he was somebody that I admired even before he was my boss		how do your colleagues perceive your success? At work, I am not sure I think there is some that I am very close to that are very supportive and who respect me as a manager	How do your colleagues perceive your success? Depends obviously the younger people coming into THE COMPANYY they admire you for where you are. Some will be begrudged
Window three	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
	"I am at a point where I don't know, there are certain things that are so important to me, that's spending time with my family, spending time with my children that if I was to take on any other major thing, or become some major executive.	You would need someone who is a specialist in that area, and then you also look at people who aspire to grow in that particular project	I think what I have experienced is we bring in the skill that we need in the team, if you are a manager and you have a team and you look around and based on your projects	I think the executive committee is very conscience of females so when it is all male we don't let teams be all male, put it that way we try to put at least one women in but when it is all female you can't tell.	It is different I think sometimes it is just time and availability sometimes I think people cluster themselves together and at times your SBU head will probably look at the strengths of the individuals before he allocates a team
Window three	<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>
	He will look at the strengths and weaknesses of individuals according to what kind of project is been undertaken right, so that will be experience of individuals	Depending on the nature of the project I will try to find somebody who's got the relevant skill, experience, knowledge to lead that project	On paper you will find that the processes are followed, but in reality it is not that. Do I like it, yes, because it works for me. If I was the next person that was a bit shier to go up and say, hey I need a deal, I would probably hate it.	It is just capacity and at times expertise and it also depends on how strategically important this transaction is and who I can trust to deliver	The head would decide who would be allocated there are various ways, the one is for certain teams they allocate certain people in that unit to work with certain BUSINESS UNIT's. It is availability it is level of experience but also we tend to find that people develop interest or specialization in certain subsectors



What are the visible norms and invisible norms that govern the organisation						
Johari's window	Window four	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
		So those people that show that they have initiative, they show that they are willing to go the extra mile and do it and deliver on time, will become conspicuous and then your boss will start looking to you and will start even maybe delegating more work to you, but if you sit around and you coast and you do nothing and you wait for them to volunteer you, first of all maybe they might not be giving you, because they don't feel like you are one of those who wants to do more or whatever	Even with the relapse they didn't see it coming, when I left work I was fine but when I got home that's when everything started, I collapsed, and it was depression as well as burn-out, when I started focusing on myself now, the self love, the healing, the forgiving	There are certain positions if you leave this role you are going to have staff now reporting into you that is your next career progression and some of them don't want that, some of them are content to be just subject matter experts the expert in what they do as appose to wanting staff	Our Senior Manager manages expectations upstairs because then the question becomes when you go to committee and you are all male the question is coming up why you are all male, so as a team as well you need to manage those expectations upstairs, for us I don't think it is neither here or there but because we need to manage expectations at executive level.	
		<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>
		Team selection is gender taken into consideration when teams are formed? I honestly wouldn't know. For example there is people that play golf with the boss so I imagine that they would have a better relationship although I been told otherwise I don't know, but I don't feel like I am prejudice I am unfairly treated,		THE COMPANY is a funny place like that. Because a lot of people that are there because if you don't want to work, you don't have to. And that is a very sad culture I think.	It is more personal ambitions and not getting there quickly enough	

## Appendix 6: RQ1\_Unconscious bias

What are the visible norms and invisible norms that govern the organisation						
Invisibility Vortex	Unconscious bias	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
		draw attention to yourself by volunteering yourself to do stuff	Sometimes as woman you tend to doubt yourself, also based on your background, your schooling, we come from the bantu schools, your assertiveness at work, your presentation skills, so I think doubting your capability is one of the challenges but I had to find ways to overcome them	Oh no you can't put that one in that position because she's got too much family issues or there is a sick husband, so I find the ladies don't just generally share. I find that women won't tell you how hectic it is at home and how they you know, you keep your private life very private you don't want it to be used against you in the work	The guys in our unit, I haven't heard anyone grumbling about it because there is more than enough work to go around in any event I think in teams where there is not enough work it might be an issue but with us there is more than enough work to go around. Like I said earlier as well everyone is equal in a way.	now that I am on the other side I see a lot differently and I just constantly ask for forgiveness for things I said out of sheer ignorance, it is only just beginning it is going to get more complicated.
		<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>
		it is my responsibility to fix it and it is not necessarily fixing it because I am fixing myself but it is my responsibility to change the situation as in to do something so I can change the situation away from what it is so I feel that you know a lot of the gender specific things that I have heard my team my colleagues complain about I thought that is not a gender thing that is a personality thing		Exactly that, he doesn't know how, because he always says women are sensitive, women are this women are that. So he prefers to have boy discussions I think. I don't know how else to put that. I think he makes more of a social effort with them, the boys. But again we have bridged that.		You know what the buddy, buddy thing I think that is the biggest one, so if your boss is a male and unfortunately the racial thing always crops up you have a white male boss and you have white male colleagues around you and either you are the only women or the only black that is the only limitation that you have, but again you don't fight that you fight other battles to get what you want.

## Appendix7: RQ2\_Impression management strategies

What impression management tactics are prevalent in the organisation						
Impression management Strategies	Assertive	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		I don't care what people say frankly, I really don't care. So they can diss me, they can say what they want, I don't care, at the end of the day I will make decisions for myself, its' not that I won't take into account what people are saying but I will make decisions for myself, I will not necessarily try to please other people and try and necessary become buddy buddy with them, so if you don't like the fact that I speak my mind, fine that's yours, if you want to keep quiet and just shut up and let everyone else have their say, that's your choice and you are going to have to deal with it when you have to live with everyone else making decisions for you for the rest of your life.	I have told myself you know what I am not going to transform myself to be a man, but what I am going to do I am going to express my point of view. empower yourself by studying, by attending seminars, women's conference, stay open, surround yourself with I don't want to say powerful women but surround yourself with grounded women, have a good support structure	For me it is finding ways to just be a better version of yourself. Be a better version of yourself personally version of yourself professionally and just do more and better that is what I think about and I am constantly wondering about platforms and opportunities to do that, it is both work and personal.		
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior	
			Something kicks in man, something kicks in. I think also you realize that the things you enjoy the things that you like, need to be supported somewhat. There comes a point where you must support them, no one else. And there also comes a point where, it is like an internal control, where you must take charge of your own destiny now. There is a point where you need to let go of all that baggage from youth, from everything and say ok Tumi, how do you see yourself in 10 years time			
Defensive	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior	
	I feel I am successful now but I think I could be more successful but I am not sure if I am prepared to pay that price to move to the next ring. I can't be gymming and studying and super Mom and everything else so I don't gym,	I was very controlling, what helped me was to stop my controlling because when you want to control you want things to happen your way, I am going to present I am not going to get a lot of questions so what I have learnt to do now, when I do a presentation I do it with an open mind, whatever happens I will be able to handle it, I don't have to be correct, I am also a student,				
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior	

What impression management tactics are prevalent in the organisation						
Impression Management Strategies	Ingratiation	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
			lately even though I have been saying that family is more important, because of this position I am really appointed in this. Yes lately it's about my work and my team, making sure they are happy, and making sure that I have got the right people on the right projects position, it's just striving for excellence			
	Self Promotion	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		I mean I have some of my male counterparts, sitting at EXCO arguing to the hilt and when I argue my point to the hilt it's like I am being, I don't know, cheeky or whatever but it's exactly the same behaviour, put it on a woman, it's seen as negative, put it on a man it's seen as positive,	For me it's not about that, as I said, maybe it's because of my spiritual, I see some earthly treasures they don't matter, what matters is to make a difference today, I assisted a lady, I am in human capital, I assisted a lady who was going through divorce, assisted someone who had some challenges, assisted a manager with a particular thing, for me that's some of the things that contributes towards successes	I think challenge for me is that people need to recognize what you are doing so in the roles that I had if somebody hasn't recognize the good work that you have put in, you are not going to progress.		
		P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
			I always finish what I start, it has to be done	So as much as I am Middle Management, I have taken on a lot responsibilities and I am happy with it.		Yes it was partly that but also I think along the way you figured I work such long hours I put in so much of myself in this but when it comes to the promotions and that it is the guys who lick ass I am sorry to say it they were moving up so what is the point?
	Exemplification	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		Even more than whether I should take this next move because for me it's very important that I do well at my job, so even though I might be thinking of moving, whilst I am doing it and until I move I must do exceptionally well at it	I try to maintain that you are always professional at work, you always show this lively feeling, you are always positive, we haven't been paid bonuses now and my colleagues were so devastated so I had to speak positive and say guys let's look at this positively	But I think those that are true leaders are mindful of how they are perceived by people. I feel the relationships that you built with people are very important in the networks that you built. You can rely on people based on the personal relationships that you built and how you maintain that personal relationship is how you treat the person professionally.	That they must work hard I suppose for me it is about hard work and its hard work and you must never sit down and be content with what you have there is always something on, even with myself right now.	some people just don't greet so I have learned over time to not defer or pull the race card automatically and rather hold your assumptions likely and in test give those assumptions give people the opportunity to address an issue in order to help you test whether your assumption is correct or not
		P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
		one of the other ladies was complaining that the boss gives the guys preferential treatment when it comes to you know the kind of jobs that they do work that they allocated and in this particular instance I felt that the actual reasons is because I felt like she should push back, she doesn't push back	I was so full of energy they didn't like me because I was all over the show full of energy, wanting to do everything, I could sense that they could not put up with that, I think I was the youngest in the team, I just didn't care and I learned from my early days at the commercial banks that also I didn't want to be taken for granted or to be victimized so whenever people wanted to take advantage of me because I was the youngest maybe by giving me an extra load of work, I would defend myself, even if my boss was going to shout at me in front of people, I will make sure that never happens, I don't want to be humiliated in front of people, I will take it up with him, so I just made sure that from the beginning I set the record straight and made sure that I was not abused		Put myself out there as a manager of the team so I can be respected as such. I realized I have a knack for managing people, I was quite young relative to my team members and also less experience, just considering their age, and also their journey their professional life I was doing with those who were quite established in their professional career and older so the fact that I brought the team together and, we became a very good team.	you are going to come across bankers who don't believe in you, people that tells you can't do it, it is the Senior manager thing I've got an idea what I want and I will make it happen with or without you.

## Appendix8: RQ2\_Stereotypes

What impression management tactics are prevalent in the organisation						
Stereotypes	Dual Career strategies	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
		Strategy two: I have been very clear to my husband that my career is very much up there in terms of my priority, and I am not about it give it up just to keep my marriage happy. He has always complained about it when I used to travel and stuff but I told him you know what I didn't go to university for nothing so that you would make up decisions for me, I went to university so that I would have a career for myself and first and foremost I am a career woman, that is me, so if you don't accept that, maybe we should quit this sooner rather than later because I will never quit my career to make this marriage happy. I will sacrifice, I will make sacrifices here and there but I won't let you decide what I do. You have to trade off your marriage to get your career, off the ground, that is a bit of the feeling that I get, I think the older you get the more, if you want to make decisions for yourself as an individual		Strategy three: I am a bit spoilt I think, or fortunate in that I don't have to cook every day because my husband work shifts he generally takes care of the cooking		Strategy two: Evening is winding down, time with baby, bath time, feeding time, settling time and then time to catch up with my family once baby is settled it is time to catch up with work again
	<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>	
		Strategy one: what we have got will also be my career, am I bringing enough home, am I happy with my daily job because if I am happy they are going to be happy so even though I am a career woman my family is more important than this. if I am going to go on a trip, I will check with my husband if he is going to manage on his own without me, then I will get his, not his approval in a sense. His support.		Strategy three: My partner takes him to school at half past seven. To get home I need to rush home, well my partner is currently working from home but it is my responsibility so I have to rush for half past six to insure that I am home to relieve her.	Strategy three: I mean sometimes you had to put in hours over the weekend but I think it was okay at the time I don't have children it was just me and my husband but even then I could've spent time on other problems and things like that.	
Gender stereotypes	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>	
	And sometimes I mean, there are things, sometimes you see, blatant like, like men making moves on you when they shouldn't do that. It's like wrong. And yet they would never treat their male counterpart like that but I mean at the end of the day you have got choices to make, I mean what are you going to do about it	In my department, I must say for me my perception is that males are very domineering, especially African males and I work with a lot of African males and you can ever hear them when they put their point across, it's very domineering, as a woman you need to be firm, you also need to be firm and respectful	I think there are there definitely is a male dominance in the organization but it is historically so because we are an organization that recruits a lot of accountants and engineers and that historical perspective they were always male, men went into engineering and accounting	We will say there is too many men and then take it out and put a women in as simple as that so there is no; it is not an issue.	I think issues of diversity in any organization is an elusive it is a difficult challenge people I think ordinarily refer to their comfort zones and subliminal practice or preferences without sometimes even thinking	
	<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>	
	I don't feel like I am prejudice I am unfairly treated, although I must there is a lot of, when I speak to other ladies in the team they do so it is a little bit difficult to see that if maybe I am just oblivious to it	I would say the COMPANY is different, I don't feel any discrimination. Where I am from, the commercial banks, it was obvious that the men had more say and they had more faith in the men but things are different here.	There is no women in hard position, the women are in the soft positions, so marketing was a lady, she has since left and then another lady is HR. I think we probably need more ladies, and not to say that HR or marketing are lesser but we need women in far higher decision making.	We don't have an issue with males versus females.	They have it easy, it is a given but if you keep that into your head you won't get anywhere. You know what the buddy, buddy thing I think that is the biggest one, so if your boss is a male and unfortunately the racial thing always crops up you have a white male boss and you have white male colleagues around you and either you are the only women or the only black that is the only limitation that you have, but again you don't fight that you fight other battles to get what you want.	



What impression management tactics are prevalent in the organisation						
Stereotypes	Societal Customs	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
		These type of things happen across the board but these are the things that women, I mean it's what society also expects of women, I mean even in African culture, when you see it, the men think that a woman is always supposed to be hit on type of thing, so they will make moves on you, you know what actually I am married and I am not interested but they just see us as, so you have to tackle a bit of that and you know roll with the punches	Respectful in terms of the way, I am an African woman so I know how the African culture works, when a man talks you need to wait for them to finish whatever they are saying. I have also seen that play in my team but I guess because of employment equity, advancement, the qualities that women are bringing into the world of work, men are also starting to realize that these people are also capable, as much as we are capable they are also capable so it's just a matter of giving them a chance, the domineering one I don't think it will go away.			
		<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>
		But it shouldn't be the first thing you can't travel let's try and find a way to achieve this without it being an issue it should never be an issue it should be only one more thing for example if I only had one leg and I was in a wheelchair we'd need to find wheelchair accessible you know it should be something against someone it should be something that should be accommodated like anything else.	It has been well managed up to this point just by communicating, if I am going to go on a trip, I will check with my husband if he is going to manage on his own without me, then I will get his, not his approval in a sense. His support			

## Appendix9: RQ2\_Ideal Worker

What impression management tactics are prevalent in the organisation						
Ideal worker	Leadership traits	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
		I think that women should be confident about themselves and I think we need to help each other	Being a leader it doesn't mean that you assume full responsibilities of taking care of others, it's about awakening their leadership resourcefulness, so I think my philosophy is that everybody is a leader in their own way, we are here to support each other, I am not going to micro manage, yes I need to give direction where it needs be but I must just find ways of unleashing my subordinates potential which is a journey	People need to see you as being confident . You need to be technically strong so you need to know your job and then I think you need to be confident. you need to be able to speak up you can't be that mousy person in the corner that says nothing in that meeting.	you must just push all the time just push the boundaries every time. especially South African Women, don't take things for granted, things are not so rosy out there.	I am just finding that I am levelling quite hetically being in this situation now, and I am a lot more empathetic and understanding of others. I would work here till nine o clock and I will take offence if someone needs to leave at four because they need to fetch someone. I find very few women who go out of their way to use the opportunities and privileges they have to help others move up.
		<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>
		I am not a mother and I am not married, but I imagine if I was a mother and I was married life would be very different in terms of my how I would experience the work place because I find that generally the work place isn't very tolerant towards mothers mostly so while it is not my experience right now what I would wish for is an environment that allow people to choose to be mothers freely without the thought of the burden of without being a bad thing.	I believe in being a servant leader or leading from behind in a way, my team have more say in how they wan things done. They must take charge because we tend to undermine ourselves and our capabilities. you must just strive and what you are be visible, I don't know if that's clear because women tend to me more timid and we tend not to say exactly what is it that we want,	If everyone could get the opportunity that I have had, at the COMPANY, and ride it, and have people believing in you when you simply don't deserve it actually, and just to give you that chance and the exposure, I think that would be just amazing. I also wish more, I don't want to say women managers, because that is also a fallacy that women managers manager women better, but I also wish for a real manager that can manage women and men equally, and not by distinction, to say men this and men that.	The other thing that is important whether you are at that grooming stage to groom a successor. I think during my two years I have had my shine and I want them to also create those opportunities by putting themselves out there so I do encourage in certain transactions I do encourage that they work with key people that they work with people in senior positions because that is important	To become business people, I want a class of women who get their hands busy in a proper business I am not talking on being in some funding structure but let's have women running businesses. let's get out of the job mode lets create a class of specifically for me I said black women entrepreneurs.
	Meritocracy	<b>P 1: A_Senior</b>	<b>P 2: B_Middle</b>	<b>P 3: C_Middle</b>	<b>P 4: D_Middle</b>	<b>P 5: E_Senior</b>
		I think the exposure is very fair, if you show willingness and you put in the time and the effort, things will come your way and if you also show delivery, more will come your way and you don't have to sacrifice your family time. Go the extra mile is, to get ahead in life you have actually got to put in the hours so even though you leave THE COMPANY, I mean THE COMPANY you can leave at 5pm and actually literally not do anymore work, but if I think, well personally I have wanted to get ahead, I will work extra, I will put in the, I will give up my weekends			That they must work hard I suppose for me it is about hard work and its hard work and you must never sit down and be content with what you have there is always something on, even with myself right now.	self-part of it, I think for me what helps is my track record up until this point I think I can confidently say I have been one two three and I have given some of my best years to the COMPANY and on the back of that I have now entered a new chapter in my life and I think that the organization has a responsibility to meet me halfway as I am negotiate this very different terrain that I have never been in before but having said that I think it is a dual obligation so both organization also self.
		<b>P 6: F_Middle</b>	<b>P 7: G_Senior</b>	<b>P 8: H_Middle</b>	<b>P 9: I_Senior</b>	<b>P10: J_Senior</b>
			Depending on the nature of the project I will try to find somebody who's got the relevant skill, experience, knowledge to lead that project	If you say you have written 20 deals and I have written 10, how many percent are you better than me, but if you have written 4 and I have written 15, you can't turn around and tell me that, you know, I am better than you.		

What impression management tactics are prevalent in the organisation						
Ideal worker	Think Manager think male	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		I find men get away with not giving any space and they seem to be fine so you know what, I am into a career and it's a man's world so I need to abide by some of their rules, you know what I mean?		I have experienced those who managed well and get things done are those who are brash and assertive and you do what I say and don't come and question me	I have travelled and even the people who work at the hotel rooms are men and the women are somewhere in the background so women here must just work and push and know that the world is your oyster. The country's got lot of opportunities available for women.	At a conscience level management I think defers to males but it is just reflected in the senior management profile of the organization and that is problematic. Generally THE COMPANY has more male occupying senior management positions than females and that is baseline starting point is problematic so the organization needs to do a little bit more to do a little bit more to address that imbalance
		P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
whenever she is in a situation she doesn't push back to the boss and that is why he does things because he knows that she is not going to complain, so it is not really so much it is not really so much that she is a women that he is doing this he is just taking advantage of her personality so it is difficult to describe but I can't say there is a bias.		THE COMPANY has got a lot of women, but very few that are managers. And it almost makes you wonder that women just women just do not that they are seen as a lower form for women than it is for men,		The head would decide who would be allocated there are various ways, the one is for certain teams they allocate certain people in that unit to work with certain BUSINESS UNIT's, It is availability it is level of experience but also we tend to find that people develop interest or specialization in certain subsectors		

## Appendix10: RQ2\_The working woman

What impression management tactics are prevalent in the organisation						
The working women	Adaptive	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		I want to be successful, but I don't want to sacrifice fulfillment and I don't want to be successful for other people but sometimes I also, I am not always true to myself, but I try to be, but it's not as easy. I can't be gymming and studying and super Mom and everything else so I don't gym.	after 8 my laptop will be on, because there will be something that I need to catch up on, during the day I don't get time to respond to emails. I am also planning for the next day because my philosophy is to come to work with a sense of purpose and with a sense of achievement and to achieve that and to live that philosophy every day I plan to say okay tomorrow this is how my diary looks like and this is what I want to see myself accomplish at the end of the day	I think we just personally manage your own personal life balance right now, you have to have your own mechanism at home. I view it is that everybody just have to do what they need to at home to make sure that they can comfortably carry out their jobs at work. You have to manage your private life your work life your children's schooling your social life you have to manage everything you know you have to be in control of it.	"I get home and I will pick my baby up I will play with her for a while I will cook, dish up, watch some TV. She sleeps with a nanny so I don't do any of that; otherwise I won't be able to function.	Strategy two: Evening is winding down, time with baby, bath time, feeding time, settling time and then time to catch up with my family once baby is settled it is time to catch up with work again
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior	
				To get home I need to rush home, well My partner is currently working from home but it is my responsibility so I have to rush for half past six to insure that I am home to relieve her.		
	Home Centred	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior	
		Now and then I will think of my twins and I will smile but I guess I am doing this for them, they are the reason why I am pushing myself hard because I want the best for them. For me it starts with the family and it follows with the community and my work here at the COMPANY and my adding something to the people of SA, am I doing something differently, am I contributing to the job creation, is my helper happy			I believe I have served the company well you know, unless it is really pressing because sometimes we are pressed by our minister in Pretoria so those are the only types of requests that I entertain even then I have decided to draw the line somewhere because you know want something is not just once every month it becomes once every week and I know if you allow it, it becomes once every day. It is understanding yourself and what you want out of your life and I mean I was well I suppose I was fortunate I had my children when I was older,	
Work Centred	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior	
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior	
	You work like crazy for a week or two and then it is quiet. I mean it is very quiet. I suppose coming from a consulting background where it was like that all the time. All the time you pushed for something there was a deadline. So I suppose coming from that kind of environment as well I got used to putting in the hours. The environment I should make sure the work that I have around me does challenge me so I should make sure that I am given the kind of work that challenge me as appose to just sort of work		I mean I am at the office at 6 o'clock the boss is walking out, and he will drop an email to say hey are you available, yes, ok then the process is there. But by the time there is an open discussion about it, it is pretty much in the bag, so that we will do the deal. Every Monday, as I explained to you, I do my admin, part of my admin, is going to speak to the peers and find out what deals have come in and which have not been allocated. Do I pick my deals, yes. I'll speak to my boss and I will speak to the senior account managers, and I'll speak to the PM and I will say to her what deals have come in, sort of get an idea of them and see what deals are doable. And that is how I get it done you know. And there has been a bit of resentment from some of my colleagues, who say, ja but you know you get given all the deals, but the issue is, if you are not going to go up and ask for them, I think people are more inclined to give someone who shows initiative and hunger than one person that doesn't.			

What impression management tactics are prevalent in the organisation						
The working women	Choice or Scarifice	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		<p>I prepared or am I not prepared to pay this price, but once I have made up my mind that okay I am now doing this.</p>		<p>I think depending on their family life cycle might opt for bigger positions where there are more staff involved or more complex structure. Sometimes when you have younger children it is not easy to just travel and pack your bags and be on the road and live out of a suitcase all of the time. if you have older children, they manage that, it is more flexible</p>	<p>I mean I don't come from a wealthy family but my parents they were just trying very hard all the time and I think at some point I realize the whole BEE thing, so I realized that it is a wind of opportunity and let me use it.</p>	<p>I wasn't at the office yesterday because my baby was ill and has been ill for the last week you know it was hard, it was a hard call to make but I decided my baby needs me. It is just negotiating that for me it is still early it has been a single fundamental shift</p>
		P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
		<p>having to make some difficult choices sometimes you actually have to make choices where you have to say okay I sacrifice it now for the bigger picture . I think it is probably time allocation so it is time with everyone. it is time from your family it is time for your friends where you have to make some difficult choices where you are not getting the immediate benefit and you are not sure that you are going to get it but you have to hope</p>	<p>I am still tucking them into bed or if I would rather go and finish up with the policy that I am busy with, that has been challenging but I must say</p>			<p>So success for me was never that I am going to be an executive at THE COMPANY and then I am going to be the CEO of THE COMPANY or I could've don't it if I wanted to because I could've left I could've gone to another company, I have been approached but it didn't fit what I wanted to do with my life.</p>



## Appendix11: RQ3\_Career progression: success

What impression management tactics are prevalent in the organisation						
Impression management Strategies	Ingratiation	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
	Self Promotion	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		I mean I have some of my male counterparts, sitting at EXCO arguing to the hilt and when I argue my point to the hilt it's like I am being, I don't know, cheeky or whatever but it's exactly the same behaviour, put it on a woman, it's seen as negative, put it on a man it's seen as positive,	For me it's not about that, as I said, maybe it's because of my spiritual, I see some earthly treasures they don't matter, what matters is to make a difference today, I assisted a lady, I am in human capital, I assisted a lady who was going through divorce, assisted someone who had some challenges, assisted a manager with a particular thing, for me that's some of the things that contributes towards successes	I think challenge for me is that people need to recognize what you are doing so in the roles that I had if somebody hasn't recognize the good work that you have put in, you are not going to progress.		
		P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
			I always finish what I start, it has to be done	So as much as I am Middle Management, I have taken on a lot responsibilities and I am happy with it.		Yes it was partly that but also I think along the way you figured I work such long hours I put in so much of myself in this but when it comes to the promotions and that it is the guys who lick ass I am sorry to say it they were moving up so what is the point?
	Exemplification	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		Even more than whether I should take this next move because for me it's very important that I do well at my job, so even though I might be thinking of moving, whilst I am doing it and until I move I must do exceptionally well at it	I try to maintain that you are always professional at work, you always show this lively feeling, you are always positive, we haven't been paid bonuses now and my colleagues were so devastated so I had to speak positive and say guys let's look at this positively	But I think those that are true leaders are mindful of how they are perceived by people. I feel the relationships that you built with people are very important in the networks that you built. You can rely on people based on the personal relationships that you built and how you maintain that personal relationship is how you treat the person professionally.	That they must work hard I suppose for me it is about hard work and its hard work and you must never sit down and be content with what you have there is always something on, even with myself right now.	some people just don't greet so I have learned over time to not defer or pull the race card automatically and rather hold your assumptions likely and in test give those assumptions give people the opportunity to address an issue in order to help you test whether your assumption is correct or not
		P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
		one of the other ladies was complaining that the boss gives the guys preferential treatment when it comes to you know the kind of jobs that they do work that they allocated and in this particular instance I felt that the actual reasons is because I felt like she should push back, she doesn't push back	I was so full of energy they didn't like me because I was all over the show full of energy, wanting to do everything, I could sense that they could not put up with that, I think I was the youngest in the team, I just didn't care and I learned from my early days at the commercial banks that also I didn't want to be taken for granted or to be victimized so whenever people wanted to take advantage of me because I was the youngest maybe by giving me an extra load of work, I would defend myself, even if my boss was going to shout at me in front of people, I will make sure that never happens, I don't want to be humiliated in front of people, I will take it up with him, so I just made sure that from the beginning I set the record straight and made sure that I was not abused		Put myself out there as a manager of the team so I can be respected as such. I realized I have a knack for managing people, I was quite young relative to my team members and also less experience, just considering their age, and also their journey their professional life I was doing with those who were quite established in their professional career and older so the fact that I brought the team together and, we became a very good team.	you are going to come across bankers who don't believe in you, people that tells you can't do it, it is the Senior manager thing I've got an idea what I want and I will make it happen with or without you.

## Appendix12: RQ3\_Career progression: career life stage

What are women's views on career progression					
Exploration	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		I needed a change, I planned for a long time, it was 9 years so I needed the change in environment, change in industry, just to stretch myself and see what the world of work holds for me because remember this company I started when I was a baby, so I wanted to get out of my comfort zone			I did that for two years and then the program was expanded to East Africa but at that time an opportunity arose for me to either go to the COMPETITOR E or THE COMPANY really decision to join the COMPANY got nothing to do, at the time you were young and sophisticated so you are not necessarily thinking about your career deliberate it was just approximate to where I lived and so I dropped the COMPETITOR E opportunity and went for THE COMPANY
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
	I realize that my chosen career choice wasn't going to work because you know the normal thing for an engineer was you go there and you going through two years on the plant and you have to live in a place like Competitor H so at that point I realized it is not going to work for me I need to find a way not to be in the bundu's		Ok, maybe the indictment is on me there, I was younger and probably not as willing to listen to authority, especially when authority came from a very, very know, clinical person, you know you will do this and you will do that. I had just come back from a working holiday in the UK, I thought myself as a bit of liberal come free spirited		
Career Journey	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
	Competitor A: Yes I mean I was at Competitor A for about 2 years, you know the thing about Competitor A and I learned, you learn as you start work, quite naive, and as you work your way through you lose that naivety, reality hits you in the face and you can't avoid any of this anymore, it's the truth, what I have learnt is that certain institutions promote certain groups,		I think leaving the teaching profession was one of them, at the time my children were very young and the hours of teaching were more conducive to having a young family because you finish at three you have school holidays how many times a year so the hours definitely were more conducive for bringing up a young family, but financially I wasn't able to take care of them the way I wanted to, and that prompted me to leave teaching.	You must just push all the time just push the boundaries every time. That they must work hard I suppose for me it is about hard work and its hard work and you must never sit down and be content with what you have there is always something on, even with myself right now.	
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
	I find that the more senior you get in corporate you are not making business decisions you are making management decisions so it is allocation of resources that is what you are doing	I was so full of energy they didn't like me because I was all over the show full of energy, wanting to do everything, I could sense that they could not put up with that, I think I was the youngest in the team, I just didn't care and I learned from my early days at the commercial banks that also I didn't want to be taken for granted or to be victimized so whenever people wanted to take advantage of me because I was the youngest maybe by giving me an extra load of work, I would defend myself, even if my boss was going to shout at me in front of people, I will make sure that never happens, I don't want to be humiliated in front of people, I will take it up with him, so I just made sure that from the beginning I set the record straight and made sure that I was not abused	I think it is also a sense of, all the guys, there is a sense of he is the younger guy, what do they know, they think they are smart, and ja, we think we are smart, young, we think we have done it, we have proven it. You can't tell me you are better than me, by virtue of the fact that you have not been at THE COMPANY 17 years.		It is very old school and on paper we've got all this gloss, I don't know if you walked in the building we've got these pop up things that are an irritation in the building you know then you've got, it is all flash, once you take that away and you see the everyday interactions of executives
Idealistic					

What are women's views on career progression						
		P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
Career Journey	Career Journey	I don't care what people say frankly, I really don't care. So they can diss me, they can say what they want, I don't care, at the end of the day I will make decisions for myself, its' not that I won't take into account what people are saying but I will make decisions for myself, I will not necessarily try to please other people and try and necessary become buddy buddy with them, so if you don't like the fact that I speak my mind, fine that's yours, if you want to keep quiet and just shut up and let everyone else have their say, that's your choice and you are going to have to deal with it when you have to live with everyone else making decisions for you for the rest of your life.	I am also being coached and one of my coaching needs is to improve in that control aspect so the curiosity to say you know what I have got this day and I am open to anything that can happen, it's about being open, which sometimes is difficult and I mean open even when you are engaging people, give people an ear, not force, I also like to force my point of view but I have learnt to listen to other people's perspective because you are also willing to learn, and since I have started to have that open mind I am learning a lot	my older colleagues they are content they are happy with the organization, they like what the organization stand for and they stay. The older ones are more aware of having to put the effort	I think my managers are a bit older so they had a tougher time, growing up in the country, so they know what success is they obviously they got their peers, a lot of them are probably behind them, so they have something to compare it to	It is just negotiating that for me it is still early it has been a single fundamental shift and I think being in this space made me less judgmental, because prior to that it is easy to judge people when you are not in their shoes, when someone calls saying their baby is sick you automatically think they are not committed
		P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
			But we don't want to be the jokers of the pack; you don't want to be the poor cousins. Whereas other guys, have become in my opinion, very comfortable and, you know it is ok to wear a leather jacket to work.	I think during my two years I have had my shine and I want them to also create those opportunities by putting themselves out there so I do encourage in certain transactions I do encourage that they work with key people that they work with people in senior positions because that is important	The head would decide who would be allocated there are various ways, the one is for certain teams they allocate certain people in that unit to work with certain BUSINESS UNIT's. It is availability it is level of experience but also we tend to find that people develop interest or specialization in certain subsectors	
	Reinventing	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
	I mean look at Fraser Moleketsi, she left her husband to go and be at the UN and now I am like wondering that marriage cannot work					
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior	



## Appendix13: RQ3\_Career progression: Grounded Turning Point

What are women's views on career progression					
Objective Success	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		I think majority of my colleagues they view success as being able to mobilize, advance, it has to be monetary, it has to be the responsibilities that you have been given, for me it's more than that, it's about living your purpose, about being content, going beyond the call of duty, giving your best to an organization, giving it your best	I would find that I have probably younger colleagues who are in that sort of the rat race, they want to earn more they want to do more, they want to be more. but my younger colleagues are continually want to advance themselves and progress themselves and looking for the next.	I think success for me would be setting goals for yourself and achieving goals or surpassing them	
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
	I think success is about goal setting and then I think it is achieving those goals you have set but having those goals be ambitious enough for you to be pushing yourself,	A lot of people their definition of success is monetary, is material things I guess, but for me it's just about being content inside and also being recognized, if I add value and work hard and I am recognized for that, recognition is not monetary for me,	I think for me success is, these are my objectives for, so I have, so I say to myself, this is what I need to achieve today, which is incredibly flexible, then this is what I say to myself, this is what I need to achieve in the next week, which is less flexible.	I find that my colleagues are very much about, rightly so, they are very much just for filling their roles	I see my life differently but achieving certain things that I set out when I was nineteen years old as a student and I had a twenty year plan for my life so that is how I define my success and ticking off the things that I wanted to do
Subjective Success	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
	I think at the end of the day success is really achieving what you want to achieve, whatever that is and personally for me I think it was about feeling fulfilled, for me I really think my definition of success is really being fulfilled, happy, with what you have achieved and everything you have done. My colleagues at work, I think what I have found is that these people have similar values actually.	For me I think success is about living your life, living your purpose, it's about being content with whatever that you have acquired, your qualifications, your achievements, at the same time being content with the challenges that you have been through, the failures, the mistakes	For me success is being able to provide a service to my organization wherever I am working, to offer them a service and be numerated for it, but also to have some challenge in that role that I am fulfilling so at the end of the day if the company is achieving objectives that they set out and I am able to fulfil those objectives for and on behalf of the company, I feel that, that's success. So you will find that there is colleagues that has got to a certain position, their children are grown up or whatever, they don't want to aspire any further and they are content with what they are doing.		your ability for me to increase your sphere of influence and use that platform for the good not only for self but to help others along
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
		We all view success differently, I think it's family, if my children and husband is happy and we are happy with what we have got that's success		So it is just making a difference knowing that I make a difference in an organization and it is felt, maybe that is why I wanted to be a manager because in that position is easier it is not because you can't	

What are women's views on career progression					
Integrating Agency actions	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
	I am giving too many kudos to The Company this is a fabulous institution, I think there has been a lot of assistance, I mean I have been for coaching and had all sorts of assistance that other institutions would not offer.	The support was great, I remember my manager encouraged me to go through your employers assistance program but the choice was on me to say, do I bring my problems to work or separate them which is quite difficult, initially I was able to do it but once the reality struck, it's quite difficult but my company was very supportive	I think for me it was sad that the other managers I had approached did not see the value that I added in that role that I was, but the CEO was able to give me the opportunity to come and then obviously be involve in this project right now	every time I think of going out then I just it is a private sector, white same story so I think that is why and I've been here for five years now. That is one of the reasons why I have stayed here this long.	I think self has to do with it but also THE COMPANY as an organization is highly supportive of working moms so I think it is one of the best organizations to work for if you are a new mom so I think it is highly accommodative so people is not necessary going to set up a meeting at 6h30 in the morning so there is a greater sense of sensitivity
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
	Competitor F: I decided to switch which was a big decision because it came at a time that I was promoted at Competitor F there was a significant salary sacrifice for me there I was moving to management there whereas here become your own right at the bottom. But I felt that at the time it was the best time to make the sacrifice it wasn't going to get better.	the commercial banks, if a client is distressed we must find a way to cut them off immediately, that's when we say want our money back, with the THE COMPANY if a client is in distress we try to find ways to help out, its' not about profits only, its' about development, it's about people so that's what I love	The people that I work with, that we push one another, so typically the younger guy, the hungrier guys are, we push each other more, rag each other and we, you know, we try and enjoy it, and try and create an investing environment at the THE COMPANY	And are you gunning for Executive role within the organization? I was working so hard to get to this point, if the opportunity presents itself I will but yes	But at the end of the day you shouldn't be here forever, I mean I am only here because I had young children late, otherwise I don't think I would still be here.
Ground turning Point	P 1: A_Senior	P 2: B_Middle	P 3: C_Middle	P 4: D_Middle	P 5: E_Senior
		Competitor: I needed a change, I planned for a long time, it was 9 years so I needed the change in environment, change in industry, just to stretch myself and see what the world of work holds for me because remember this company I started when I was a baby, so I wanted to get out of my comfort zone	The company: It was for career progression all the time, I had been, you know once you are in a role and you know the roll inside out and you find you reached your ceiling then you start looking for what's the next role that I can do you know, based on the skills and the expertise that I now have gained from this current role, so all my moves had been purely for career progression.	Competitor: Okay so the biggest one was when I worked at Competitor C and I realized it was a dead end job, so I decided to take time off took a year off went and did my honours and I pursued the CA career and then qualified as a CA	The company: Some would what is happening we've got a post investment function which is a support function so once the deal has been approved you will find some dealmakers who don't enjoy the deal making function then maybe again move to post investment, so which is post investment is our monitoring and evaluation kind of unit so they would use their skills in that function as appose to day to day deal making.
	P 6: F_Middle	P 7: G_Senior	P 8: H_Middle	P 9: I_Senior	P10: J_Senior
	Competitor: I realize that my chosen career choice wasn't going to work because you know the normal thing for an engineer was you go there and you going through two years on the plant and you have to live in a place like Competitor H so at that point I realized it is not going to work for me I need to find a way not to be in the bundu's	Competitor: Firstly I didn't like their strategy, the way they treated clients and also the way I was being treated, but I guess at that stage what made me make that decision, it was about me, I was feeling demoralized and unappreciated and I just thought no there is more to life than this	THE COMPANY will have an account manager and senior account manager and all of that in support as well as in deal making, same balance. Whereas if you move to other banks, deal making is completely different to support, support is exactly like a support. So even the pay bans are very different. Whereas in the COMPANY you could become, say for example, tomorrow I could decide that I don't want to travel any more, I don't want to do DDs any more, I don't want this stress any more, at the same salary, I will get moved to HR, Marketing, posting investment work out, whatever, so it is a big pool, and people start families, people come in young from the academy, you start a family, you make a decision at home, to say look for the same amount of money you can do less work, a lot less work, but you will have less time pressure, less work pressure, so why don't you move to another division where you don't have to travel every year, you don't have to be a deal maker, you know, you don't have to write reports. So I think, I'm not saying that deal makers must be treated like gods, but I think there needs to be a very distinct, rule and remuneration policy with regard to the deal makers and support staff.	Competitor J: He said that he was informed by his advisors that is was market related, but I said how is it market related that I am a manager and my team is earning much more than I am and I am doing twice the work that they are doing and you have other manager that is in the same department that is earning more than I am so how can that be market related.	but also just staying here, not having intended staying here for so long for the reasons that I have highlighted to you.
Opting out					