Challenges Faced by Women in Leadership Positions in Emerging Economies: A Case of The Petroleum Industry

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Abstract

The study sought to investigate the challenges faced by women in leadership positions in the petroleum industry in South Africa. The study was motivated by an overwhelmingly huge female worker population in the operational levels, resulting in a disproportionate representation of men and women in this sector. The researcher also analysed different research from other researchers, but she felt there was still a gap because there was less research concentrated on the petroleum industry. The study employed the mixed methods approach, whereby questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from the participants. Moreover, the researcher used purposively sampling to select 315 questionnaires she used together with the interview notes from 10 participants to analyse and discuss the data under qualitative method. The study findings showed that women are still facing challenges such as lack of confidence, male dominance, and others. Based on these findings, some recommendations were made such as initiatives focusing on creative approaches to limited learning opportunities and looking for mentors. The study also recommended the need to increase male participation in female lobby and interest groups for gender equality policies and programmes, strengthen e-learning on women leadership and increased women involvement and participation at strategic levels. Further, it is imperative to develop ethics committees and revisit the recruitment process for leadership positions in the industry.

Key words: Petroleum Industry, women leadership, gender, inclusive leadership, emerging economies

1. Introduction

There has been an increase in the occurrence of gendered leadership roles in sustainable development throughout time. However, it is unclear whether attitudes or barriers to women leaders in the Petroleum industry have changed because of this transition. This study seeks to investigate the complicated and frequently hidden factors, such as a lack of self-confidence, that are considered to impede women's access to leadership positions, as well as disparities among women, which make it difficult to identify general solutions to the problems we are investigating. The aim of the study is to identify the challenges faced by women in leadership within petroleum industry in South Africa. The question is, do women especially mothers in executive positions, need to leave their parenting skills at the door when they become executive managers, or can those skills aid in their success? How do women rise to the top of their professions when they also have significant family responsibilities? These critical questions have not yet been fully addressed by existing models of leadership. This is partly because while the empirical literature on leadership and management in Africa is sparse, the literature on

women in leadership is even sparser (Nkomo & Ngambi, 2009). Several writers are in agreement that the presence of women in senior leadership roles remains limited, both globally and in South Africa (Dormehl 2012; Nkeli 2012; Sandberg 2013; Sealy & Vinnicombe 2012; Sellers 2012).Taking a look around the average college or university classroom, there will likely be more women in attendance than men, but despite the large numbers of females attending college, the number of female leaders in executive leadership positions in organisations is significantly lower than that of their male counterpart(Omarjee,2016). He further explains that in total, women hold 29% of senior management positions across industries. Women representation still lags in the petroleum industry, at 9%. The sector traditionally relies on engineers for its workforce, historically being men. This study answers all the above question using the women leaders in the Petroleum industry, South Africa.

Several researchers have noted that women are less likely to pursue senior level positions, Moreso if they have young children at home (Dominici et al., 2009; Kahanov, Loebsack, Masucci, & Roberts, 2010; Tessens, White, & Webb, 2011). In fact, many women appear to be opting out of higher positions altogether, because they struggle with the time demands needed to fully commit to their organisations and to their families (Aiston, 2011; Zhou, 2013). Wendell-Wolf and Ward (2006) explained that the time needed to devote to one's career in senior and executive positions can often be too much for many women to handle, especially with children.

The study interrogates the challenges that are faced by women in leadership, particularly mothers, as leaders in the petroleum sector, sampling Engen Petroleum South Africa, with the aim of exploring an alternative model to the usual notion of a Western male as the prototypical leader in order to ensure equality and justice towards women, especially mothers. The study interrogates the challenges by exploring the lives of executive managers in the petroleum industry particularly at Engen, in order to identify how being a woman and a mother has affected their career paths and how their experiences shaped them into the leaders they are today. This study adds to the existing literature on women in higher positions and provides insight on an alternative model that has assisted women and mothers to be successful holding senior and executive positions. It is envisaged that the outcome of this study would assist women especially mothers to unlock their full potential when given leadership positions, reduce the stereotypes of managers being male, thus reducing discrimination and promote fair opportunities.

2. Literature review

This section leadership theories and challenges faced by women in business organisations, especially in the petroleum industry. There is extensive literature on how leadership can be defined as several definitions of a leader has been discussed, including prominent reference papers like Baldoni (2000), Allio (2016).Baldoni (2000) developed an acronym using the letters LEADER and came up with the following definition; "L" stands for Listening and learning from others; while the letter "E" is for Energizing others, "A" for Acting for common benefit; "D" for Development of everyone; "E" stands for Empowerment and lastly the letter "R" is for Recognition of others' achievements. Following Yukl (2008), who has multiple leadership books we discuss that the recognized key responsibilities of leaders include monitoring and responding appropriately to the performance of subordinates.

Since there is quite intensive literature on different ways of defining leadership and how it is effective in achieving desired organizational goals and as such, several definitions of a

leader has been discussed. Following the discussion by Nawaz & Khan (2016), we discuss the main theories that emerged during 20th century include, the Great Man theory, Trait theory, Process leadership theory, Style and Behavioural theory, Transactional, Laissez Faire and Transformational leadership theory, which is more inclined to female leaders, (Stempel et al. 2015). In their study, Stempel et al. (2015) explored whether transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles are considered to be more characteristic of female or male leaders. As expected, transformational leadership is assumed to be more characteristic of female leaders. Inspirational and idealized power, however, are categorized as gender neutral. In the case of transactional leadership, contingent rewards were perceived to be more typical of female leaders, while management, by comparison, was categorized as neutral Stempel et al. (2015).

In comparison to expectations, laissez-faire was not seen as more typical of male representatives, but as gender neutral. Implications of perceived gender discrimination in the selection process. In this section, the researcher also reviews different hypotheses of the types of leadership and success that exist in the literature.

According to the study by Bourke & Dillon (2018) order to empower more women to reach the highest ranks, there is need to focus on three key areas: early socializing leadership, modeling leadership and building trust through role models and networking, and delivering or enhancing corporate development programs that move more women forward. Shinbrot et al. (2019) explored the views of male and female sustainable development advocates about structural obstacles, as well as their dreams of meaningful contributions by women leaders to sustainable development when these obstacles are overcome. Their qualitative analyses uncovered several themes: first, the findings reflect overwhelming concerns about patriarchal systems that are considered to continue to constrain women from being leaders. They, (Shinbrot et al. 2019) also identified complex and often hidden issues, such as lack of self-confidence, which hinders perceived access to leadership positions, and differences between women, which make it difficult to find comprehensive solutions.

A recent study by Evans & Maley (2020) investigated the possible reasons why Australian companies have not done more to promote gender equality in senior management, despite the abundance of data on economic benefits. The results they obtained were based on a qualitative analysis of the views of 15 women in key senior roles, which highlights that given Australian laws on gender equality in the workplace and unconscious bias remains a major obstacle to women in senior positions.

The results provide insights into the structures that uphold long-lasting gender order in contemporary Australian business and affirm men's continued supremacy in their organizational hierarchies. The impact of unconscious bias on women arising from ingrained assumptions about gender roles and the ideal characteristics of leaders that remain entrenched given the substantial strides made in women's educational achievement and engagement in non-traditional occupations was the major obstacle of women to take their leadership roles effectively.

The first and maybe most significant topic is ensuring gender equality in leadership is gender equity Poltera (2019). Leaders are powerful, which means that if females are removed from top leadership, they are denied the ability to make a difference in the world Poltera (2019), saidlooking at the hinderances that limit women, lets us discuss about balancing work and family responsibilities and as discussed by Oo et al. (2019) for women seeking leadership is one of the most difficult hurdles (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Sandberg, 2013), especially intimidating

the millions of working women who raise their children on their own (Hess & Kelly, 2015). Women are typically the main (if not the only) parent in their highest years of workforce to look after children and other family members. They work more irregularly than men (Rose & Hartmann, 2008).

In addition, men had less chance of claiming pressure to overlook the benefits of working life to leave their jobs (Sprunt et al., 2013). Gender socialization and financial limitations in the sense of cultural norms also means that the career choices of women and men are formed, identified and reduced by a broad range of factors. In one study by Wille et al. (2018), men who did not adhere to a male stereotype of violence were rated below men who matched better this male stereotype. Gender stereotypes like this may affect both men and women negatively. This may also contribute to partiality in decision-makers' judgment. Stereotypes surrounding mothers could adversely affect women in leadership positions (Judge et al. 2012). Employers may conclude that the dedication of women to treatment makes them unavailable for challenging work. As a matter of truth, research clearly indicates that women have both the potential and ability to be effective leaders, but like anything else, leadership requires flexibility, (Barreto et al. 2017, Wille et al. 2018). Effective leaders are those who regularly assess the qualities they bring to their organization in terms of the ever-changing demands of business and can adapt to meet these demands. The study's findings showed that women rank highest in the leadership competencies of monitoring quality, focusing on the business and analyzing and interpreting. With respect to two of Bartram's leadership styles, women ranked predominantly as modernizers and catalysts, individuals who increase the rate of change. According to Wille et al. (2018), these competency rankings confirm that women possess exceptional knowledge of their business and have the skills to be effective leaders. Clearly, women have the tools to take risks and perhaps all that is lacking is the confidence to act.

The ancient myths still disregard the contribution that women make to businesses (Abdallah et al. 2020). Female and male leaders are commonly believing to have radically different features and types to illustrate the improved success of companies with more gender-diverse top management teams (Abdallah et al. 2020). Based on three alternate viewpoints on personality and gender roles in leadership, Abdallah et al. (2020) study explored whether men and women are closer to managers than women. It has tested whether similar features differentiate managers from lower levels of workers across genders. Gender discrepancies between managers were smaller than non-managers about management features that were important in emerging contexts (i.e., sensitivity, emotional wellbeing, extraversion). Similar characteristics also differentiate managers from non-managers across genders. Both managers and women display an archetypal "boss personality" based on affirmability, strategic thought of a high level and decisiveness (Wille et al. 2018). Five underlying factors were extracted from the analysis: "male oriented labour market," "detrimental issues for being a woman," "harsh working conditions in the construction industry," "unfavourable perception of the construction industry," and "high competitiveness of the construction industry, (Barreto et al. 2017).

A review of the challenges facing women who want a professional career raises the question: What motivates women to choose one career over another? There are many theories explaining the career decisions made by men and women, and this section details those theories relevant to female development. Particular focus is paid to Bandura's (1977) self-efficacy theory, Holland's (1958) career choice theory, Super's (1980) life- span, life-space approach,

Mainiero and Sullivan's (2005) kaleidoscope model of careers, and McMahon's (2011) systems theory framework of career development.

Gender is a multidimensional construction which deals with different roles, responsibilities, limitations, and experiences, based on the presentation of the gender and/or sex (Eklund et al. 2017). Gender refers to the position, behaviours, activities and attributes that society deems acceptable for men and women as described by Eklund et al. (2017), the psychosocial ramifications of biological sex whether male or female as a gender is the magnitude and/or femininity/ sex is typically operationalized by analysing men's and women's actions (Eklund et al. 2017). Literature has it that women are often reluctant to take up leadership roles at times Alan et al. (2020).

Research has therefore shown that women are not mentally handicapped by leadership. Rather, they face a barrier of gendered perceptions and prejudices regarding their leadership ability, which are then transformed into patriarchal standards and organizational processes in areas such as recruitment and promotion (Hearn & Parkin 2001). Recently updated study by Hearn & Parkin (2001) indicates that women in leadership positions are considered every bit as successful as men. Women make highly capable leaders, according to those who work most closely with them and what is holding them back is not lack of potential, but lack of opportunity. Evidently, women are fast taking leadership positions amid stereotypes. However, both men and women pose different approaches to leadership. The variations are not due to nature, but to specific factors correlated with the characteristics and theories of leadership.

Stempel et al. (2015). Gipson et al. (2017) argue that despite the proliferation of leadership studies over the past 75 years, the study into the ways in which women and men leaders behave and experience leadership continues to pose unanswered questions. In the context of selection, growth, leadership style and performance, we report on gender-related findings from a large survey of current literature over the past three decades. Findings include differential selection rates for women and men leaders; leader growth criteria that vary by gender; evidence for general consistency in leadership style (with noted exceptions) between women and men leaders; and similar performance results between women and men leaders.

Today, much research (Zenger & Folkman 2020, Taylor 2020) has found that women leaders are different from their male counterparts in management style in that women leaders tend to be more concerned with consensus building, participation, and caring. Women are often more willing than men to share power and information, to empower employees, and to be concerned about the feelings of their subordinates. This type of leadership has been also found to be highly effective, as suggested by Radu et al. (2017). They also viewed it as interactive and emotionally leadership, culturally diverse work force demands more interactive and collaborative coordination. Looking at the external parties like customers of a firm, this management style of a caring and flexible management style serves customers better than traditional methods of management.

The growing willingness to address family care issues insofar as they impinged on labour market participation, especially of women, was as much a part of the considerations as the equal opportunities' agenda (Lewis, 2001b; 2002). By the end of the 1990s substantial changes marked the three related fields of work/family reconciliation, equal opportunities and social policy. The effort to achieve equal opportunities became marked by the new commitment to mainstream the consideration of gender equality across all policy fields (Rees, 1998), while the concept of equality was dramatically broadened in the Treaty of Amsterdam to include

'discrimination based on racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation'.

The Treaty also gave 'employment' a separate title and equal status for the first time with 'economic and monetary policy' and with 'social policy'. This opened the way for commitment to work/family reconciliation to be much more firmly integrated into employment policies with the elaboration of the European Employment Strategy shortly after the signing of the Treaty (Lewis, 2006). The effort to increase equal opportunities within the European Union also aims to increase a diverse workforce within economic activities. A diverse workforce can better manage the diverse economic challenges we face today. Some researchers also argue that women manage critical situations before economic crisis more effective than men. Based on this argument, it is important to include female leaders in economic activities and understand that female leaders can contribute to avoid critical economic situations.

Much more recent study shows that women more than men lead in a participative manner, suggesting not only that women lead differently but also that they may lead more effectively. Another possible difference in women's and men's leadership traces to a distinction drawn from research in the 1940s exploring the roles that people play in groups (Bales 1958). Some individuals tend to be focused on completing the group's tasks, while others spend more time addressing group members' feelings and emotional needs. Several studies suggest that women are more feeling-oriented and less task-oriented than men, but the preponderance of evidence does not support a difference. Research does show, however, that women tend to be more communal, that is, oriented toward the concerns and needs of others, and less agentic, that is, focused on individual achievement and advancement (Carli & Eagly 2011). In all this study, the range of individual differences within the female and male populations is considerably larger than the average difference between the two genders.

Gender plays a significant role in defining leadership roles and determining the quality of services in organizations. Gender refers to social traits of men and women that range from norms and relationships to roles. Studies reveal that people's perceptions towards gender vary from one society to another and are subject to bound over time. The society instils behaviour and norms, such as relationships between people from opposite sex or workmates to people.

This study discusses the theoretical approach of gender and leadership, gender differences in decision-making, gender and time management well as the factors undermining the effectiveness of women in leadership. Theoretical Approach of Gender and Leadership some of the recent studies reveal that leadership approaches differ from men to women due to the distinctive biological characteristics. The social setup and cultural projections present women as a weak sex that battles inferiority complex. Thus, women have been perceived as lesser beings than men in organizational or political leadership. The phenomenon can be understood properly by analysing factors such as attitudinal drivers, gender roles, decision-making, and time management.

Also, different theories are used to back up the contributing factors of gender impacts on leadership. Attitudinal Drivers Feminine values are evident in business and government institutions. The traits defy the authoritative as well as competitive approach to handling leadership responsibility. However, women abilities are linked to the traditional leadership view of masculinity. The difference between men and women arises due to consensual relations that emanate from feminine values. The varied aspects inspire distinct management issues such as communication, control, and negotiations. Importantly, the feminine values need to be balanced to ensure success in leadership.

The submissive nature of women towards leadership reflects some levels of incompetence that influence the ability to lead. Attitude affects an individual's perception towards guiding other an offering solution to complex challenges. According to the gender role theory, women learn feminine duties at young age, which influences their mental attitude and future careers. Appelbaum, Audet, and Miller (2013) states attitude provokes the view of preserving certain individuals as better leaders than others in the society. Women's negative view of leadership contributes to the inefficiencies and incompetent results in some positions. In addition, attitude is intricately linked to motivation and therefore, low morale exhibited by women leaders creates a dull atmosphere and sluggish pace of working by juniors in an institution. Self-confidence and quality leadership requires strong character engrossed by self-certainty and trust for successful achievements.

Pew Research Centre (2015) indicates that women tend to internalize a second-class attitude that negatively affects their self-confidence. Lack of confidence reflects unworthiness in top positions hence poor leadership image. The relative deprivation theory stipulates that women express satisfaction with little achievements as compared to men. For instance, a woman would be contented to work in the same rank as a man, but with a lower income level than the male colleague. The character of women to accept less than men signifies low self-confidence and facilitates poor reward system in appreciation of excellent leadership skills. Notably, the composure and leader emergence regression model help in improving the leadership predictive abilities of an individual to fill a vacant position.

"Looking at the roles of women at home as mothers, as discussed in literature, women with who have made it to senior positions and at the same time have families are called freaks" (Williams & Dempsey, 2014). This quote came from a female consultant interviewed by Williams and Dempsey (2014) regarding top-level leaders with children. Stone and Hernandez (2013) argue that by virtue of their care-giving responsibilities in the home, women are less able than men to meet the time demands of professional jobs. They studied the flexibility bias facing mothers in higher education who request work flexibility in order to balance their time between leadership roles and care-giving responsibilities. In their study, Stone and Hernandez found that 76% of all participants experienced some sort of stigma related to work status and motherhood, including taking maternity leave. Stone and Hernandez (2013) learned that when a woman in a leadership role identifies herself as a mother, it links her with the "inability to carry out one's job. Even women without children in leadership roles said when they were of childbearing age they were marked as "suspicious" because of their status as "potential mothers" (Stone & Hernandez, 2013).

Many mothers feel "overwhelmed by trying to be the type of wife and mother they believe they should be while working in demanding full-time administrative positions" (Dindoffer et al., 2011, p. 283). For those mothers who do reach the leadership roles they seek, many feel they have sacrificed personally (Dindoffer et al., 2011). For some, the pressure of the second shift at home becomes too strong, forcing mothers to opt-out of managerial and leadership positions (Dindoffer et al., 2011; Dominici et al, 2009). Second shift refers to the second, non-paid job that working mothers face once they return home from their paid job. This includes responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, taking their children to after-school activities, helping children with homework, bathing children, and ckaring for them when they are ill.

Spivey (2005) indicated that when mothers do interrupt their careers, it might take them over 20 years to regain the negative effects of wages lost after an extended absence to care for children. In their study, "Do Babies Matter: The Effect of Family Formation on the Lifelong

Careers of Academic Men and Women," Mason and Goulden (2002) learned that women with children are much more likely to opt-out of academia than men or women without children. They stated fifty nine percent of married women with children indicated they were considering doing so. And women with children were also far more likely than the other groups to cite children as one of the reasons they changed their career goal away from academia. Not surprisingly, on another question series asking about sources of high stress as a postdoc, women with children were the most likely to indicate that balancing career and family was a source of high stress for them (over ¾ cited this as a source of high stress). (Mason & Goulden, 2002, p. 15).

Williams and Dempsey (2014) explained the opt-out phenomenon further, some women drop out of the workforce, abandoning careers they have spent decades building and becoming economically vulnerable in the process. "Other women keep working and become subject to criticism about their parenting or their commitment to their jobs or both, placing them in the uncomfortable position of being the broken ones, the women missing the gene that drives women back to the home, where, the story line goes, mothers belong". (p. 128). Although many mothers struggle with the decision to leave leadership positions in order to stay home with their children, most mothers in higher leadership positions return to work shortly after having their children; the consequences of interrupting one's career trajectory appear too severe for top-level aspiring mothers (Spivey, 2005). Stone and Hernandez (2013) reported, "Among mothers, college- educated women have the highest labour force participation rate" (p. 239). They explained that the overall trend among women fitting the demographic of the opt-out phenomenon is downward, and "at-home mothers are the minority of college-educated women (on the order of 20 percent)" (Stone & Hernandez, 2012, p. 50), demonstrating that college-educated women are remaining at their jobs to assist in supporting their families financially, even if they would prefer to opt-out, which is the case in most sectors.

Many women with children who decide to stay in administrative and leadership positions will face what Williams and Dempsey (2014) described as the maternal wall. 2They defined the maternal wall as consisting of both descriptive bias, in the form of strong negative competence and commitment assumptions triggered by motherhood, and prescriptive bias disapproval on the grounds that mothers should be at home or working fewer hours". (Williams& Dempsey, 2014, p. 21).

They concluded that women with children are rarely at the top of the professional world. Mothers are stereotyped as benevolent and family-centred, traits that conflict with those typically associated with administrative leadership. Williams and Dempsey explained that this conflict forces women to prove their commitment to the institution repeatedly, at a rate higher than men and childless women.

Another struggle that mothers in leadership face the most is the conflict that arises when a child is sick. People tend to remember when women have to leave early or stay home to tend to a child, and may even hold it against them (Marcus, 2007; Williams & Dempsey, 2014). Marcus (2007) explained that mothers use "bias avoidance" to cloak family obligations from co-workers (p. 29). In other words, they may call in sick so that no one knows they are home because of their children; they do not want family obligations to halt their career track. Workplace flexibility is an option to assist men and women with children, and Williams & Dempsey (2014) reported that 79% of companies in the US offer workplace flexibility programs, this program also extends to South African companies.

Gender stereotypes influence not only the types and conditions of employment for women, but also career decision making, especially for men and sectors (Segovia-Perez et al. 2020). This´ is partially because of discrimination and gender stereotypes, women are historically associated with 'female' professions, which include lower working standards and lower remuneration (Segovia-Perez et al. 2020). Stereotypes are perceptions about the qualities that´ distinguish groups or categories of people (Schneider, 2004). They are typically thought of as over-generalizations, sometimes with negative connotations such as 'thinking ill of others without warrant' (Allport, 1954). Stereotypes can apply to any category that a society considers important, from gender to caste to religious affiliation, and have been acknowledged in the literature since the start of the twentieth century.

Stereotypes are further reinforced by various social mechanisms, such as the spill-over effect, which suggests societal gender roles may contaminate organizational roles and result in different expectations for female and male managers. In short, our gender belief systems include stereotypes and gender-role attitudes (Fiske, 2012). For women in leadership roles, the matter is complicated as the reference for potentially evaluating women are limited (Lee & James, 2007) and stereotyping is seen as the best bet. Stereotyping is based on familiar women's roles (mothers, wives, nurses, and so on) and the characteristics they embody, which are currently inconsistent with those that traditionally define a good business leader.

A female advantage in leadership style which has been discussed previously might be offset by disadvantages that come from prejudice and discrimination against women as leaders. Prejudice consists most of the time of unfair and negative evaluation of a group of people based on stereotypical judgments of the group rather than the behaviour or qualifications of its individual members. When people hold stereotypes about a group, they expect members of that group to possess characteristics and exhibit behaviour consistent with those stereotypes (Werth & Mayer, 2008). Individual women are very often perceived as selfless, warm, and communal whereas men are perceived as assertive, instrumental, and agentic which people perceive as characteristics of successful leaders. This perception or prejudice hinders women to be assigned for top management positions where assertiveness and instrumentality is needed to succeed (Eagly & Carli, 2003;Rhode, 2016).

Thus, women who attain leadership positions have to make a trade-off between being liked versus respected, or 'damned if you do, doomed if you don't' (Catalyst, 2007). Also, as is often said, women have to work harder than men in order to prove themselves (Bielby & Bielby, 1988). The concern regarding the evaluation of their performance rather than focusing on opportunities for learning can result in, for example, not taking on challenging assignments which are necessary for career progression (Ely et al., 2011). Despite doubts about women's competence as leaders, one might expect that highly agentic female leaders would be able to overcome these difficulties.

However, people may perceive women who demonstrate clear-cut leadership ability as insufficiently feminine. That means that a female leader may be rejected because people perceive her to lack the agentic qualities associated with effective leadership or because she possesses too many of them. This rejection as 'too masculine' results from prescriptive gender role norms which are consensual expectations about what men and women should do and how they should act. Women should show communal behaviour and not too much agentic behaviour (Fiske & Stevens, 1993). These results have not changed substantially over time. Male leaders are portrayed as being assertive, self-reliant, competitive, objective, forceful, ambitious, emotionally stable, and self-confident (Paris, Howell, Dorfman, & Hanges, 2009). Presumably

the most important obstacle for women in management is the persistent stereotype that associates management with maleness.

As a result of these injunctive demands, female leaders often receive less favorable reactions than male leaders do for male-stereotypic form of leadership. This generalization was confirmed in a meta-analysis of Goldberg paradigm experiments on the evaluation of male and female leaders (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). Women received lower evaluations than equivalent men for autocratic leadership but comparable evaluations for democratic leadership. Also, women encounter more dislike and rejection than men do for showing dominance, expressing disagreement, or being highly assertive or self-promoting. In addition, dominance lowers women's but not men's ability to influence others. The resistance to female leadership demonstrated by these findings is problematic for female leaders, especially because it appears that men who currently hold most positions of power and authority generally find female leadership more objectionable than women do. Male evaluators rate female leaders less favourably than equivalent male leaders (Eagly & Carli, 2003), (Rhode, 2016).

Stereotyping can produce its own reality through the confirmation of the expectation, the so called 'self-fulfilling prophecy' which may constrain women's performance in the stereotypic domain (Watzlawick & Kreuzer, 1988). When a negative or positive stereotype exists about a certain group, members of the group perform in a way that confirms this stereotype. This phenomenon is called the 'stereotype threat' (Steele,1997).

For women in management, this may result in the internalization of the idea that women are less capable of assuming leadership roles. As such, they do not identify themselves with potential leadership positions, considered male territory, thus undermining their motivation and potentially leading to lower performance. Stereotype threat has been proven to impact women negatively in academic fields such as lower performance on math tests, and, importantly, in women's professional aspirations (Roberson & Kulik, 2007).

The impact of different cultures on the perception of female leadership Apparently the views of what constitutes effective leadership especially during economic crisis and the perceived characteristics of men and women as leaders are consistent across cultures, even the ones that are considered to promote gender egalitarianism. Thus the problem is fundamentally the same insofar that most managers, regardless of cultural background, consider stereotypical male behaviours as closer to good leadership than stereotypical female behaviour (Prime, Jonsen, Carter, & Maznevski, 2008; Schein, 2001; Williams, John & Best, 1990).

Nevertheless, beliefs regarding gender and leadership do vary among cultures and approaches. Managing these beliefs or stereotypes may vary from country to country and from organization to organization. Leadership and related behavioural values must be understood within a given cultural context, as stated by Geertz, (1973) 'There is no such thing as human nature or independent of culture.' Leadership research shows that cultures often have very different notions and perceptions about what behaviours contribute to outstanding leadership (Ardichvili & Kuchinke, 2002), different leadership prototypes (Paris et al., 2009), and differences in leadership style as perceived by male and female subordinates (Stoeberl, Kwon, Han & Bae, 1998).

Thus, cultures seem to vary in the degree to which they associate feminine and masculine stereotypic traits with women and men, respectively. This means that in some cultures, people are more likely to describe women with feminine stereotypic traits and men with masculine stereotypic traits than in other cultures. Several studies have shown how

acceptance of certain leadership behaviours such as being assertive or affective varies between cultures (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). For example, collective cultures tend to stress traditional authority (Hofstede, 1980), (Triandis, 2001), which would predict perceived typical male leadership attributes as more appropriate than perceived typical female leadership styles.

Think Manager Think Male (TMTM) (The glass cliff)

The 'think manager – think male' association (TMTM) underlies many gender inequalities in the workplace. However, research into 'the glass cliff' demonstrates that the suitability of male and female managers varies as a function of company performance such that in times of poor performance people may 'think female' (Ryan & Haslam, 2005; 2007). As previously observed, much of the evidence regarding the challenge for gender differentiation in the workplace can be seen to reflect people's implicit theories about leadership and gender. More specifically, they can be seen to arise from the perceived incompatibility between beliefs about what it means to be a good leader and what it means to be female (e.g., Agars, 2004; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989; Schein, 1973, 1975, 2001). Along these lines, Berthoin Antal and Izreali (1993: 63), suggest that "probably the single most important hurdle for women in management is the persistent stereotype that associates management with being male" Early work examining stereotypes of managers, of men, and of women, and the relationships between these stereotypes, was conducted by Schein (1973, 1975).

Results demonstrated that both male (Schein, 1973) and female (Schein, 1975) managers believed that men were more likely than women to possess the characteristics associated with managerial success. Indeed, of the ninety-two descriptors used, sixty were seen to be characteristic of both managers and men, including being emotionally stable, aggressive, (having) leadership ability, self-reliant, competitive, self-confident, objective, ambitious, well-informed, and forceful.

Consistent with the notion of women as crisis managers, as noted above, in Schein's (1973, 1975) original studies, there were a small number of traits associated with managerial success that participants believed women were more likely to possess than men. These researchers replicated the glass cliff effect and in doing so demonstrated that while masculine attributes associated with success predicted the appointment of leaders in times of success, feminine attributes associated with crisis predicted appointments in times of crisis.

Women Leaders in the Petroleum industry

South Africa is the second largest country in terms of refining capacity in Africa, the first being Egypt. South Africa processes approximately 20 million tons of crude oil per annum, in addition to owning one of the world's largest coal-to-motor fuels plants, Sasol (KPMG, 2016). Sasol supplies 44% of the country's fuel demand. About 90% of the country's fuel service stations are supplied by large oil companies like Shell, BP, Sasol, Engen and Total. The price for the fuel is fixed by the Department of Energy. The presence of many big oil companies shows that the sector is highly competitive, which in turn implies low profit margins.

Women representation still lags in the petroleum industry, at 9%. The sector traditionally relies on engineers for its workforce, historically being men. "Historically, few women studied in these areas, the pipeline of women is smaller than men than in other areas," explained Lameez Omarjee (2016). Women continue to be markedly underrepresented in leadership positions in organizations. Michelle, Ryan & Alexander Haslam (2007), further explains that despite barriers, the number of women who occupy management positions is

slowly increasing than ever before (Bullard & Wright, 1993; Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2005; Dreher, 2003; Equal Opportunities Commission, 2002). This increase in representation has focused on challenges that both the media and the research spotlight on the way in which women leaders perform once placed in these leadership roles. As a result, commentators are continually asking a series of probing questions. How good are women managers and leaders? Are they as good as men? What happens to the companies that appoint women to senior positions? Indeed, it was questions of exactly this form that inspired the researcher to interrogate some of the challenges that are faced by women in leadership, particularly mothers as leaders in the petroleum sector as petroleum industry, sampling Engen Petroleum Africa, with the aim of exploring an alternative model to the usual notion of a Western male as the prototypical leader in order to ensure equality and justice towards women, especially mothers.

Michelle, Ryan & Alexander Haslam (2007) further explain that women's march into senior positions has been far from smooth. Other challenge is that in the first instance, women managers tend to receive greater scrutiny and criticism than men, and they tend to be evaluated less favourably, even when performing exactly the same leadership roles as men (Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992). Workers also express a tendency to prefer male supervisors to female ones (for example, Simon & Landis, 1989), and many men particularly male managers remain unconvinced about the effectiveness of women leaders (Sczesny, 2003). An obvious question here is whether this is a reflection of real differences between men and women or whether it is a symptom of additional barriers that women encounter once they have broken through the glass ceiling. This then leads to a need of alternative model that focuses on women especially mothers as leaders in order to unleash full potential of women leadership.

Legal Framework in South Africa

Since 1994, massive political transformation has taken place in South Africa and this in turn has affected the country's gender policies and relations. The government has endeavoured to remove gender barriers and to provide more leadership opportunities for women in an effort to draw them into various economic sectors to be successful alongside their male contemporaries. (Bates-Earner, Karin, Lee, Lim, & Kapila, 2012). Gender equality is embodied in legislation such as The Bill of Rights of the Constitution and The Employment Equity Act (EEA), which both aim to achieve the equal treatment of men and women in leadership in all economic sectors. Despite the many efforts to achieve gender equality, through legislation such as the EEA, Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) and the Commission for Gender Equality, South Africa is still contending with the challenges of inequality in the economic sector (Anon, 2016). The government has also tried to support women in the petroleum industry specifically in the form of various legislation aimed at transforming it from a male dominated industry (The Report on the Status of Women in South African Economy, 2015). Despite this, it appears that drastic changes in policy are necessary in order to achieve gender equality (Majola, 2015).

3. Research design

The study used a mixed-method research design because using both qualitative and quantitative methods in combination enriches research as the strength of one complement the weaknesses of the other (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2007). Mixed method is a procedure for collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative research methods in a single study to understand a research problem. Scholars have indicated that the justification of using the mixed-method for the study is to draw from the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of

the quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Williams, 2007).

The population under study included all women who are in executive level, senior level and well as middle level of leadership in petroleum industry in South Africa, with Engen, Shell and VVTI are the target companies. The sampling frame was produced by getting a list from each division HR Manager from these companies. The individual lists were then collated into the sampling frame which consisted of all women leaders. The study developed the sample size based on a Cochran (1977) computation as shown below:

$SS = (Z\text{-score})^{2*}p^{*}(1-p) / (\text{margin of error})^2$
$SS = (1.96)^{2*}0.5*(1-0.5) / (0.05)^2$
$SS = 3.8416*0.25 / 0.0025$
$SS = 384.16$
(Z-score is 1.96 for a 95% confidence level)
$SS \text{ Adjusted} = (SS) / 1 + [(SS - 1) / \text{population}$
$SS \text{ Adjusted} = (384.16) / 1 + [(384.16 - 1) / 137619]$
$SS \text{ Adjusted} = 384.16 / 1 + [383.16 / 137\ 619]$
$SS \text{ Adjusted} = 384.16 / 1.00278420857$
SS Adjusted = 383.093388105
Where SS   = Sample Size
     FP   = Proportion where population is not known (Common to use 0.5)
     SS Adjusted   = Sample Size Adjusted
This is calculated at desired level of confidence of 5% margin of error with 95% confidence.

Based on the above calculation, in this study, the sample size of 383 was determined from an estimated population of 137 619. Therefore, this sampling strategy ensured that all the population of the women in leadership was fairly represented in an attempt to achieve the aim and objectives of this research.

6. Results

The study interrogates the similarities and differences identified and justified accordingly. The researcher analyzed the collected data simultaneously in a bid to achieve optimum results. The researcher discovered that triangulation research design method was less time consuming than other methods. The results proved that the qualitative and quantitative research method designs were aligned and the reasons were due to the selected population, understanding of the subject and aligned questions in both the structured questions and research instrument (Strydom 2011).In light of the fact that this study used a mixed methodological research design, this chapter serves to combine the findings from each of the three stages and to explore the themes that arose as a result of the investigation.

Inorder to answer the research topic challenges faced by women in leadership within petroleum industry in SA, ten challenges were hypothesized and eight of them were found to be significantly relevant to make conclusions that they were affecting women in leadership roles. The conclusions are provided against each operational research question, based on both the quantitative and qualitative findings as a build up to the overall conclusion addressing the main research question. The eight challenges are affecting women. These challenges are interconnected because one challenge can be caused by another and therefore, they are all linked, for instance, lacking confidence can be caused by the "Most people in the room being men' problem.

The study findings have cemented that there are challenges that are associated with the perception related to petroleum industry being male dominated industry. There was enough evidence to support this tenet, with regards to the challenges that are associated with perception related to petroleum industry being male dominated industry. Male-dominated sectors and vocations are particularly susceptible to reinforcing macho stereotypes, which makes it even more difficult for women to achieve success in these fields. This frequently causes women in this industry to feel awful, since they aspire to be the greatest, which is obviously impossible. As discussed in literature (Born et al., 2018; Harvard Business Review, 2021), women in male-dominated businesses have a poor opinion of their relative performance. Male-dominated fields like engineering can present hurdles for women, whether through overt discrimination or subtle forms of bias. As a result, many women leave the industry because they go out of their way to prove that they are just as good as males (Harvard Business Review, 2021).

Another factor that was found to characterize the petroleum industry in South Africa is the challenges that are associated with woman managing many roles: business and personal (work-life balance). The study revealed that female employees' judgments of their work-life balance, physical appearance, and sense of personal identity, all significantly influence their leadership roles. It is again due to the fact that the industry is male dominated that women's decisions on whether or not to have children or devote their time to their jobs affect them. In literature, Chamorro-Premuzic 2020, Shinbrot et al. 2019, Evans & Maley 2020 highlighted the ability of women to balance the demands of family duties with their career ambitions. Participants were asked what does being a leader and a woman/mother mean to them, to which they indicated that it means multi-tasking, balancing work and the personal life. This means that there is need for supportive measures to ensure that women succeed as leaders in the industry, and also that they are able to balance their roles as mothers and as managers in their workplaces.

The study also unveiled that there are challenges that are associated with playing the games i.e. men have a way of doing things, which includes building alliances, sourcing votes before meetings, and preparing their positioning beforehand through golf games. These are the difficulties that arise as a result of women's lack of access to crucial informal networks, such as the golf course, sporting activities, or even just simple after-work drinks. The respondents indicated that often, males assume that women do not want to participate in these types of gatherings, and as a result, they do not invite them. This exclusion of women, together with the work-life balancing factors, go hand in hand and hinder women from unlocking their full potential. For decades, golf is the conventional method of developing customer connections, and it continues to be so in many businesses today. Despite the fact that more and more women are participating in golf, the sport remains a largely male-dominated activity (Dresden et al., 2018). Men's bonding, according to a study published by the National Bureau of Economic Research in the journal "*The Old Boys' Club: Schmoozing and the Gender Gap*," has been identified as one of the factors contributing to discrepancies between men and women in leadership roles in the workplace. This means the industries need to restructure when it comes to social networking events, so that they are more inclusive, in order to fully exploit talent in women as leaders as well.

The presentation of the quantitative results attested to the fact that most participants agreed that there are also challenges that are associated with women being more cautious about risk taking. This means that when compared to men, females are more likely to consider the consequences of taking a risk, whereas males are more likely to take chances. The study results indicated that the society takes women as risk averse people and as such, are not expected to

be in positions of authority in organizations, such as CEOs and executive managers. However, the participants made comments that women's extreme caution may be more attributed to their relatively disempowered position, rather than to their biological makeup, as many women are already at a disadvantage in the workplace, as compared to men from the earlier mentioned challenges (Petrus Holtzhausen & Naidoo, 2016). On the other hand, research from the domains of social psychology, physiology, and medicine suggests that traditionally characterized risk-taking behaviours are biased towards men, but risk-taking behaviours engaged by women have been less defined or investigated, despite the fact that women are risk takers as well.

Additional detrimental challenges demonstrated by study finding is that women choose to stay in the background, out of limelight so as not to attract attention. In essence, women are burdened with the perception that their gender group's success in the organization will be significantly more difficult than that of their male counterparts; this contributes to feelings of threat and distress, as well as the perception that they will be unsupported in the organization. This is also linked to the challenges associated with women lacking confidence in themselves and their ability to do anything anyone can do. Lack of self-confidence or capacity gap is a big challenge in the petroleum industry, as numerous women expressed concerns about their ability to take on a leadership role, citing, for example, a lack of previous leadership experience. This is exacerbated by the social norms and expectations about what leadership is and entails playing a role in influencing outcomes. Self-assessed inexperience and a lack of confidence in one's ability to lead as a result makes women in positions fail to excel in their work. This perception is however linked to male dominancy in the industry, because women in female-dominated workplaces have a more positive perception of their relative performance than those in male dominated (Petrus Holtzhausen and Naidoo, 2016). viii)   How confident did you feel about applying for leadership position?

Participants were asked how confident they were when applying for the leadership position, the majority of the participants 95 (71,5%) said they were very confident or confident because they had qualifications and experience, as compared to the other participants 7(5,3%) who said they were not confident, mostly due to lack of exposure in any leadership roles, 30 (22,7%) said they were fairly confident and felt that management knew them and had faith in their abilities. Other participants, 75 (24%) did not answer the question, either did not apply for the leadership position or opted not to answer the question. Oo et al. (2019) examined early career women in construction, focusing on their career choices and barriers. The study examined the factors affecting women's career choices in construction and the barriers that they face at the early career stage.

In terms of the barriers, four statistically significant barriers noted were difficult to integrate into masculine culture in the industry, stressful and competitive working culture, long and inflexible working hours; and lack of informal networks for career opportunities.

The "Most people in the room being men" challenges which are associated with the pressure of being the only one can be overwhelming, was the other area that was pointed out and supported by research to be common in the industry like every other industries in South Africa too (Petrus Holtzhausen & Naidoo, 2016). Study findings showed that it is difficult for female leaders to walk into a business meeting and realize that she is the only female in the room. This challenge can be turned into an opportunity to highlight distinctive skills and perspectives, instead of shrinking back.

The challenges associated with lack of support structures and being hard to build a support network in a "boys club" world is another challenge that is poised to women in leadership. This is supported by a study conducted by the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO, 2017), which found that over 48% of women in business find it challenging to establish a strong support network in male-dominated sectors. Although faced with a difficult situation, women have an incredible opportunity to collaborate and form strong support networks.

The conclusion drawn from this discussion is that the study was able to obtain evidence on eight challenges as found in the literature and failed to get any evidence on challenges to do with Think Manager Think Male (TMTM) syndrome and that of women having to higher standards that their male counterparts. From the discussion we can make conclusion that the challenges are 50% from the women centered and the other challenges are societal in nature. Though this is not clear cut as for instance we can say most of the people in the room as a challenge exaggerated by the fact that the women themselves fail to take it as an opportunity to be outstanding. Further, lack of confidence and negative impressions around women leadership are held by both men and women. It is these reasons that make the problem tough to handle.

Moreover, the factors discussed below are associated with women lacking of confidence in themselves, lack of adequate skills, burden from domestic responsibilities, as well as some religious factors.The majority of the participants strongly agreed that there are factors affecting women lacking confidence in themselves, so we can conclude that this is one of the major factors that plays a role in influencing how women perform as leaders in the petroleum industry. Women in the petroleum business have expressed worries about their ability to assume a leadership role, citing, for example, a lack of previous leadership experience as a major source of frustration. Because of social conventions and expectations about what leadership is and entails, the outcomes were influenced in part by these factors (Petrus Holtzhausen & Naidoo, 2016).

This is in line with the findings by Shinbrot et al. (2019), who also identified complex and often hidden issues, such as lack of self-confidence, which hinders perceived access to leadership positions, and differences between women, which make it difficult to find comprehensive solutions. This has also been found to be a serious obstacle even in developed countries like Australia. Research by Evans and Maley (2020) concluded that the impact of unconscious bias on women arising from ingrained assumptions about gender roles and the ideal characteristics of leaders remain entrenched given the substantial strides made in women's educational achievement and engagement in non-traditional occupations was the major obstacle for women to take their leadership roles effectively.

The other factors pointed out by the participants include the overburdening domestic responsibilities. The majority of the participants agreed that women are overburdened with responsibilities at home and as such, fail to show their full potential at work as leaders. This goes in line with the research findings that balancing work life is a challenge for women. Family responsibilities, as discussed by Oo et al. (2019), is one of the most difficult hurdles for women seeking to climb the leadership ladder (Eagly & Carli, 2007; Sandberg, 2013.

Domestic responsibilities involve tasks that are carried out within a household in order to guarantee that the basic requirements of its members are addressed, such as cooking and cleaning. According to a report by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2019, in India, women spend up to 352 minutes per day on domestic

work, which is 577 percent more than men (52 minutes) and at least 40 percent more than women in South Africa and China. This means that this factor is a major one in terms of contributing to woman failing to unlock their full potential in workplaces.

Religious factors were also found to be significant in negatively affecting women in leadership. The findings of the study revealed that religious and cultural influences have a profound effect on societal attitudes, thoughts and behaviours about women, and this ultimately affects their leadership roles. This is in line with a study by Udoh, Folarin and Isumonah, (2020), who indicated that religious beliefs and doctrines can be used as a weapon to silence women's potential across different sectors. However, religion can also be viewed from a certain perspective to provide equal rights for women to obtain, utilize opportunities around them to become great leaders in business. Religious leaders, while focusing on the equality of all beings, can use this to instil the notion of eliminating oppressive patriarchal and cultural frameworks.

The presentation of the quantitative results attested to the fact that most participants agreed that lack of adequate skills is a factor that influences women in leadership. The number of women with the training and abilities to break into the industry and move into leadership roles is significantly lower, since they have unequal access to education in sectors that are often dominated by men, including STEM. This is in line with the study by Poltera, (2019) who noted that it will be a challenging task to put more women in positions of leadership without promoting adequate skills. Despite the adequacy of education discussed earlier, and the fact that the respondents when asked there pulling factors in assuming leadership roles, they pointed out skills as one of them, more work must continue throughout careers in the industry to strengthen the ability of women to lead.

On legal barriers or poor implementation of legislation that promotes gender equality, the majority of the participants indicated that this does not affect their leadership capabilities. This may be due to the fact in addition to being enshrined in the Constitution, gender equality is protected and promoted by South Africa's Promotion of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act of 2000, Employment Equity Act of 1998, Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and Related Matters) Act of 2007, and Domestic Violence Act of 1998, among others. According to the Commonwealth discussion paper by Hinds (2017), there is growing numbers of governments and businesses taking decisive steps to increase women's representation in leadership positions, including through legislation, regulatory reform, governance reform and other initiatives in South Africa. Other initiatives include raising awareness of gender bias and empowering women through empowerment programmes. Positive action measures are slowly but steadily making a difference in some nations (Dryding, 2021), when it comes to increasing the proportion of women in political leadership and positions in commercial and public boards of directors.

From the study findings, there is no sufficient evidence to support the factors associated with leadership positions not appealing to women. We can conclude that it does not in any way hinder woman to unlock their full potential, just the same as the factors that are associated with the constant stereotype encounter that "women are more emotional and less decisive than men". We can conclude that there is insignificant agreement that there are factors associated with the constant stereotype encounter.

The factors are associated with women lacking adequate education was not supported by the study findings. Educational opportunities are essential for a country's development, as well as for its citizens' personal growth and development. According to the Commission for

Gender Equality in South Africa (2018), more girls than boys are now graduating from secondary school and enrolling in institutions of higher learning. This is in line with Afrobarometer findings, South African men and women are about equally likely to have completed secondary school (62% of men, 63% of women), as well as some form of post-secondary education (21% and 20%, respectively).For this, education adequacy is not a factor that inhibits women from unlocking their full potential.

From the findings about the factors and challenges that affect women in the Petroleum industry in South Africa, what is common among the responses is the importance of inner strength and embracing the complexity and diversity of women in leadership; the pressing need for more data and theoretical research on the topic to build and further understanding and evidence.

7. Conclusions and recommendations

To answer the question, "What are the challenges experienced by women in leadership within the petroleum industry?" Ten challenges were postulated, and eight of them were determined to be significantly important to draw conclusions about how women in leadership roles were affected. These issues can be said to be interrelated, since one challenge can be caused by another and so they are all linked. For example, lack of confidence can be created by the "Most people in the room being men" problem. The study's findings have confirmed that most of the issues are linked with the view of the petroleum business as a male-dominated industry. There was sufficient evidence to support this concept as the main challenge that results in other challenges. Male-dominated industries and occupations make it even more difficult for women to succeed in these domains, as the women lack confidence in themselves. This challenge should be used to motivate women and make it an opportunity to succeed.

There is little evidence to substantiate the factors linked with leadership roles being unappealing to women, according to the conclusions of the study. We can conclude that the stereotype that "women are more emotional and less decisive than men" does not prevent women in leadership roles from realising their full potential, just as other factors connected with the stereotype that "women are more emotional and less decisive than men" do not. The following recommendations were made based on the study's findings:

- Considering that there are challenges, such as the perception of the petroleum industry as a man dominated industry, the author recommends that more effort should be put on promoting women leadership in the petroleum industry through enforcing more measures. Despite the presence of the gender policy on promoting women leadership, there is need to implement a radical gender inclusive leadership policy in petroleum industry to deal with the male dominant perception in this sector. This can be more effective if the participation of male activists is considered as champions in advancing women's leadership in this industry. If this perception is done with, other challenges will be turned into opportunities.
- Considering the finding that women lack confidence in themselves, it is recommended that industry wide campaigns are done, targeting women. There is need to boost sector women's leadership development programmes to cover issues like emotional intelligence in leadership and how to deal with preconceptions and cultural prejudices.
- Moreover, it was also revealed that male dominancy is also another source of challenge to women leadership, this study thus recommends that there is need to promote good governance and ethics committees that will function as watchdogs to ensure gender

inclusive leadership in petroleum sector industry. This will deal with, "men playing games", the "boys club" world, and most people in the room being men and create an ethically balanced system supported by processes that allow for the creation of a monitoring instrument.

- The study findings have shown that the greatest challenge is to deal with women centred problems such as lack of confidence and also women preferring to stay behind. Therefore, we recommend that sensitization programs for aspiring women leaders should be implemented through dialogue and other appropriate activities aimed at encouraging active participation in women leadership. This will allow the development of mechanisms to encourage women at all levels also to support other women in the workplace.

- Findings have also shown that women view leadership in a good way such that those in leadership have potential to uplift and encourage other fellow women. This therefore means that if a mentorship program is initiated, specifically in the petroleum industry, to have role model leaders to coach young women. Women in positions of leadership should work to support other women- should pave the way for others to follow in their footsteps, working diligently to dispel negative stereotypes about female leadership. Training and mentoring women leaders is critical for two reasons: it helps them gain confidence and develop a positive relationship with their jobs, which may be two of the barriers that prevent them from achieving leadership positions in the first place.

- Domestic burdens have been noted to be one of the major factors affecting women. Therefore, it is imperative that supportive households, communities and organizations are developed to promote women to reach their full potential. In collaboration with the South African government, the Petroleum industry can promote awareness of social attitudes and values that prevent women from participating in leadership roles.

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