Women's Career Advancement And Underrepresentation Within The South African Public Service

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Abstract: This article enlightens on improvement of women's participation in labour and employment. Women in administrative positions within the South African Public Service continue to increase however at the management level it does not increase at the same proportion. This article evaluates the fundamental relationship between employees' perceptions of managerial and gender roles and the gender equity policy in selected public organisations. Data was collected through a survey administered to two hundred and sixty-five (265) middle and senior employees. Analysis revealed negative relationship between women's managerial competency and women's career advancement (t = -.475, p < .317); significant relationship between gender equity policy and women's career advancement (t = 2.494, p < .146); and insignificant positive relation between gender role perceptions and women's career advancement (t = 1.376, p < .605). The findings reveal women's career advancement as being impaired by barriers with continual under representation at the managerial level within the South African Public Service.

Keywords: gender equity policy, underrepresentation, career advancement, Progression, Gender, Gender equity

I. INTRODUCTION

A few government policies have been introduced within the last twenty-three (23) years with the creation of the Commission for Gender Equality through an act within the constitution of South Africa. The Commission for Gender Equality primarily duty is to promote respect for gender equality and protecting, developing and attaining gender equality (Terjesen, Aguilera and Lorenz, 2015). This has been applauded by various public and private institutions who truly find it necessary to promote the respect and support female employees. The South African government continues to encourage and compel the private and public sectors to adopt affirmative action programmes such as education and training schemes as well as appointments in the same way as those defined for the public service (Altbach, Reisberg and Rumbley, 2009). In south Africa, women occupy only 3.6% of chief executive, 5.5% of chairperson and 21.4% of executive managerial positions (Farmer, 2013). The Business Women's Association of South Africa (2016) in its recent findings (Table 1), replicates the current appointments women in management positions and how much these women have been excluded from key decision-making positions within the organisations. It further revealed how 59.9% state owned enterprise managers are men and 40.5% are women, and 61.8% public service senior managers are men while only 38.2% are women. Further, it shows that at the executive managerial level 70.7% are yet only 29.3% are women and in the directorship category 78.2% are men and women only 21.8%. Their data shows at the chairperson's position it consists 90.8% of men while women make up only 9.2%. The comparison is sharper at the CEO position - men figure at 97.6% while their female counterparts control only 2.4%. A close look at the trends between 2008 and 2015 confirms that women at the management level within the South African Public Service have been totally marginalised.

Percentage (%)	2015 (%)		2012 (%)	2011 (%)	2010 (%)	2009 (%)	2008 (%)
Gender	Male	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Management position							

CEOs	97.6	2.4	3.6	4.4	4.5	3.6	3.9
Chairpersons	90.8	9.2	3.5	5.3	6.0	5.8	3.9
Directors	78.2	21.8	17.1	15.8	16.6	14.6	14.3
Executive Mangers	70.7	29.3	21.4	21.6	19.3	18.6	25.3
Public service managers	61.8	38.2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
State owned enterprise Top managers	59.5	40.5	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Business Women's Association (BWA 2016)
Table 1: Women in management positions in South Africa

These statistics confirms how South African female employees can access the managerial level positions but only a few get to the top positions of chairperson and CEO. Considering this, it can be said that women's career advancement to the top management positions continue to be influenced by several career barriers. These barriers bring about under representation as well as bitter experiences encountered on the job by these women. This study sought to examine the effectiveness of the Gender Equity Policy in the achievement of career advancement for women within the South African Public Service. The scarcity of research addressing gender equity policy problems at the managerial level within developing countries makes it imperative to investigate the extent to which western perceptions are applicable in developing countries. There has been a great measure of studies surrounding the under representation of women managers and gender discrimination issues in the workplace (Cho, McLean, Amornpipat, Chang, Hewapathirana, Horimoto and Hamzah, 2015). Most organisations still do not recruit, promote, or support women workers on a par equal to men (Cho, et al., 2015). Scholars around the world (i.e., Heydenrych and Van Wyk, 2014; Nkomo and Ngambi, 2013; Hurst, Leberman and Edwards, 2016; Allen, French and Poteet, 2016; Shrestha, 2016; and Eagly and Carli (2007) and most especially in South Africa have identified several factors as barriers to career advancement for women. their studies focus around glass ceilings in workplaces as a major barrier to career advancement, managerial positions and leadership style in organisations.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ✓ To assess the relationship between women's managerial competency and career advancement of women.
- ✓ To determine the effect of gender equity policy on career advancement and underrepresentation of women in top management positions in South Africa.
- ✓ To establish the relationship between gender-role perceptions and career advancement of women.
- ✓ To also develop a conceptual framework depicting the relationship between variables of the study and women under representation in the public service.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ✓ Is there any relationship between women's managerial competency and career advancement of women?
- ✓ Does gender equity policy assist in advancing women representation in top positions in South Africa
- ✓ Is there a relationship between gender-role perceptions and career advancement of women?

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The need to influence and correct gender disparity and to increase the number of women in a managerial role within the South African Public Service sector is widely accepted. Measures to attain these objectives are well-established within the context of the South African legislation and policies. The framework illustrated in Figure 1 is used to investigate the factors (independent variables) hypothesized to influence women's career advancement. Career advancement, the dependent variable demonstrates a direct relationship between the variables (women's managerial competency, gender equity policy, and gender-role perceptions) and women's career advancement and under representation.
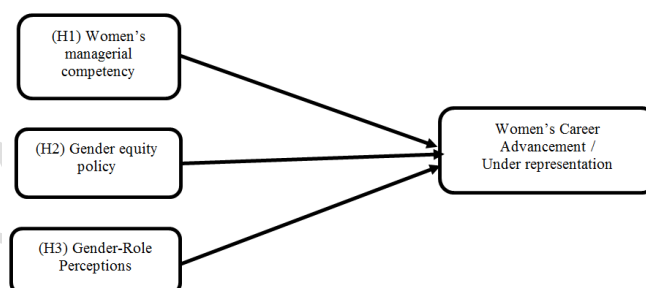

Figure 1: Conceptual framework of factors that influence career advancement for women

LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies have discussed gender differences in perceptions of workplace progression, women career advancement, affirmative action and gender transformation and equity in the South African workplace (Mathur-Helm, 2005; Garavan, O'Brien and O'Hanlon, 2006; Du Plessis and Barkhuizen, 2012; Lewis-Enright, Crafford and Crous, 2009). It is still apparent that the most prominent barriers identified in the literature include women's social existence derived from some fact of their physiology (Davis and Maldonado, 2015), and gender and leadership stereotyping. Research into gender roles stereotyping reveal there are common beliefs that women are inferior to men and that they lack the ability to deal with the challenges of senior managerial roles. A study released by the Business Women's Association in 2016 indicates that in 2015, only 38.2% of the females were employed at the managerial level compared to their male counterpart at 61.8%. This indicates how relevant the struggle for attainment of a desirable number of women participating at the top managerial level within the South African Public Service sector is. Women in the South African Public Service are engaged into middle management level but find it hard to proceed to higher level managerial posts. Despite numerous studies that have

clarified the barriers women face in the workplace, as well as extensive research into potential solutions to address these barriers, the pace of intervention from the various authorities has been slow. The 2012 edition of the South African Public Service Women in Top Management Positions revealed that women in top managerial positions have remained an elusive for past investigations as it is very difficult to get a current participation statistic. Thus, studies have not centered on gender equity at the managerial level within the South African Public Service. This provides evidence for studying under representation of women at the managerial level within the South African Public Service sector. This also makes it a matter of necessity for more extensive research to be conducted on the issue of under representation and factors preventing women from holding top managerial posts.

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON CAREER ADVANCEMENT AND UNDER REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN

The Employment Equity Act 55 (EEA) of South Africa (1998:5) was established in line with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) requirements for fair labour practices. It was also established to redress the effect of discrimination so that all the South African people can be well represented in the workforce. The South African Employment Equity Act 55 (1998) is also responsible for transforming the designated groups that were previously side-lined. These groups are now a significant component of the workforce that is changing conventional family roles and adapting to the white culture (Quanson, 2014). Likewise, one of the main objectives of the Employment Equity Act, 1995 was to break the glass ceiling that prevented women from advancing in their careers. The Act elaborates on measures to be taken by employers to ensure proper representation and treatment of the disadvantaged in the workforce so that they are given equal opportunities to advance in their jobs. Although, the process of developing employment equity plans and employment equity committees have already been initiated within the South African Public Service, the various management teams are mandated to drive the process that will have an impact on the stakeholders. The Employment Equity Act 55 of South Africa (1998) calls upon the employees and the employers respectively to increase the representation of women at the managerial level, and to eliminate gender discrimination. Studies have found women to be under represented in the following male-dominated professions and environments: information technology (Michie and Nelson, 2006); accounting managers (Hinson, Otieku and Amidu, 2006); computer gaming (Prescott and Bogg, 2011); quantity surveying (Haupt and Madikizela, 2009); architecture (Caven, 2006); and pilots (Davey and Davidson, 2000). However, Catalyst (2011) reported that countries such as Norway and Sweden currently have 40.1% and 27.3% of women holding board seats and chairs respectively (Catalyst, 2011). Catalyst stated further that "in 2011, 15.8% board seats and 5.3% board chairs were held by South African women" (Catalyst, 2011). North America has 53.9% and 46.1% of men and women respectively in the labour force. Over the last three decades, there has been a measured rise in the numbers of highly skilled female professionals and managers across different industries, which

has led to a gradual re-configuration of the top management positions from male towards female (Ismail & Ibrahim, 2007; Afande, 2015).

The South African Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (South Africa, 1998) affirms women's right to equal employment opportunities while gender transformation and equity progress in the South African workplace is still unacceptable (Du Plessis & Barkhuizen, 2012; Hicks, 2012; Lewis-Enright, Crafford & Crous, 2009). The representation of South African women in top managerial posts according to Business Women Association (2012) has however declined from 3.9 per cent in 2008 to 3.6 per cent in 2012. The South African government seems more committed to implementing policies to promote women representation in workplace. Despite this commitment on setting gender equity targets for the inclusion of women in senior management services (SMS) in the public service, and with the rate of recurrence of women employment and entrance into management positions, the government is yet to reach its target of 50% female representation at the management level. Men are still appointed to a significant proportion of executive positions in the public service, and women are still the minority in higher positions (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010; Kahn and Motsoeneng, 2014; Kahn and Louw, 2011).

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quantitative research design using survey research technique and standardised measuring instruments. "Quantitative research is highly formalized and controlled, with a range that is more defined, and which, in terms of the methods used, is relatively close to the physical sciences" (Bryman and Bell, 2015). It involves explaining phenomena by collecting numerical data analyzed using statistics (Bryman and Bell, 2015). According to Bryman and Bell (2015), research design could be explained to be a strategic procedural plan engaged for collection and analysis of data to evaluate a perspective; providing answers to the research questions, while controlling the variance (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). Subsequently, research studies may also be conducted in various ways, depending on the researcher. The plan and structure of this study is best achieved within the realms of the quantitative research design strategy which has been chosen because the study engages a self-administered questionnaire to collect data in numerical form and to measure the variables.

Research procedure

The sampling began once ethical clearance was obtained from the University of Witwatersrand Ethics Committee. Questionnaires were distributed to participants at selected organisations through their various human resource administrators. Confidentiality of participants was assured and upheld (Wiles, Crow, Heath and Charles, 2006). Additionally, the researcher informed participants about the right to withdraw from the research at any time if they so wish.

DATA ANALYSIS AND COLLECTION

The sampling began once ethical clearance from the relevant authorities was obtained. The raw data was then collected into a Microsoft Excel database, which was then used as input for the statistical procedure being engaged in conducting the statistical analysis. The analyses were carried out through statistical modelling studies (descriptive statistics, item analysis, inferential statistics, and analysis of variance). Data collection can be carried out using various methods i.e., interview, survey, publications etc. this study made use of administered questionnaire which conveniently sampled middle and senior employees at the surveyed organisation using the non-probability sampling strategy (Bryman & Bell, 2011). The sampling was carried out using selected public sector organisations (departments of education, social development, infrastructure, agriculture, environmental and rural affairs) within the Gauteng province. The purpose of the study was explained in the cover letter to the substantive questionnaire. A total of 286 questionnaire were administered; while 265 were returned (92% return rate), the 265 returned questionnaires were usable. Data was collected from respondents over a period of 120 days by the author with the assistance of the various administrative officers.

RESEARCH SETTINGS AND PARTICIPANTS

In this study, the intention is to study a relatively homogeneous sample to find out the perceptions around Gender Equity Policy, career advancement and under representation of women in managerial positions in selected public sector organisations (departments of education, social development, infrastructure, agriculture, environmental and rural affairs) within the Gauteng province. It focused on middle and senior employees and how women's careers have been affected by these policies along with the absence of women in the highest decision-making positions within the organisation. The study focused on the under representation and barriers experienced by women aspiring to join the highest decision-making bodies within the South African Public Service. Various studies on women in managerial posts relate the under representation of women at the executive level to a multitude of barriers inhibiting women's progress (Bagues and Esteve-Volart, 2010). The gender profile of the respondents (n=265) comprised 14.3% males and 85.7% females. A sample population of 286 middle and senior employees from the South African Public Service organisations within the Gauteng province was used to collect data for the research.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section provides in depth information determining if the theoretical relationships specified at the conceptualisation stage received support from the data. This is followed by discussions on interpretation of the results. The data collected from respondents regarding the basic issues involved in this study are presented and analyzed.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE SAMPLE

The sample consisted of 38 males (14.3%) and 227 females (85.7%). It presented an average 45.44 years, which indicates that most respondents were aged between 41-45 years (40.8%). The distribution on years of experience were as follows: 0-4 years (9.4%), 5-9 years (12.5%), 10-14 years (32.1%), 15-19 years (10.6%), 20-24 years (20.8%) and Above 25 years (14.7%), while those possessing either a postgraduate or an undergraduate degree were (87.5%) and (12.5%) respectively.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WOMEN'S MANAGERIAL COMPETENCY AND WOMEN' CAREER ADVANCEMENT

The multiple regression analysis reveals a non-significant negative relationship (Beta = -.043) between women's managerial competency and women's career advancement. However, the negative relationship was not supported by bivariate analysis though there exists a weak relationship between women's managerial competency and women's career advancement (r = .032, p < 0.605). Therefore, partial support was found for Hypotheses 1 which states that (there is a slightly insignificant positive relationship between women's managerial competency and women's career advancement).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GENDER EQUITY POLICY AND WOMEN' CAREER ADVANCEMENT

The bivariate correlation analysis reveals a significant slight positive relation between gender equity policy and career advancement of women (r = .129, p < 0.036). The multiple regression analysis also confirm hypothesis 2 (t = 2.494, p < .02) therefore, overall support was found for hypothesis 2 which states (there is a significant a slightly significant positive correlation between gender equity policy and women's career advancement).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER ROLE PERCEPTION AND CAREER ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

The bivariate correlation analysis indicates an insignificant slight positive relationship between gender role perception and career advancement of women (r = .090, p <0.146). The multiple regression analysis also shows a weak positive value for Beta (.099). Therefore, support was found for Hypothesis 1 which states (there is a relationship between gender-role perceptions and career advancement of women). the item analysis associated with the gender role perceptions demonstrates that "women exhibits better team-building skills than their male counterparts".

DISCUSSION

The concept of women's career advancement and under representation within the South African Public Service has been considered with a purpose of ascertaining relationships between the factors preventing women from climbing the

ladder and resulting into underrepresentation. The research design and methodology followed by data collation, the instruments used and the statistical analysis were extensively explained. However, from the data analyses it was discovered that there was:

✓ slightly insignificant positive relation between women managerial competency and women's career advancement;
✓ slightly significant positive correlation between gender equity policy and women's career advancement;
✓ an insignificant positive correlation between gender role perceptions and women's career advancement;
✓ not all the independent variables had a significant effect on women career advancement.

The results indicated that the items measured (variables) as postulated, as well as supported the theoretical framework underlying the postulated relationship between the variables, i.e., women's career advancement and under representation and gender-role perceptions, women's managerial competency and gender equity policy. This section provides in depth information determining if the theoretical relationships specified at the conceptualisation stage received support from the data. This is followed by discussions on interpretation of the results.

Women in workplace are believed to experience incessant employment related conflict than their male counterparts. This perception hinders women's promotion into higher positions, and most times lead to leads to discrimination against women in the workplace in such a way that men are appointed to higher positions whereas women are appointed to lower paying jobs (Hoobler, Wayne & Lemmon, 2009). The international Labour Organisation (ILO) reported in its "Women in Business and Management: Gaining Momentum, 2015 edition reveals that there are more women in decision-making roles than a decade ago. However, women are still under represented in decision-making and leadership positions. During the year 2000 and 2012, women's share of management in 25 countries has increased by more than 5 per cent with women making up 30 per cent or more of all managers in 70 countries. By 2013, the ILO Company Survey revealed 26 per cent of the world's chief executive officers were women, with the highest level of gender parity in Latin America and the Caribbean (40 per cent female chief executive officers) and Central and Eastern Europe (45 per cent female chief executive officers). At the global scale, however, with the exceptions of Colombia, Jamaica and Saint Lucia, there are more men than women in management positions (ILO, 2015). There is a belief that women do not have the potential to lead and that their managerial style is different to that of men, and can be detrimental to them and to the organization they lead (Mathur-Helm, 2005; Rosette & Tost, 2010). It is argued that women's leadership style is more people oriented, and men's more tasks oriented. Thus, while most women's leadership style might make subordinates feel inspired, it does not influence productivity in the workplace. Nevertheless, the gender diversity issue has been on the South African agenda for several years, this does not augur well for the advancement of women. Women have been revealed to explore challenging assignments and undergoing specific course or training to advance in their careers; placing oneself in a tough, challenging and stretchy assignment brings about real learning (Posholi, 2012). The best way to develop a career is undergoing specific course or training related to one's profession to ensure lifelong learning, re-skilling and up-skilling (Omang, Undie & Bassey, 2012; Posholi, 2012). The achievement employment equity and the implementation of affirmative action are not without challenges (Thomas, 2002; van der Bank, Mphahlani & Moloi, 2015).

The National Planning Commission's Diagnostic Report, written in 2011, highlights key challenges faced by South Africa on its path to an inclusive and just society as stated by the Constitution (National Planning Commission, 2013). Even though gender issues are not the sole focus of the report, the various challenges listed in the report directly or indirectly affects gender equity. These challenges explain the reasons behind some of the shortfalls in gender policy and ways in which the government, civil society and gender-activists can develop gender and empowerment policy to ensure these indirect obstacles are not neglected. Women managers however, are still battling with exotic and unfavorable working conditions influenced by traditional patriarchal attitudes, even though they have participated in work policies and legislation formulation (Da Silva Wells, 2004). Although Employment Equity Act No.55 of 1998 seems to have a positive effect; as it is meant to promote the implementation of affirmative action to redress the circumstance of female managers lacking acceptance and are faced with isolation from past discriminatory practices. This Act legitimizes the female equity struggle and creates the space for females to redress gender equality at the workplace (Trask, 2013; Mahasha, 2016). However, the South African government acknowledges that women in the past were subjected to different forms of discriminatory policies, behaviours and attitudes obstructed from full participation in the labour market (Mahasha, 2016).

The Labour Relations Act of 1995, section 2(1)(a) also states that unfair discrimination, whether direct or indirect, against an employee is prohibited on any arbitrary ground including gender, race, class, religion, sex, ethnicity and disability. In recent times, the Employment Equity Act has been aiming at redressing some of the injustices women experienced in the past, such as under-representation of women in senior and managerial positions (Manfredi, 2017). It is also very important to recognise recent efforts by the Gender Equality Commission towards promoting, respecting, protecting, developing and attaining gender equality in South Africa, just as the South African National Policy Framework for Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality guarantees procedures for accomplishing Gender Equality as key to South African change processes inside of all structures, procedures, establishments, approaches, and projects of the government, common society and the private segment (Manfredi, 2017). Archer and Lloyd (2012) explain Gender roles to be what people think about male and female categories. The potentials about what is suitable for each sex constitute the characteristics of gender roles (Holt & Ellis, 1998). Bem (1981) affirmed that there are individual differences in people's gender role stereotypes, in that some individuals are more gender-typed and hold to more traditional beliefs that women are dependent, illogical, and ineffective. In workplaces, male managers are stereotypically observed to be

independent, unemotional, competent, aggressive, dominant, logical, active, objective, in their dealings and having all the positive qualities of a good manager. In like manner, female managers are viewed as possessing the opposite qualities of male managers (Oakley, 2000). There is the presence of other restraining stereotypical opinions about women in upper executive positions, for example, their tone and pitch of voice, mode of dress, and physical appearance. However, Wajcman (2013) along with Powell and Graves (2003) believe people respond differently to female managers, compared to male managers; while favoring the males over female managers. This is mostly because, according to Stewart (1989) and Posholi (2012), in leadership or management, surrounding social structure invalidates and undercuts women's attempts to be effective, influential and powerful.

Bierema and Opengart (2002) also belief that women's career advancement is being affected by gender role. They held that men are believed to play all their roles well, while employed women, especially those who are in senior positions, have their roles such as being mothers and care-takers considered as unique contributions to their career advancement. In like manner, DiPrete and Buchmann (2013) reported that in Lesotho, girls receive more education than boys, but still they often fall into gender-specific roles of wife and mother once they complete school. Due to this setback, their chances at higher education and/or advancing their careers are stifled. It is only over the last few decades that women's role in the history of South Africa has, belatedly, been given some recognition. Many South African women continue to experience marginalization and discrimination in the workplace, in their homes and within the communities. Not only did most of the older studies focused on the achievements of men (often on their military exploits or leadership ability) virtually leaving women out of South African workplace. The reason for this "women underrepresentation" calls for a quick and prompt intervention. Even though, women were not expected to concern themselves with matters outside the home that was more properly the domain of men. Perhaps the two most noteworthy findings of this study relate to the effect of these career barriers on the advancement and under representation of women in workplace. However, some previous studies were consistent while others were not. This indicates that developments amongst women in the workplace may be continuously changing and evolving.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING RELIABILITY ANALYSIS

Nunnally (1978) identifies that only instruments with a modest reliability coefficient can be used to collect data for testing hypothesis. A Cronbach alpha indicating the reliability content of measuring scales above 0.70 is generally considered acceptable (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000; Pallant, 2010). Item-total correlations of above 0.20 were also considered as indicators of internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). The results of the reliability analyses in this study were satisfactory and acceptable in accordance with the above-mentioned

procedures. A summary of the reliability results for each of the measuring scales is presented in Table 2. All scales achieved reliability scores that exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. The results also showed that all items presented achieved an Item-Total correlation above the recommended threshold value (0.20) except one scale; gender role perception scale with reliability coefficient of 0.682 suggesting that one at least of the items for this scale should be eliminated. It was thus concluded that all the measurement instruments could be considered reliable for data collection and hypothesis testing.

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's alpha
Managerial Competency	7	0.739
Gender Equity Policy	7	0.848
Gender Role Perception	9	0.682
Women Career Advancement	7	0.938

Table 2: Measurement scale reliability results

CONCLUSIONS REGARDING DIMENSIONALITY ANALYSIS

The purpose of the dimensionality analysis was to confirm the uni-dimensionality of each scale and sub scale and, if necessary, to remove items with insufficient factor loadings. To examine the uni-dimensionality assumption, Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was conducted on all the measurement scales. The results indicated that all the measurement scales engaged in this study satisfied the uni-dimensionality assumptions. It was also discovered that all the items comprising the measurement scales demonstrated a highly satisfactory factor loading on the first factor. Factor loadings of items on the factor they are designed to reflect are considered satisfactory if they are greater than 0.50 (Kinnear and Gray, 2004). The higher the value of the loading, the more the factor explains the total variance of scores on the variable concerned (Kinnear and Gray, 2004).

To realise the objectives of this study, it became very important to first ensure that the measurement scales engaged in this study to assess the relationships were concept valid and internally reliable. It was necessary to establish the validity and reliability of the measurement scales to ensure that complete statistical results were attained when further analyses were performed. Based on the study, it is a common fact that women's career advancement within the public service sector is very slow while they are still being underrepresented. More importantly, the outcome of this study provided an empirical and methodological explanation to the recommendation by Eagly and Carli (2003) that gender role studies should be contextualized using scientific methodology. This outcome thus represents an incremental contribution to the existing body of literature in gender studies, particularly within the south African context.

Even though the statistical analysis of the study reveals that some women can defeat their cultural obstacles and societal norms to stand up for leadership positions, even

though they had to juggle their leadership positions with cultural expectations as explained by Burke and Collins (2001) and Connell (2014) to the extent that prejudice towards female employees is dependent on features of the gender role context as well as characteristics and biases of the investigation. This study provides support in terms of gender relativity and a changing argument and literature suggesting consideration of gender roles, there could be no gender difference in gender-managerial role effectiveness. The conceptual framework developed and validated in this study provides a framework for future studies in the areas of women's managerial competency, gender equity policy, gender-role perceptions, and career advancement of women. However, in summary, while the results of the study primarily confirmed the findings of previous studies, it also built on the relationship between the concepts (Women's managerial competency, Gender equity policy, Gender-role perceptions, and Career advancement of women). This study therefore forms the basis for future research in a similar or different organisational environment, especially as it is one of the very few studies conducted in the Gauteng province of the South African Public Service.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study therefore, based on the literature, and the empirical findings of the current study, a few recommendations are noteworthy. These are:

✓ Women should be encouraged and supported to compete for leadership positions. Also, mentoring women by providing them with tasks for leadership practice is of great importance to women's career development

✓ Establishment of well managed and updated data platforms to include: gender, education level, year spent on post and other critical aspects by the Government Departments to facilitate a cordial responsive decision making, policy formulation and implementation about addressing women underrepresentation and gender equality.

✓ It is also recommended that the basic education sector should provide an updated yearly data of female employees returning to work after dropping-out due to child birth and family commitment. This will give the concerned employee a strong sense of belonging as a follow up or induction.

✓ It is encouraged to create links between governments, intergovernmental organizations, regional institutions and non-state-actors (i.e., the private sector, civil society non-profit organizations and other stakeholders) to ensure a better use of its resources, increase synergies among initiatives, negotiate the allocation of scarce resources and encourage a collective sense of responsibility for attaining objectives.

✓ This study emphasizes that female employees outnumber their male counterpart in the higher education system yet women dominate lower management level while men dominate within the top managerial levels. There is need for concerted effort within the higher education and training sector to concretely encourage women into aspiring for top managerial positions.

✓ This research indicates that little data exists with respect to career advancement of women in managerial posts within the South African Public Service. Therefore, a set of guidelines for recording women's career advancement should urgently be developed and supported by the relevant government departments.

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