

DISSERTATION

SEEKING CULTURALLY ATTENTIVE CAREER ADVANCEMENT STRATEGIES
FOR WOMEN: PERSPECTIVES FROM ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements

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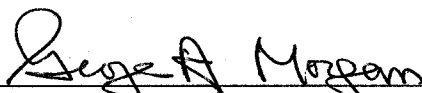
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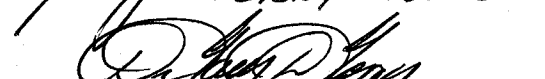
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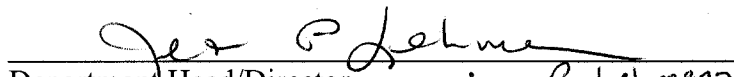
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

SEEKING CULTURALLY ATTENTIVE CAREER

ADVANCEMENT STRATEGIES FOR WOMEN: PERSPECTIVES

FROM ZIMBABWEAN WOMEN

There is scarcity of information on women managers in Zimbabwe despite the fact that women have entered the workforce in large numbers. This study offers a preliminary analysis of Zimbabwean women managers. This exploratory study locates women managers within the context of gender relations and culture in Zimbabwe and analyzes several factors that enabled a select group of senior-level Zimbabwean women to hold senior positions. This study is grounded in the social constructivist philosophy. Social constructivism was selected as the paradigm because it provides the interpretive framework within which the research questions could be explored. The research design involved phenomenological interviews using semi-structured open ended in-depth interviews. Ten women from different backgrounds and a cross-section of public, private, non-profit and other organizations were interviewed. The site was urban Zimbabwe, particularly Harare. With more women entering the Zimbabwean workforce, knowledge of strategies to advance women in the workforce is of critical value to Zimbabwe's development. The findings suggest that the culture in Zimbabwe has not changed much; hence the implementation of women advancement strategies borrowed from the west has not been sustainable because they are not compatible with Zimbabwean realities. The study suggests career advancement strategies that incorporate cultural dimensions of gender in the society. It views culture and its interaction with other systems, as a basis for women's advancement

strategies. The study has policy implications for the implementation of sustainable career advancement strategies for women.

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Dedication

To my late sister Auxilia who inspired me to stand up for what I believe in.

I love and miss you very much sisi.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The Problem

After gaining independence in 1980, the new Zimbabwean government took a proactive approach to addressing women's issues and freedoms. Pressure to address gender disparities was a historical product of women's active involvement in the struggle for national liberation in Zimbabwe and throughout Africa (Mandaza, 1986). Because of the equality between the genders during the protracted war, there was pressure to redress gender disparities in Zimbabwean society after independence. Since then, numerous laws and policies have been implemented to improve the circumstances of women (Ranchod- Nilsson, 2001).

Women in Zimbabwe currently form a significant portion of the nation's workforce and play a critical role in the development of the country. The proportion of women in the labour force increased from 17% in 1980 to 45% in 2000 (World Guide, 2001/2002). While Zimbabwean women have penetrated the workforce, few women have gained access to senior management positions in organizations. Muller (1994) stated that only a small group of elite African women have been able to attain professional or managerial positions in Zimbabwe. Women senior managers in public service constituted 19.7% of total management in 1999 (Zigomo-Nyatsanza, 2001). According to a Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum report (2001), in 2001, of the seven universities in Zimbabwe, only one had a female pro-vice chancellor; of 24 High court judges, 6 were

women and the first woman was appointed as a Wing Commander in the Air Force of Zimbabwe in the same year. The report noted that women had similar status in the private sector.

Women are major contributors to the economic development of their countries International Labor Organization (ILO, 2002). Recognizing female empowerment as a tool for sustainable development, the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD, 1994) stated that the empowerment of women and improvement of their status are important ends in themselves and are essential for achievement of sustainable development. Sustainable development cannot be achieved without the active involvement and participation of both men and women on a basis of full equality (ILO, 1997).

To get more women to advance into senior management positions in Zimbabwe, factors that contribute to career advancement need to be understood and included in women advancement programs and policies. A review of the literature reveals little information on the experiences and circumstances that enable Zimbabwean women to advance to senior management positions. A study that exclusively studied Zimbabwean women managers was conducted by Muller (1994) on the constraints faced by women in entering and retaining management positions within different sectors. The study documented the barriers that impede women's progress in all sectors of employment, and the kinds of societal restructuring and class action that must be undertaken if true change is to occur. Despite the existence of barriers, some women do move past the ceiling, but

relatively little is known about these women (Stewart-Belle, 1992). While the actions suggested by Muller are essential, comprehension of the factors involved in the advancement of women's careers is needed (Bullard & Wright, 1993). This exploratory study aims to reveal some of the factors that contribute to women's advancement as well as factors that enable them to overcome the constraints identified by earlier studies.

Most of the studies of the advancement of women to senior management positions in the past 30 years have been conducted in North American and European organizations (i.e., Davidson & Burke, 1994; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Tanton, 1994; White, Cox & Cooper, 1992). Consequently, the factors explaining the small proportion of women senior managers as well as the strategies required to increase their numbers, have been based on the contextual and institutional characteristics of these settings (Izraeli & Talmud, 1997). Bell, Denton and Nkomo (1993) postulated that earlier researchers assumed their findings to be applicable to all women. The social construction of women in different cultures is overlooked and considered to be secondary to gender. Thus, there is failure to recognize that context constitutes gender identities (Bettors-Reed & Moore, 1995; Muller, 1998).

In recent years, the significance of cultural context in examining women's career advancement has been acknowledged and efforts have been made to study factors that contribute to the advancement of women in different contexts (Adler & Izraeli, 1988, 1994; Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995; Limerick & Andersen, 1999; Linehan, 2000, 2001; Marcano, 1997; Muller, 1998; Muller & Rowell, 1997; Rana, Kagan, Lewis &

Rout, 1998). It has been realized that different cultures have different ways of perceiving the world, hence the need to understand each group within its own culture. Since women in different parts of the world have been historically constructed and socially constituted in different ways (Amott & Matthaei, 1996), in order to determine factors required for the advancement of women in Zimbabwe, it is vital to study and understand the experiences of Zimbabwean women in senior management positions within their own cultural context. Studies from other parts of the world and even other parts of Africa may have limited application to Zimbabwe.

It is crucial that research investigates the factors that lead to becoming a woman senior manager within a particular context so as to incorporate historical, cultural, organizational, political and socio-economic factors in women advancement programs (Amott & Matthaei, 1996). Policies and programs should recognize the diversity of advancement that takes into account the different situations of women (Muller & Rowell, 1997). Geroy, Jankovich, Hyden and Wright (1997) argued that economic development strategies are most successful and lasting when interventions take the cultural dimensions of both the target and original cultures into consideration. Hammoud (1993) stated, "The role of women in management cannot be treated in isolation from the general status of women in society, and from the general aims of economic, social and educational development "(p. 31).

Consequently, a study of perceptions of women in senior management positions in Zimbabwe regarding their career advancement paths and circumstances will contribute

to a better understanding of the experiences of woman managers within the Zimbabwean context and possibly provide insights into the development and implementation of career advancement strategies for women.

Problem Statement

The problem of this study is to explore Zimbabwean women in senior management positions and factors that contributed to their advancement with a view to examine culturally and contextually appropriate strategies that may be used to facilitate the advancement of women to senior management positions in Zimbabwe.

Research Question

The study will be guided by the central research question: What do Zimbabwean women in senior management positions report as major factors that contributed to their career advancement? The following sub-questions will be explored:

1. What family dimensions empower women to advance to senior management positions?
2. What societal characteristics contribute to women advancing to senior management positions?
3. What organizational characteristics do women identify that empower them to attain senior management positions?
4. What are the institutional mechanisms that assist in the advancement of women to senior management positions?
5. What are the strategies utilized by the women to overcome perceived barriers to career advancement?

6. What do women consider to be factors that would empower other women to advance in management positions?

These questions will be investigated through in-depth interviews with Zimbabwean women in senior management positions.

Purpose of Study

The purpose for this study is to show the Zimbabwean context of women in senior management positions. It is the intent to contribute to the literature and to identify factors which enabled the women to advance to their current positions. This will be achieved by exploring the experiences to gain understanding of the process of becoming a woman senior manager in the Zimbabwean context.

Significance of the Study

There is very little empirically designed systematic research on women in management in Zimbabwe. Although women in Zimbabwe are entering the workforce in large numbers, very few have reached the top. While it is known that those women who manage to reach the top have surmounted substantial barriers, there is little understanding of what fosters their advancement. An understanding of factors that foster career advancement is essential in determining what changes need to be made regarding design and development of human resources policies in both the business and education arenas. It is also important that women know the variables within their ability to control that they can use to further their careers. By gaining these tools, women can increase their potential for achieving career goals and for advancing from within their culture.

Research which examines the phenomena that occurs in a specific setting acquires an in-depth understanding of that particular phenomenon (Sekaran, 1990). It is hoped that this exploratory study will add to the knowledge on women in management in Zimbabwe and fill an important gap in the women in management literature. Moreover, it is hoped that this knowledge will assist policy makers to develop and implement policies, strategies and programs that provide the foundations for effectively advancing women to senior management positions.

Conceptual Framework

This study is informed by the social constructivism philosophy. Constructivism is appropriate when the researcher's intent is to make sense of the meaning others have about the world (Creswell, 1994). According to Derry (1999) and McMahon (1997) social constructivism argues for the importance of culture and context in understanding and constructing knowledge of a phenomenon. The framework fits well with my desire to understand Zimbabwean women managers' view of their career advancement and hopes that their perceptions will lead to an understanding of factors that contributed to their advancement.

Social constructivism starts from the premise that reality is socially constructed (Vygotsky, 1978). It argues that different cultures have their own unique understandings of the world and people construct their perceptions of the world using their culture as a guiding tool (Bohan, 1997; DeLamater & Hyde, 1998; Gergen & Davis, 1997). Hence social constructivism advocates for multiple, socially constructed realities. These

realities can only be studied holistically and in context to understand behavior making. It argues that it is difficult to generalize human behavior from one site to another (Lincoln, 1990; Lincoln & Guba, 1986). Schwandt (2000) described social constructivism as an epistemology where both the researcher and the participant construct knowledge to make sense of experience.

This theoretical framework suggests that traditional systems and cultural beliefs about gender roles and relationships inform the current status of women in management positions in the Zimbabwean workforce (Sheppard, 1992). Societal systems and stereotypes have a huge impact on women's beliefs about what they can and cannot do (Bussey & Bandura, 1999). The beliefs that girls and women develop about career aspirations and their potential are shaped by social practices within the family, education system, peer relationships, mass media, the occupational system and the national culture (Bandura, 1997; Phillips & Zimmerman, 1990; Signorielli, 1990). Since women's experiences and identities are constructed in gendered social contexts (Lamphere, Zavella, Gonzales with Evans, 1993; Segura, 1992), we can gain an understanding of the process of becoming a woman senior manager in Zimbabwe by exploring the experiences of Zimbabwean women in these positions.

The next chapter examines the literature related to women and work in Zimbabwe, women career advancement strategies and culture, leadership and gender theories.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose for this study is to show the Zimbabwean context of women in senior management positions and to contribute to the literature by identifying factors and strategies that enabled the women to advance to their current positions. The review of literature with attention to Zimbabwe includes: constitutional position of women, women and work, gender policy in employment, gender role expectations in the culture, women and education, women in management. A historical perspective of women in Zimbabwe will be given so that the life and career paths of the participants can be superimposed on the context relevant to their advancement. Literature related to and theories associated with the advancement of women to senior management positions, gender culture and leadership theories will be examined.

The review of literature will provide the documentation and framework on which the study is based. It will form the basis for exploring the problem, the significance of the problem, the methodology to be applied and research question of the study as well as guiding the analysis.

Facilities of the Colorado State University's Morgan Library will be used to identify sources of information from journals, periodicals, books and other documents. Computer searches will be conducted using online public access catalog, Sage Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC) and dissertation abstracts databases.

Internet search engines and Interlibrary Loan will be used to identify and obtain articles on African/Zimbabwean women's issues. Periodicals and journals from business, sociology, management, organizational behavior, cultural and gender studies, applied psychology and United Nations country reports will be used as sources of relevant information.

Historical Background to Women's work in Pre-colonial Zimbabwe

The Shona and Ndebele constitute the two major ethnic groups in Zimbabwe. Pre-colonial (before 1890) Shona and Ndebele societies are characterized as having been very patriarchal, with women having no direct voice in public affairs and no control over social resources (Schmidt, 1991). According to Schmidt, male chiefs, headmen and other elders made the decisions that governed public life, regulating relations and settling disputes. Senior men controlled the distribution of resources such as land and wives, monopolizing control over the society's productive and reproductive capacity. They exercised authority over the labor power of women, children, and junior men, and wielded institutionalized religious and political power. Women were subject to the complete authority of their in-laws, for whom they were expected to work on the land and in the household.

Polygamy was widely practiced and bride wealth payment (lobola) was a significant custom. Lobola compensated the bride's family for loss of labor and transferred the rights to a woman's labor to her husband's family (Cheater, 1986). On widowhood, women were inherited by their late husband's nearest male relative (Mama,

1996). Most of these customs are still prevalent in Zimbabwe today (Muller, 1994; Ncube & Greenan, 2003; Shenje-Peyton, 1996).

Production in both the Shona and Ndebele societies was differentiated by gender with women attaining social status through hard work and child bearing (Muller, 1994). Adjetey (1995) noted that the woman's major duty was to assure survival of the household and maintain domestic life in all its forms as well as taking care of the house. Production of food and children were women's two most important responsibilities and both were conducted under the full control of their spouses. Mama (1996) added that women also engaged in the gathering of wild fruit, vegetables and insects for domestic consumption. They fetched wood and water, pounded maize, ground millet, took care of children and prepared food. Schmidt (1991) indicated that men were primarily responsible for cattle rearing, and undertook seasonal agricultural tasks, particularly bush clearing and crop threshing.

Furthermore, activities such as harvesting, guarding ripening crops and hunting were shared, often being carried out by family parties of men, women and children. Armed men and boys protected herds and performed various other specialized tasks including weaving and clothes production, carving, ceramic production, mining and iron smelting, building the framework and thatching the roofs of houses and granaries. Hence life in pre-colonial Shona and Ndebele societies involved extensive work for both sexes, but gave men all authority, the ownership of most property, and control over the land and the labor of women and children (Mama, 1995). What women did control was the

produce of their own small plots, and the gifts they received for their successful bearing of children.

Women and Work

Several studies of gender and labor in colonial southern Africa have indicated that colonialism transformed labor and gender relations (e.g., Berger, 1982; Hunt, 1997; Schmidt, 1991; Walker, 1990). Colonization (1890 to 1980) imposed major changes thereby increasing the burden of women. The general trend that emerged in southern Africa as a result of colonialism is one in which men migrated to urban areas and mining compounds, leaving women the responsibility to raise children and provide for their in-laws and the elderly in the rural areas (Muller, 1994).

The colonial economy extracted male labor, while bearing none of the costs of its welfare or production. Mama (1996) asserted that accommodation in hostels and barracks was most often provided for male workers only, suggesting that their families were expected to remain in the rural areas, where they might be visited. Mama added that these male workers were not paid enough to fully support their families, with the result that family survival came to rely on women's food production and whatever informal activities proved profitable in a given area. Thus women's situations were not improved by having an absentee wage-earning husband, since this increased their existing workloads as they had to take on many of the tasks that would traditionally had been the men's or their joint responsibility. Furthermore, as Africans were increasingly

dispossessed of the lands they had farmed for generations, and the whole balance of the economy changed, the conditions under which rural women labored often worsened.

Some women left the rural areas either to accompany migrant men, or to move away from the controls and confinements of life with their in-laws (Bonner, 1990; Bozzoli, 1991; Walker, 1990; White, 1990). However, once in the urban areas, they were excluded from virtually all forms of waged work. Thus they found numerous ways of earning a living in what was to become known as the informal sector. They engaged in beer brewing, food preparation, laundering, and the provision of the numerous domestic, social and other services needed by male workers living singly in hostels or compounds (Mama, 1996).

These trends resulted in what has been referred to as the domestication of African women (Walker, 1990). Since women were left to bear many of the social costs of the changing/developing economy, the result was an almost complete exclusion of women from formal waged employment and complete confinement to domestic work. The ideology of domesticity has provided both the rationale and the justification for the marginalization of women from the paid labor force (Berger 1982; Hansen, 1992; Schmidt, 1991; Walker, 1990).

Education

During the colonial period, there were different educational programs for girls and boys. Girls and women were discriminated against by the colonial state's education

policy in terms of access to and equity within the school system. The formal and hidden curricula were biased in favor of boys, preparing girls for domesticity and boys for work outside the home (Gordon, 1996). Western ideals of women as homemakers dominated curricula and the important role women traditionally played in agriculture were ignored (Seidman, 1984). The few African women who managed to complete their education with the necessary qualifications for entry into the modern economy faced further discrimination by race and gender in the workplace. This was reflected in their wages, employment rates, and the types of jobs they held. African women were employed mainly in the public sector as nurses and teachers in institutions catering to Africans. They earned less than men because of the breadwinner concept. Upon marriage, women were given temporary staff status and required to resign from their jobs to have children and reapply after delivery with no entitlements. Upon reentry, they had to start at the bottom of the pay scale. Women's incomes were heavily taxed, since they were considered supplemental to their husbands' incomes (Gordon, 1996).

Based on literature on women's work during the colonial period, it can be concluded that imported and local gender ideologies worked against women entering the colonial labor market and economy. Women were largely left out of the colonial labor market, or kept under the control of men to facilitate the exploitation of labor, in both the reproductive and productive realms. One result of this exclusion was the emergence of an urban informal sector, in which women were and continue to be disproportionately represented in activities which conform to their feminine roles as providers of food, care

and nurturance to men. Hence most of the research on women's economic activities focuses on the informal sector. Severely limited access to Western-type education prevented women from obtaining skills other than those conformed to Western notions of femininity, thus ensuring their marginalization in an expanding labor market that was at first exclusively male, and subsequently dominated by men.

Legal Rights

Policies and practices of European settlers fundamentally reshaped gender relations among Africans (Schmidt, 1991). Customary law was developed by the colonial administrators in consultation with traditional experts of chiefs, headmen, and elders as a mechanism of controlling and subordinating women. Under customary law, African women were legally perpetual minors under the guardianship of men. Men became legally entitled to the payment of bride wealth (lobola) and retained all rights to property and children upon divorce (Gordon, 1996).

Land consolidation and settlement policies gave title deeds to men as heads of household, even when they were absent from the farm (Jacobs, 1991). With this policy men had legal rights to the proceeds of the land, including the products of women's labor, which women traditionally had controlled. Additionally, the introduction of intensive production, cash crops and a wage economy further enhanced men's status and prestige. Even though women carried out most of the work, men remained the main beneficiaries of this work, because European merchants traded with them (Jacobs, 1991; Umerah-

Udezulu, 1999). While traditional customs had been both flexible and sensitive to extenuating circumstances, customary law was not (Schmidt, 1991).

Consequently, Zimbabwean culture and customs, as they exist today, are a blend of Zimbabwean customs, imported colonial common and civil law notions and traditional African beliefs. The application of the laws within the plural legal systems, which are the legacy of the colonial era, has left women socially, politically and economically in a subordinate position. While there is legitimacy to the claim that pre-colonial Zimbabwe was male dominated, colonialism set the stage for state structures designed to solidify female subordination (Jolly, 1994; Ranchod-Nilsson, 2001; Schmidt, 1991; Staudt, 1989). Since the gender relations established under British colonial law had some connection to traditional African tribal law, traditionalists were able to ground their claims of control over women in tribal, customary, and general law. They were able to reassert their authority over all aspects of women's lives from sexuality through labor, resulting in the inability of women to protect and ensure their productive capacities (Adjeley, 1995; Barnes, 1999; Staudt, 1989). Thus women became subordinated by African customary law' as well as general law, a fact that strongly influenced the position of women in all aspects of life including the workforce (Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1997).

Current Position of Women in Zimbabwe

When Zimbabwe gained its independence in 1980, it introduced deliberate policies to empower women through enactment of numerous laws. The most significant

is the 1982 Legal Age of Majority Act (LAMA), which guarantees majority status to all Zimbabweans upon reaching the age of eighteen (Ranchod-Nilsson, 2001). This law has had great impact for women. Until this act was passed, women were considered minors for life and needed a guardian's consent, even to marry. This act enabled women to vote, own property in their own names, and contract marriage without the consent of a guardian.

A ministry that specifically caters for gender issues, that of Youth Development, Gender and Employment Creation was created in 1992. Through the Minimum Wage (1982) and the Labor Relations Act (1984) the government of Zimbabwe has mandated equal opportunity for women in terms of upgrades, transfers, promotions, recruitment, layoffs, terminations, rates of pay and other forms of compensation such as tenure, selection for training, and other personnel actions (Muller, 1994; Mutambirwa, Utete, Mutambirwa & Maramba, 1998). Women who worked at least one year are entitled to maternity leave at three quarters pay for three months and are permitted time off during the day for breastfeeding, at the employer's expense (Muller, 1994). The Matrimonial Causes Act of 1985, entitled women upon divorce to become beneficiaries of property acquired during marriage and to obtain custody of children.

In another step towards equality for women, Zimbabwe ratified three international agreements on women's rights: the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1991), the United Nations Universal Declaration of

Human Rights (1986), and the African Charter on Human and People's Right (1986). (Ranchod-Nilsson, 2001).

The Zimbabwean government has adopted measures to ensure that the girl child gets an equal opportunity in education. After independence, the government of Zimbabwe introduced free education for all children of primary school-going age. The education for all policy resulted in a steady increase of the enrolment levels at primary level over the period 1980 to 2000 with very small differences between female and male enrolments and almost reaching parity in 2000 (Gender Budget Watch, 2004).

The government has begun a program to review school textbooks and is developing a curriculum on human rights to be taught at the primary and secondary levels (Human rights library, 1998). However, a Zimbabwe Central Statistical Office-Educational Report (2001) shows that, at the secondary school level, the enrolments show that over the 10 years 1990 to 2000, there are far less girls enrolling in secondary school than boys. The gender gap is higher at secondary level than at primary school level. This trend reveals that a significant number of girls are out of formal school in the higher grades.

According Raftopoulos (1996) affirmative action measures, particularly in the areas of education, employment and political participation and decision-making, have been introduced in Zimbabwe. The University of Zimbabwe, for example, specifies a cut off point for female students entering the institution. In 1995, the cut off-point was two academic points below that required for male students (Raftopoulos, 1996). This

program aimed at doubling the number of female students entering the institution by 1997. However, Singh (1999) reported that the University of Zimbabwe had 30 % women students despite the affirmative policy favoring the admission of female students. Among staff, women constitute 3.6 % of professors, 15.9 % of associate professors, 19.8 % of senior lecturers and 35.4 % of lecturers. A Zimbabwe Central statistical Office Educational report (2001) also indicated that enrolment of females at the university of Zimbabwe is still half that of males. According to Gender Budget Watch (2004) the enrolments for the technical and vocational institutions shows that females are still not accessing the training offered in these institutions at the same rate as their male counterparts.

In a 1997 declaration, heads of state and government of the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) committed themselves to a 30 % target for female representation in their national political and decision-making structures by 2005 (Southern African Development Community report, 2003). However, in the 150-seat Zimbabwean parliament, women constitute 10,6 percent of the members which is well below the 30 % target set by the SADC Declaration on gender and development, to which Zimbabwe is a signatory (Johwa, 2005).

Despite the existence of policies by the government which encourage their participation, women's representation in top management, government and politics in Zimbabwe remains skewed. A major challenge still exists for Zimbabwe to intensify efforts to improve the participation of women in decision-making in the domestic sphere

and in public and private sector. For example, despite all the changes upon independence, gender equality was not written into the Constitution of Zimbabwe until the end of 1996, and when it was recognized, it was diluted by the retention of Section 23, sub-sections (3) (a) and (b) of the Constitution which have since 1980 exempted all customary, family and personal law from Constitutional regulation. Section 23 of the constitution states that, no law should contravene customary law in matters of marriage, divorce, and inheritance of property and the application of customary law in any case involving Africans.

Thus the Constitution itself permits, or even encourages, discrimination against women in innumerable ways, provided these are recognized customs, or fall within the realm of family or personal law (Kazembe, 1986; Nyagura & Mupawaenda, 1994; Zimbabwe Human Rights Forum report, 2001). Changes in the law, that in some respects granted women important rights, have simultaneously complicated the professional position of Zimbabwean women. On one hand they are considered minors while on the other they are expected to function as equals in professional domains.

Hence at the heart of the women career advancement in Zimbabwe is the conflict between customary law and traditions on one hand, and the Constitution and statutes on the other. Although the Zimbabwean government has made appropriate changes to women's advancement, patriarchal power has remained intact. Gender equality is professed in the public domain while in the domestic realm of family and home women are subordinate to men. It is in this domestic sphere that girls are socialized and educated

into accepting their inequality. The impact of this unique culture can be expected to produce unique behaviors and expectations on the part of women in Zimbabwe. Cultural and social norms that portray women as perpetual minors may negatively affect girls' and women's perceptions of their abilities.

Women and Management in Zimbabwe

Studies of the processes through which women in Zimbabwe have entered in senior positions are few and far between (Muller, 1994). Furthermore, Muller stated that biographies of African women do not contain references to women being managers. Most of the research on women and work in Zimbabwe addresses women's waged work in factories, rural areas and as entrepreneurs (Adam, 1991; Ncube & Greene, 2003; Sylvester, 2000).

Ncube and Greenan (2003) investigated the pathways of entrepreneurial career development and the processes involved for women to become entrepreneurs in Zimbabwe. Women in the study implied that entrepreneurship was an improvement over previous occupations and roles. Entrepreneurship allowed women in the study to find a better place in the social order; virtually all of them constructed its meaning in positive terms (Young & Richards, 1987). However, their careers were interwoven with other aspects of their lives in complex ways. The interaction of private and public responsibilities and roles was evident. Due to the small size of their ventures, women entrepreneurs were often engaged in the full range of activities of the enterprises with their employees rather than specializing in management and administration.

Adam (1991) presents a useful analysis of female wage labor in rural Zimbabwe. He provides extensive quantitative data to illustrate women's high level of participation in paid agricultural work. He addresses women in waged agricultural worker and indicated that women are paid less and hold lower positions. According to Adam, social construction which believed that man are the breadwinner and woman are housewife has been used to legitimate paying women less than men in agriculture. As women's main tasks are to care for the family and do the housework, they are considered not productive and reserved to get paid less and occupy lower positions.

Sylvester (2000) analyzed women's narratives about their experiences within the production industry. Sylvester does an overview of each production site and the institutions that have some influence on labor and gender relations in it. She then examines how those with social power within that site, such as management, donors, trade unions, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), worker committees, civil servants define women and men in that setting of production. The emphasis of each chapter in Sylvester's book is an analysis of how these powers interact with the varied ways in which the women themselves define progress in that production site. The weakness of Sylvester's book is the lack of attention toward other important informing discourses of gender within the Zimbabwean context as a whole. For example, cultural models of gender relations promoted by traditional beliefs and colonialism often intermingle with those promoted by managers and donors, influencing Zimbabwean women workers' self-understandings and stances toward women and men and toward

advancement.

Hence Sylvester (2000) is unable to locate common sources of material and symbolic subordination, in access to resources. Sylvester portrays the struggles of Zimbabwean women producers as hinging mainly around topics that speak to more secular international and globalized dialogues and debates on gender and labor rights and international development. This is explicitly marked by her pointing out the similarities of the ideas of the various women she interviews to positions such as liberal-pragmatism, Gender and Development (GAD), socialist-feminism, etc. Such a translation is relevant in trying to inform positions and programs promoted by development practitioners and/as feminists. But omitting other informing models and practices that do not easily fit the norms of such transnational discourses would limit, effective understanding of cultural factors relevance to women's roles and advancement.

The only study found that has exclusively addressed Zimbabwean women managers were conducted by Muller (1994). The proposed study differs from Muller in that Muller's study was an assessment of the constraints faced by women in entering and retaining management positions within different sectors. In the current study, I intend to look at women's experiences and factors that contributed to advancing their careers.

Furthermore, Muller's study pointed out that most of the women's advancement programs in Zimbabwe operated on the premise of the traditional modernization theory that assumes that women's status improves as the result of industrialization. This theory assumes an a-historical, universal, neutral, and efficacious natural force for improving

peoples' well being and raising standards of living. The modernization paradigm posits development as a linear process whereby tradition-bound societies would slough off their historic impediments and embrace modern (that is, Western) institutions, technologies, and values.

Proponents of this theory did not question whether this prosperity would extend equally to all classes, races, and gender groups. Tinker (1990) indicated that the modernization theory makes an assumption about the end point of the modernizing process that is ideologically biased and ethnocentric. Modernization typically defines the developmental process in terms of western rationality and scientific knowledge which are culturally limited and yet have been presented as universally valid. Modernization also assumes that modern values and behavior by individuals lead to socioeconomic development at societal level. Causal linkage does not necessarily hold because society is not simply the total of the individuals within it.

As such it is important to reveal the experiences of Zimbabwean women senior managers within their own socially and historically specific context (Segura, 1992; Segura & Pierce, 1993). Muller (1994) asserted that there is need to consider historical factors when analyzing women managers in contemporary Zimbabwe as women must overcome the constraints of traditional African gender role distinctions, the legacy of colonialism as well as managerial patriarchy.

Women in Management Worldwide: Perspectives on Career Advancement

Literature that relates to the issues of women and career advancement can be found in the fields of education, sociology, psychology, and labor. This literature suggests that women face special difficulties in virtually all societies. Most of this literature posits that women who have managed to overcome institutional and societal barriers to advancement will tend to exhibit similar characteristics in all societies (Catalyst, 1998; Goulet & Singh, 2002). Lynch (1973) stated that conditions that have led to the success of the women managers vary within nations, but show, to some extent, to be the same between nations. Several studies have shown that women have incorporated many strategies to help them attain senior management positions while entrenched in patriarchal systems. This section of the review of literature will examine the most critical factors involved in the advancement of women in management.

Education

A factor cited most often for contributing to women's career advancement is education. In a study which examined career experiences and perceptions of female professional administrators (Hurley, 1993), one of the findings was that prospective female administrators should get as much education as the possible. A study by Kanter (1977) concluded that inadequate schooling has been a major limitation to women's career advancement. Wirth (2001) also indicated that education is one very essential element that is required for women to close the gap between them and the men in upper management levels. It also plays an extremely important role in helping women to reach

and obtain the upper management positions in the first place (Adler & Izraeli, 1994; Ibarra & Smith-Lovin, 1997; Powell, 1999).

Tharenou, Latimer and Conroy's (1994) cross-sectional study found that credentials, (education) skills and knowledge (training and development, work experience) most explained gender differences in advancement.

Mentoring and Sponsoring

Mentoring has been referenced by many in literature as a strategy for career advancement for women (Burrington, 1993; Davies-Netzley, 1998; Gardiner, Enomoto, & Grogan, 2000; Grogan, 1996; Gupton & Slick, 1996; White, 1995). The roles mentors usually play are: role model, teacher, guide and counselor, sponsor and coach (Catalyst 1998). For advancement to higher levels, interpersonal factors and career encouragement are critical to women (Davies-Netzley, 1998; Schor, 1997; Tharenou & Conroy, 1994). Women need encouragement to persist in trying to advance to higher than lower levels of management because they have more barriers to overcome and less access to inside information (Lyness & Thompson, 2000; Schneer & Reitman, 1995).

The importance of mentoring in women's career advancement is corroborated elsewhere. Hennig and Jardim (1978) showed that when female managers had mentors, this helped them to develop confidence to take on extra responsibilities. In a study of thirty-eight African American female school administrators, mentors and sponsors were revealed as playing important roles in their career advancement (Allen, Jacobson & Lomotey, 1995). Respondents in the study, who had a mentor during the early stages of

their career, acknowledged they received encouragement and moral support which led to higher levels of effort and expectations.

In a study focusing on the relationship between social support and stress as differentially experienced by African American women, white women, and white men both within and outside the workplace, Baliey, Wolfe, & Wolf (1996) revealed that whereas social support was important for all groups studied, it was particularly important for African American women to develop sources of social support at home and at work. The job support assisted white men and women in the study reduce depression and strain, but did not for African American women. The same held true for home support for the participants in the study.

Gardiner, Enomoto, and Grogan (2000) conducted a study consisting of eighteen women, of whom fourteen were African American and four were Hispanic. The participants revealed six needs of women of color who seek to move into educational administration. First, they expressed a need to understand the political dynamics of public schools and to develop the skills to succeed as both women and minorities. Second, they wished to gain access into networks within and outside the school system. Third, they desired mentors who were similar to themselves. Fourth, because of the few women of color in positions of power, they also sought mentoring from those who were different from themselves. Fifth, they expressed a need for more than one mentor with at least one being female and one being a person of color. Lastly, they saw a need for alternative support systems beyond the formal and informal mentoring established in

educational organizations. Four of the identified needs focused on mentoring and support.

In a study designed to identify important factors in achieving state directorships that might help other women reach this level and beyond, (Mayer, 2001) concluded that a woman's advancement to a directorship in Extension administration is a complex combination of factors, such as positioning, networking, matching organizational norms, and taking advantage of mentoring.

Networking

Networking is an individual's attempts to develop and maintain relationships with others who have the potential to assist them in their work or career. It is a process of linking people to each other as career resources and assisting, supporting and helping others to find resources they need (Kram, 1985; DeWine, 1983). Networking has been reported to play an important part in management development, especially for women. Meeting other managers with information in a profession, senior professionals within the employing organization, and in other fields of employment provides an opportunity to share ideas and experiences in a collegial way. Informal learning can bring many benefits in developing strategies and learning effective tactics (Catalyst, 1999; Powell & Mainiero, 1993; Ragins & Sundstrom, 1989; Wellington &). Networking behavior has been thought to be especially critical because it is one strategy women can use to breakthrough the glass ceiling (Baker, 1994; Catalyst, 1999; Morrison, White & Van Velsor, 1987).

Personal Characteristics

A group of 21 executive women in British librarianship told of their experiences in advancing their careers, of the conflicts that had to be faced, and the decisions they had to make. They feel that the factors that contributed to their achievements were hard work, making choices, determination, and the ability to recognize and seize opportunities (Burrington, 1993). In a survey of women senior managers, Lynch (1973) found that on the whole, these women pictured themselves as talented, hardworking, enthusiastic, flexible, persevering, versatile, and more understanding of behavior than their fellow male executives.

Davies-Netzley, 1998 & Gupton and Slick (1996) cite many advancement strategies stemming from their study of female public school administrators. The strategies include being prepared, career planning, persevering, being diligent and professional, honoring, preserving and protecting integrity, reaching out to and through others, mentoring, and leading by example.

Organizational Support

The impact of the organization as instrumental in determining women's career advancement has been documented by several theorists. Female theorists believed that the organization should assume some responsibility for a woman's professional advancement (Hennig & Jardim, 1978; Kanter, 1977). Although Kanter (1977) felt a woman's background, social class, and outside connections coupled with her sense of drive, ambition, and inherent ability were the best predictors of her professional

advancement, she also suggested organizational activities that would encourage a woman's professional development. She recommended clustering women rather than dispersing them throughout an organization, establishing task related networking for the recruitment and orientation of women, and creating a flexible organizational culture that would be more permeable to and less insulated against women and minorities.

Others, such as Bolton (1980) charged organizations with developing networks for females in occupations where male/female representation was disproportionate. In White's (1995) study several of the women credited open-minded bosses for giving them the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and for having faith in them regardless of gender.

Morphet (1993) examined the career paths of women chief executives to identify how other women might be encouraged and supported to become chief executives. Several mechanisms or processes were identified: personal support of patrons, proactive support by authorities for women's career development, proactive equal opportunities policies, benefiting from having a mentor or a sponsor, a wider recruitment strategy which considers non-standard candidates for entry in middle or senior management helping women to manage the career break, to ensure continuity and reduce potential loss of confidence, ensuring that women receive a wide spectrum of experience.

Other Factors

Catalyst (1998) surveyed senior women and CEOs in the United States and the United Kingdom, the study was replicated in Canada in 1997. Thus, the study was able

to compare the experiences of women in senior management in three countries. A total of 1188 women respondents and 117 CEO respondents are included in the UK study.

Catalyst found that in all three countries the top career advancement strategies used by senior women to advance are the following: consistently exceeding performance expectations and developing a style with which male managers are comfortable. While European and U.S. women are in general agreement about what it takes to advance, there are interesting differences regarding the importance of certain strategies to each group's advancement. European women list international experience, cross-functional experience developing and adhering to career, having school, family, and social connections. On the contrary, US women emphasized the importance of personal style, exceeding performance expectations and networking. Based on this study, Wellington, president of Catalyst commended that the bottom line is that there are more similarities among women across borders and overseas than there are differences.

In a study to determine what conditions are required for women to advance to top executives positions, Adair's (1994) findings revealed the following factors, (a) having opportunity to be participating, valued family members and to compete while young helps girls to develop a sense of competence mastery; (b) education, credential building experiences, certain competencies and being willing to take risks (c) having certain attitudes and philosophies; (d) mentor network involvement and relationships with peers; (e) having spiral career plan concept.

This review of literature reveals that the attainment of senior management for

women is complex and involves many variables. Although several factors have been cited by different researchers as contributing to advancement, it is unclear how applicable these strategies are to other context such as Zimbabwe.

Culture Leadership and Gender

There is a volume of literature that emphasizes the importance of exploring cultural factors in understanding and facilitating women's advancement toward managerial positions (Adler & Izraeli, 1988; 1994). The literature suggests that women's career advancement strategies reflect and are shaped by their socialization and by their unique social location within dominant culture organizations. Attitudes, both women's and others concerning the role of women are influenced by personal experience and conditioning. Cross-cultural leadership theory asserts, "that expected, accepted, and effective leader behaviour varies by cultures." (House & Aditya 1997, p. 454). The local culture within a geographic area exerts an influence on the expectations of and by the women within that community (Davidson & Cooper, 1992). Rudman and Kilianski (2000) asserted that culture defines gender roles and that in any given culture societal values and expectations perpetuate gender role stereotypes, and mandate males to be masculine and females to be feminine.

Fagenson's (1993) gender-organizational-system approach argues that culture is a major factor in understanding people and organizations, and that racio-ethnicity and historical processes influencing the position of people in organizations today need to be addressed. Bell, Denton and Nkomo (1993) Calas and Smircich (1996), and Guerrero

(1997) and Sparks (1995) called for a “post-colonial” analysis citing that it may provide relevant and more appropriate insights for issues of racio-ethnicity and gender in contemporary organizations. Alexander and Mohanty (1997) and Mohanty (1994) added that this type of analyses should incorporate historical and cultural factors as critical research components to uncover the subtle and overt power relations between the state and marginalized people that affect gender roles, and to deconstruct generalizations.

According to Williams and Best (1990, 1994) and Williams, Satterwhite and Best (1999) gender stereotypes are the psychological characteristics believed to be differentially associated with women and men in a particular cultural group. Reviewing her work and recent studies both by herself and collaborators concerning perceptions of the managerial role, Schein (2001) and Schein and Mueller (1992) found significant relationships between descriptions of men and successful managers by both men and women across many national cultures. In contrast in the U.S., since the proportion of women in management positions has increased, positive evaluations of women as managers have increased. However, this increase has been much greater on the part of female than male managers. The latter holding less positive perceptions than the former.

Hofstede (1998) argues that a form of the masculinity/femininity dimension differentiates countries as well as individuals. He postulates that while an individual can have both masculine and feminine traits, a country's culture is either masculine or feminine. Hofstede defines masculinity as a society in which social gender roles are clearly distinct. In a society characterized by masculinity, men are supposed to be

assertive, tough, and focused on material success while women are supposed to be more modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life. Conversely in a feminine society social gender roles overlap with men and women expected to be modest, tender, and concerned with the quality of life (Hofstede 2001).

Consequently in masculine countries, decisiveness and ambition are more often seen as masculine, where caring and gentleness are more often regarded as feminine. In feminine cultures, all these terms are seen as applying to both men and women. In masculine cultures, assertiveness is emphasized whereas in feminine cultures, modesty is emphasized. Men's and women's values differ more in masculine cultures than in feminine cultures, and more for younger than for older persons. The gender gap in values is bigger in masculine than in feminine cultures.

The ways in which gender is constructed within a society affects the manner in which organizations are structured and managed (Collinson & Hearn, 1996; King, 1995). King argues that 'sex roles and gendered behavior are institutionalized as part of a culture and reflect important aspects of the culture itself' (King, 1995: 82). In interpreting Hofstede's 'masculinity' cultural values dimension, King suggests that countries with lower masculinity tend to have more women in senior positions and more positive attitudes about women and leadership and believe that organizational and private life should be separate' (King, 1995: 83).

Writing about South African women in the academic world, Makhubu (1999) points to the origins of universities and their cultures in Africa as problematic for women.

Makhuba points that universities are essentially steeped in tradition to the point of being medieval and have entrenched cultural practices not easily changed to accommodate women. In particular, with the perspective that is common in African societies, the role of women is basically non-scholarly. It is rather, of mother, wife, and provider of basic necessities. Many women also hold these values and tend to shun careers advancement for motherhood.

Stereotypes of gender roles created by a culture determine people's way of life. These stereotypes vary among different cultures as well as among different ethnic groups (Franklin, 1984; Harris, 1994; Landrine, 1985). Bradford, Buck & Myers (2001) argued that unlike White women, African American women must negotiate organizational interactions constrained by the effects of centuries-old, stereotypical images that pervade Western society. Olivier (1999) indicated that black women teaching at historically black universities in South Africa face particularly difficult choices between the 'traditional' and the 'modern' role, which can lead to identity crises, uncertainty, confusion and conflict. Olivier (1999) argues that "the factors inhibiting an academic woman in traditional society, severely handicap her potential, also, to make a meaningful contribution to a university culture focused on informing critically the transformation to a new society" (p. 543).

Hartsock (1985) proposed a theory of a feminist standpoint. According to this theory, everyone has a certain way of viewing the world based on their experiences, interests, and circumstances. Feminist standpoint recognizes the fact that women are

diverse and socially positioned in other areas that affect their lives. Consequently, their ways of understanding their own situations and perspectives of the world are diverse (New, 1998). It is important to consider women's experiences as a beginning to gain knowledge of these understandings and perspectives. Standpoint texts are organized in terms of several assumptions (Denzin, 1997). The starting point is the experiences of persons. Standpoint epistemologies attempt to discover new knowledge regarding how the world works in the lives of oppressed people. It also intends to recover and derive value to knowledge that has been suppressed by existing epistemologies. Denzin further noted that feminist standpoint epistemology begins with the subject who knows the world directly through experience. The argument is that experience as the starting point for social change has the potential for empowerment.

Given the cultural uniqueness of each country or region, no cultural group can provide useful analogies for the experiences of another culture (Harrison & Bennett, 1995). Legacies of traditional culture and colonialism have shaped the situation of women in Zimbabwe. Hence, to understand women career advancement in the Zimbabwean workforce, there is need to explore the perspectives of women's actual experiences of management life.

In this chapter, I described and evaluated the position of Zimbabwean women in the workforce, various women advancement frameworks and gender culture and leadership theories. The main objective of the chapter has been to try and interpret the various ways in which these theoretical frameworks can be used to shed insight into

factors that advance women in management in Zimbabwe. From the literature review conducted, it is not clear how applicable advancement strategies suggested for women in other countries might be to women managers in Zimbabwe when on the one hand they are legitimated minors, and on the other hand they have to function as leaders. The gender culture and leadership theories that were explored revealed that it pertinent to explore strategies that recognize and are a product of social, cultural and historical events of a particular context. This study is therefore challenged to explore a new phenomenon, which in turn has implications for the choice of the methodology. Any analysis of people's experiences needs to build on a methodology which allows them to construct themselves as well as recognise that their lives and social identities are constructed by the social, cultural and material conditions around them. Thus this study will now develop a phenomenological approach to answering the questions.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research problem which the study sought to explore. The rationale for the methodology, a description of the demographics of the participants and a description of the research methods used in the data collection are provided. The chapter also provides a brief schematic description of the ways the data was analyzed. A more detailed presentation and analysis of the data are in chapters four and five.

Restatement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences and perspectives of Zimbabwean women in senior management positions with particular reference to advancement issues. The factors that have facilitated the women's attainment of senior management positions will be critically assessed. Zimbabwean women are entering the workforce in large numbers but despite numerous measures being implemented to advance them, they still occupy a small proportion of senior positions. In an attempt to explore this paradox, the study addressed the following question: What do Zimbabwean women in senior management positions perceive as the major factors that contributed to their careers advancement? This and sub-questions outlined earlier will be explored through a qualitative research approach.

At the end of Chapter two, it was concluded that constraints on the workforce participation of women in Zimbabwean have strong historical roots reinforced by

contemporary legal code. It is therefore unclear if factors that have been found to advance women in other contexts are applicable to Zimbabwean women. Hence, to answer the research question this study must now develop a phenomenological view of women senior managers in Zimbabwe using original data.

Research Approach and Rationale

Qualitative Study Approach

Patton (1985) defined qualitative research as an investigation in which the researcher attempts to understand reality by examining it in a holistic way or by examining components of that reality within their contextual setting. Creswell (1998) defines qualitative research as:

An inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyzes words, reports detailed view of, and conducts the study in a natural setting (p. 15).

Marshall and Rossmam (1989) pointed out that qualitative research emphasizes the value of context, setting and participants' frame of reference. Qualitative research tradition produces an interpretation of reality that is useful in understanding the human condition (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). This is the logic to the claim for legitimacy of qualitative research methodology. Qualitative studies are undertaken due to lack of theory to explain a certain phenomenon (Hancock, 2000; Merriam, 1998; Lincoln & Guba 2000; Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Van Manen, 1990). The purpose of the current study is to understand the phenomenon of Zimbabwean women senior managers within their own

context and from their own perspectives. There is a scarcity of literature that explains factors that contribute to the advancement of women in African countries, specifically in Zimbabwe. Thus this study will be exploratory in nature because there is not sufficient information in the literature to answer the research question posed here. Lack of information about the topic dictates the need for a qualitative approach, to explore and develop a detailed view of the topic (Creswell, 1994).

Phenomenological Study Approach

Phenomenology is the study of human phenomenon; it studies situations in the everyday world from the viewpoint of the experiencing person (Becker, 1992). According to Hancock (1998), phenomenological research begins with the acknowledgement that there is a gap in our understanding. Thus it explores phenomena where there are gaps in our understanding. Taylor and Bogdan (1984) stated that phenomenological research leads to an understanding of the motives and beliefs driving actions and behaviors. According to Miller and Salkind (2002), a phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of the lived experiences surrounding a concept or a phenomenon. Thus, phenomenologists explore the structures of consciousness in human experiences (Polkinghorne, 1989; Moustakas, 1994; Natanson, 1973).

Phenomenological approach was selected for this study because the purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of Zimbabwean women senior managers from their own perspectives. The use of phenomenology will enable the researcher to examine

the experiences of becoming a woman manager in Zimbabwe while gaining an understanding of the nature or meaning the women attribute to their everyday experiences. This study is exploratory in nature because there is minimal empirical research on the topic of women career advancement in Zimbabwe, hence the appropriateness of the approach of choice.

Procedures

Data Sources

The site of this study is the capital city of Zimbabwe, urban Harare. Harare was selected as accessible sources using purposive sampling. Another reason for the selection of Harare is its diversity of both business and population; therefore, Harare could be more representative of the Zimbabwean women in management. Boyd (2001) indicated that in phenomenological studies, two to ten participants are sufficient to reach saturation. Similarly, Creswell (1998) recommended lengthy interviews with up to ten participants for a phenomenological study. A cross-section sample of ten women senior managers from a variety of sectors was selected. The sample was drawn from private, public, non-profit and other organizations to represent the diversity of Zimbabwean women managers and the organizations they work for.

Purposive Sampling

Qualitative inquiry usually uses relatively small samples that have been selected purposefully (Patton, 1987). Purposive sampling is used to identify information-rich cases (Patton 1990). It involves selecting a sample from the population with a

specific set of characteristics for one's research (Greig & Taylor, 1999; Polit & Hungler, 1997; Schwandt, 1997). In this study, the participants are Zimbabwean women who have managed to attain senior management positions. Purposive sampling is particularly relevant when the researcher is concerned with exploring and understanding phenomena. In this study, purposive sampling was used to specifically select the participants who fit the purpose of this study.

Access

The Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network was contacted (a network whose objective is to improve the position of women in Zimbabwe through collecting and disseminating material on gender and development) to request information on organizations with women in senior management positions in Harare(Ziyambi, 1997). A public directory of women at work was sent to the researcher through regular mail. Once women in senior management were identified from the directory, prospective participants were contacted by telephone.

Informed Consent

To obtain informed consent, potential participants were presented with a brief background to the study covering the following details: the nature and purpose of the study, the sampling procedure and what was required of them if they become participants (See Appendix A for a copy of this letter). It was emphasized that the discussions of the interviews would be confidential and the anonymity of the informants assured. After presenting this information, participants were invited to take part in the study. This

information was provided over the phone and a written consent form was then mailed to the participants (See Appendix C for a copy of the consent form).

Pilot Testing

Before the actual interviews, two Zimbabwean women currently residing in the United States were contacted to pilot test the interview protocol. These women met similar criteria as the actual participants in that they have held senior management positions before leaving Zimbabwe. Arrangements were made for one of my colleagues to attend the interview sessions. Pilot interviews were tape recorded for review and critiqued by my colleague, the pilot participants and myself. The purpose of the pilot test was to determine if the questions identified the participant's perceptions regarding factors that enabled them to advance in the workforce. Feedback from both participants and my colleague was incorporated into the final interviewing protocol. Identified potential problems with the questions and the protocol were corrected before the actual interviews.

Data Collection

In qualitative research often the data is collected through person to person interviews (Creswell, 1998; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). Darlington and Scott (2002) stated that given the concern of qualitative research to understand the meaning people make of their lives from their perspective, interviewing is the most appropriate data collection method because it recognizes that people are experts on their own experiences and are able to report how they experience a particular phenomenon. Telephone interviews were used in this study.

Because there are no identifiable studies of Zimbabwean women managers, the historical-biographical approach was used to explore the lives of the women managers in depth. Due to its holistic nature, several authors have suggested this approach, especially when there is little previous information (Bell et al, 1993; Bell & Nkomo, 1992). Data was collected by the semi-structured in-depth interview format comprising open ended questions. Semi-structured interviews encourage participants to express views in their own words. Seidman (1998) states that at the root of in-depth interviewing is an interest in understanding the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience. They prevent the researcher from controlling the content or the flow of the interviews and allow in-depth probing while permitting the interviewer to keep the interview within the parameters identified by the purpose and questions of the study (Creswell, 2003; Morse, 1989). The questions and probes covered the areas of: family background, marital status, demographics, educational background, work family interface, managerial experience, organizational constraints and gender cultural role expectations and how these experiences relate to women's career advancement. Some of these categories were suggested in the studies of women in management conducted by (Muller, 1998; Muller & Rowell, 1997) and others were informed by personal experiences and intuition.

The interviews were scheduled at times convenient for the participants (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986) during non-business hours away from their work settings. This was done to provide privacy. The participants were informed at the beginning of the interview that

the researcher could terminate the interview if it was considered to be in the best interest of the participant. They were also informed that their rights of refusal and withdrawal would be respected and that they could choose not to answer some questions or to terminate the interview. Interviews were approximately forty minutes to an hour in length.

Interviews were conducted in either English, Shona (the local language) or both depending on the participant's comfort. Although English is not Zimbabwe's first language, it is the country's official language and most people who have gone through the formal education system communicate coherently in English. People also generally tend to switch from one language to the other in the same conversation or sentence. Allowing this relaxed the participants so their responses could be as informative as possible.

The interviews were audio taped with the permission of interviewees (Arksey & Knight, 1999; Bailey, 1996). Audio tapes offer a record with completeness of the conversations. Silverman (2000) noted that tapes provide a research trail and they can be replayed and transcriptions can be improved. Listening to tape recorded information after each interview helped to improve the researcher's interviewing technique as well as analysis and interpretations (Denscombe, 1998; Merriam, 1998).

Data Analysis

According to Creswell (1998), phenomenological data analyses proceed through the methodology of reduction, the analysis of specific statements and themes, and a search for all possible meanings. The aim of the phenomenological data analysis is to

explicate the phenomenon and to grasp its most prominent elements or characteristic.

This type of analysis involves setting aside all prejudgments, bracketing the researcher's expectations and experiences and calls for the researcher to be as open as possible to new experiences. It calls for the researcher to rely on intuition, imagination, and universal structures to obtain a picture of the experience.

The process of data analysis was informed by Willig's (2001), four- stages of analyzing phenomenological data. Interpretative phenomenological analysis starts with transcripts of structured interviews generated by participants (Willig, 2001). The original protocols are divided into statements or horizontalization. Then, the units are transformed into clusters of meanings expressed in psychological and phenomenological concepts. Finally, these transformations are tied together to make a general description of the experience, the textural description of what was experienced and the structural description of how it was experienced. The phenomenological report ends with the reader understanding better the essential, invariant structure (or essence) of the experience, recognizing that a single unifying meaning of the experience exists (Creswell, 1998).

Willig's four-stage phenomenological study analysis and integration of cases were used as follows:

Stage 1: Initial Encounter with the Text. The first stage of phenomenological analysis involved reading the transcript several times. At this stage, wide-ranging and unfocused notes were produced. The notes were a reflection of the researcher's initial

thoughts in response to the text. These initial thoughts included; comments, insights observations about the data, summaries, questions, use of words, metaphors and possible interpretations. They were documented down the left hand margin.

Stage 2: Identification of Themes. The second stage of analysis involved identifying and labeling the emerging themes, both sub-ordinate and core themes, using conceptual theme titles that captured the essence of what was found in the text. These were documented in the right margin.

Stage 3: Clustering of Themes. The third stage involved listing and reviewing of the emerging themes from stage 2 and considering relationships between them. It involved creating some order and structure into the analysis. Clusters of themes were formed and given labels that capture their essence. It is important to ensure that clustering of themes identified at this stage make sense in relation to the original data. This means that it is necessary to move back and forth to the transcript and check that the themes do actually exist within the data. The connections between themes identified on paper need to be reflected in the details of the participant's account. Some clusters consisted of many themes, whereas others were much more narrowly focused.

Stage 4: Production of a Summary Table. The fourth stage of analysis involved the production of a summary table of the structured themes, accompanied by quotations from the text. The summary table included those themes that captured something about the quality of the participants' experience of the phenomenon under investigation. This means that some of the themes generated during stage 2 were excluded. These excluded

themes were not well represented within the text or were not important to the phenomenon being studied. The summary table included the cluster labels together with their subordinate theme labels, brief quotations, and references to where relevant extracts are found in the interview transcript (i.e. participant) in the text.

Integration of Cases. After summary tables have been made for each participant, these tables were integrated into an inclusive list of master themes that reflected the experiences of the group of participants as a whole. Data collection of this study is based on purposive sampling, in which participants are selected according to criteria of relevance to the research question. This means that the group of participants is homogeneous to the extent that they share the experience of being women senior managers in Zimbabwe that they are asked to describe or discuss. Therefore, it makes sense to look across the entire corpus of data to obtain a more generalized understanding of the phenomenon. As in stage 3 above, it is important that the process of integration is carried out in a cyclical manner, so that any emerging higher-order themes are checked against the transcripts. It is important to ground both integrative themes and lower-level conceptual themes in the data. Integration generated a list of master themes that captured the quality of the participants' shared experience of the phenomenon under investigation. The master list, therefore, tells something about the essence of the phenomenon itself. The list of master themes included the labels of super ordinate themes and their constituent themes, together with identifiers that indicate which of the participants invoked them and where they did so.

Analysis continued until a full integration of themes was achieved. Interpretative phenomenological analysis is not complete until the elements that are shared between participants have been identified and captured in master themes. Analysis should continue until all subordinate themes have either been integrated into or dropped from the analysis (Willig, 2001).

Ethical Concerns

Ethical concerns tend to revolve around four major issues. These include the question of informed consent, confidentiality, duality of roles, and benefit versus harm (Cowles, 1988; Josselson, 1996; McLeod, 1996; Munhall, 1988; Smythe & Murray, 2000). Informed consent was ensured by the use of the consent form, informing participants of the purpose of the study and what was expected of them as well as giving them the right to terminate the interview or discontinue participation at any time. One participant withdrew from the study after being told by her husband that she should not participate. The study assured confidentiality of participants by not including participant's names or any other detail that might identify them in the text of the study (Kvale, 1996). Instead, pseudonyms were used to protect their identities.

The role of the researcher may shift over the duration of the research project. In the Canadian Psychological Association Code (CPA, 2000) it was noted that any conflict of interest in the relationship needs to be explicitly addressed. Qualitative research, takes place in a context of reciprocity where a trusting relationship is built in order to elicit personal information, thus the research relationship can be complex (Grafanaki, 1996;

McLeod, 1996). The duality of roles was addressed by recommending open discussion of the issue with the participant (Munhall, 1988; Smythe & Murray, 2000) while maintaining appropriate boundaries as a researcher and not an interventionist (Bar-On, 1996; Josselson, 1996; Munhall, 1988; Raudonis, 1992). Participants were invited to comment on the transcripts and the feedback was incorporated into the analysis, thus participants were considered co-creators (Grafanaki, 1996; Josselson, 1996; Smythe & Murray 2000).

Including procedures to detect harm and deal with it represents an important precaution in any study in which the potential for harm can be imagined. Munhall (1988) commented that to avoid harm, the researcher must continually evaluate the impact on participation throughout the research process, and renegotiating consent. As noted in the design section, both the researcher and participants had the right to discontinue the interview if the process caused discomfort to the participant. Rowling (1994) recommended the return of interview transcripts to interviewees for confirmation as one technique which is aimed at protecting participants' interests as well as confirming the accuracy of the information. Pilot studies typically increase both the scientific rigor of the study and the protections for participants. Pilot interviews were conducted and comments from the pilot interviews were included in the final interviews.

Qualitative researchers have also documented that participants report positive benefits from sharing their story. Flesch (as cited in Cowles, 1988) noted that participants were "grateful that they could discuss their true feelings without subterfuge or

concealment” (p. 165). In her research on the experience of individuals who had lost a loved one in a violent death, Cowles (1988) reported that many of the participants "reported better sleep patterns and fewer nightmares for several days following the interview" (p. 167). Bar-On (1996) and Lather (1986) likewise noted that providing an opportunity for interviewees to discuss particular aspects of their biography had a healing effect for them. Participants in this study seemed to have enjoyed sharing their stories.

Research Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985), Marshall and Rossman (1989), Yin (1994) suggested the use of terms that are appropriate for naturalistic axioms for establishing the trustworthiness of qualitative studies. The suggested terms are credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability.

Credibility

Credibility is concerned with the question of how the findings match reality and whether the researcher is observing or hearing what he/she thinks he/she is observing or hearing (Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Phenomenological studies are concerned with understanding experiences in the context of the phenomenon, thus the validity of the design and research is of fundamental value (Moustakas, 1994). Schurink, Schurink and Poggenpoel (1998) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) emphasized the truth-value of qualitative research. Merriam (1998) suggested six strategies that can enhance the credibility of a study, namely: triangulation, member checks, long term observations, peer examination, participatory or collaborative modes of research and

clarifying the researcher's assumptions. For this study, the researcher assured credibility through bracketing herself consciously during interviews and analyses to understand the perspectives of the participants as well as clarifying the researcher's world view in the study (Mouton & Marais, 1990). Member checking was also used to increase the credibility of the study as the participants were given the opportunity to review transcripts for the purpose of determining if the information was consistent with their lived experiences (Guba, 1981; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Polit & Hungler 1997). Pilot testing enhanced credibility by ensuring the appropriateness of the data sources and questions. The audio tapes, capturing the participant's exact words further contributed to the truth.

Transferability

Transferability deals with the degree to which the findings of a study are generalizable beyond the immediate population being studied (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Lincoln and Guba (1985), Merriam (1998) and Miles and Huberman, stated that in order for a qualitative study to be generalizable, rich and thick descriptions of the data collection and analysis must be provided to enable readers to determine how closely their situations match the research situation. For this study, detailed descriptions of the data collection process and interpretations were provided.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent to which study findings could be replicated. It is concerned with the question of whether the research procedures can be repeated by another researcher on the same sample and still gets similar findings (Merriam, 1998;

Miles & Huberman, 1994). Establishing an audit trail by documenting details of the procedures and decisions made at all stages of the study is the best way to assure re-dependability (Lincoln & Guba, 1989). For this study, a thorough and clear description of each stage of the research process was provided. Explanations of what was done and why it was done were also provided. Data collection in the form of tapes and transcripts also increased dependability.

Confirmability

According to Sandelowski (1993) confirmability is concerned with the freedom from bias in the data collection and interpretation process. Collection and interpretations of research need to be grounded in contexts and participant's perceptions and are not to be creations based on the researcher's biases and imagination (Guba & Lincoln 1989). To achieve confirmability, all data needs to be tracked to its source and the logic used in collecting and interpretation should be clear to readers and other researchers (Schwandt, 1997). For this study, documents will be available for re-analysis by other researchers. Details of the study will allow replication by other researchers if their methods and procedures are similar to those used and followed in this study. Overall, confirmability is said to occur when credibility, transferability and dependability are established (Glaser & Strauss 1967).

This chapter has described and justified the methodologies that were utilized in this study. It examined the procedures and processes that were followed in choosing the participants, data collection and analysis. Finally the chapter explored the issues of

ethical concerns and ensuring trustworthiness of the study.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA AND FINDINGS

Introduction

In chapter three I described how I collected data. This chapter introduces ten women managers who participated in this study using pseudonyms to protect their confidentiality. Demographic information and profiles are given. The chapter also presents the data collection and analysis processes. The second part of the chapter entails analyzing the ways in which participants perceived their attainment of a senior management position and depicts on the themes emerging from the woman's stories using analytical themes emerging from a close reading of the interviews. The theme categories which the women share in common will be presented. At the end of each category, the answers to the research questions from which the themes evolved in response to, will be presented.

Method and Demographics of Participants

The problem of this study was to explore Zimbabwean women in senior management positions and factors that contributed to their advancement with a view to examine culturally and contextually appropriate strategies that may be used to facilitate the advancement of women to senior management positions in Zimbabwe. Data was collected by the semi-structured interview format comprising open ended questions. Ten Zimbabwean women managers were interviewed and the interviews lasted between 40

minutes to one hour. The ten women who participated in this study ranged in age from 43 to 67 years. Eight were married, one was widowed and one was divorced. They all had at least two children. All had at least a masters degree. All of them worked in Harare. Some of these women have occupied more than one management position and some have worked in different sectors during the course of their careers. Five of the women managers worked in private organizations, four worked in public organizations, two worked in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), one worked for an international organization and three women worked in parastatals (owned or controlled partly by the government). The interviews were scheduled at times convenient for the participants. The focus of the study was to explore the perspectives of the women managers and the culture in which they are grounded. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of this study.

Participants' Background Information

The following is brief profile of the participants. All management positions held by the women during the course of their management careers, both past and current are included in the profiles. To protect participant's identity, their profiles are not discussed individually but rather as a group. The following are positions, present and past, occupied by the ten women during the courses of their management careers: chief industrial officer, deputy general manager, assistant general manager, head of institutional development, director, registrar, senior assistant register, senior training officer, gender communication officer, training and development officer, senior register, senior

administrative officer, executive director, economist, deputy director, assistant chief planning officer, chief analyst, assistant general manager, manager, chief domestic statistician, estate section manager, fodder specialist, provincial coordinator.

The following are the credentials held by the participants: diploma in personnel management, masters in business law and employment relations, bachelor of arts in psychology and social anthropology, diploma in social work, masters in public administration, masters in business administration, bachelor of science in biological sciences, masters in gender analysis and development, masters in adult education, state registered nurse, diploma in nurse education, diploma in nurse administration, masters in agricultural economics, masters in business administration, masters in psychology of education and masters in business studies.

Interview Process

The interviews were conducted over the phone. Each participant was contacted over the phone to set up times to conduct interviews. The participants were asked to propose times convenient to them. The following is a list of the research questions that guided the interview:

1. What family dimensions empower women to advance to senior management positions?
2. What societal characteristics contribute to women advancing to senior management positions?
3. What organizational characteristics do women identify that empower them to attain senior management positions?

4. What are the institutional mechanisms that assist in the advancement of women to senior management positions?
5. What are the strategies utilized by the women to overcome perceived barriers to career advancement?
6. What do women consider to be factors that would empower other women to advance in management positions?

After conducting the interviews, the interviews were transcribed from the audio-tapes to electronic format. Each participant was asked to review the transcripts. Any changes or modifications by the participants were communicated to the researcher through email. After the review, the researcher came up with the final transcripts.

Data Analysis Process

As discussed in chapter 3, the data analysis was conducted using Willig's four-stage of phenomenological analysis. As an initial encounter with the interview scripts, the interviews were read several times. A wide-ranging of unfocused notes was produced. The second stage of analysis involved identifying and labeling the emerging themes, both sub-ordinate and core themes. These themes captured some recurring patterns cutting across the data. Identified themes were coded according to the essence of what was found in the text. All coding was done by hand. Summary tables of the themes were generated as illustrated in Appendix E. Ultimately 5 major themes emerged from the data. The table below illustrates themes that emerged from the narratives.

Table 1: Themes and sub-themes

Master Themes	Sub-themes
I. Cultural Role Expectation	(a) Maintaining domestic role (b) Support of husband (c) Humbling on the domestic front (d) Hiring extra domestic help (e) Lack of support from extended family and society
II. Work Family Interface	(a)Balancing professional role with domestic role (b) Separation of equal rights domestically and professionally
III. Organizational Support	(a) Support from supervisors (b) Resistance from coworkers
IV. Government Implemented Women Advancement Mechanisms	(a) Ambivalence about government support
V. Personal Characteristics	(a)Traits, skills, abilities (b) Qualifications (c) Working harder than men

The categories were informed by the study's purpose, my knowledge and the meanings were made explicit by the participants themselves (Merriam, 1998).

Integration of Themes from the Interviews

In this section I present the integration of master themes that emerge from the women's narratives. I present narratives produced by the participants to capture their perceptions (Creswell, 1998). Effort is made to report on how the participant described

and narrated their experiences (Van Maanen, 1988). The presentation will be guided by the themes that are shown in Table 1. The text in italics represents the direct citations from the interview transcripts. Special attention will be given to what the participants suggest to be the factors that contributed to their career advancement. For purposes of anonymity to protect their confidentiality, each participant will be identified as woman and a number. At the end of each category, the answer to the research questions from which the theme or themes evolved will be presented.

Cultural Role Expectations

A majority of the participants cited maintaining cultural role expectation as one of the strategies they used to advance their careers. The participants emphasized that women need to continue playing their cultural traditional roles at home in order to get the support they need from their families, particularly husbands. They all maintain that the Shona culture has not changed much in terms of gender roles and therefore regardless of having advanced professionally, a woman needs to continue playing her role as expected.

Maintaining Domestic Role

A majority of the participants indicated that continuing to play their domestic roles as mothers and wives is one of the strategies they use to get support from their husbands given the patriarchal nature of the society. They said,

You have to make sure the children have done the homework; you have to make sure everything is in place. The groceries are done by the time you get into bed. You can't rest as much as men can (Woman 1).

Although woman 2 indicated that her husband was not supportive, she believes

that a woman still needs to respect her domestic cultural role in marriage and that this is a major factor for advancement.

About family, in women's organizations we talk about not influencing women to do things that are not compatible with our cultural expectations or what we will not do ourselves but influence others to do so which may break their marriages or result in being told to stay home (Woman 2).

Other women reiterated the same idea by saying,

He never complained, because I remained a wife in the home and I also think that my spiritual life has helped me a lot (Woman 3).

I really did play my role as expected (Woman 4).

Woman 5 eloquently expresses the importance of maintaining domestic role expectations to career advancement as follows,

I think as women, frankly there are certain duties that you have to do. No, I don't believe in this thing of saying the men have to cook as well. And the men have to do a duty roster or whatever. Me, I believe there are certain things in the home that only women can do better. There are certain things that you as a mother will have to attend to and not delegate to anybody. So, I think if you just are able to manage your time and play your roles efficiently, that will not be a problem at all. You cannot say that because I am a top executive bla bla, I can not supervise my kid's homework. There are certain things that you have to do whether you're at the top or not. Yea, I think so because most women think that now because they are top executives, they can not take their children to bed or they cannot do the dishes in the home, set the table for the husband or this thing of holding a dish for my husband to wash hands, I feel better if I do it myself you know. I think that is my role as a wife as well as taking my children to brush their teeth. I want to do that as a mother. So we should not really confuse ourselves by mixing the 2 issues. Although I would like to say it also depends on the society, and the culture, the beliefs in it. The beliefs in each and every culture differ you know. Some are different, like western countries are more liberated. Because you cannot generalize, what happens in Africa does not necessarily hold in the States or things like that. Your culture also plays a big role. Because you find that if you adopt some of the things that are applicable in the US and you apply them here you will find that you will have a problem at your workplace or a problem at home because of cultural difference. So, you have to look at a

culture, the way you live, your life style for example. If your husband does dishes here it will be news, you can't have that, and you will have serious issues with in-laws, saying what did you do to our son or whatever. Zimbabwean men have it easy.

Two other women added,

Clearly there are some you know, eh, restrictions in terms of cultural expectations. You know, I've got to go home and supervise homework (Woman 8).

Men need to be given their place in society, just say lets discuss and find how we can best work this out. Most of the time they will understand (Woman 9).

Support of Husband

All participants in the study listed husband support as a factor in their career advancement. Husbands were seen as critical in influencing career advancement by giving their wives the freedom to pursue their careers, helping with the children and emotionally supporting their wives.

Woman 1 had this to say,

Oh yeah my spouse, you know, us Africans sometimes spouses can be jealousy of the advancement of their partner? Mine, I think he was very supportive from that perspective. Hum, even the studying with the kids and all, he really, he was playing a big part in giving me the opportunity to advance myself because like I would come from work, really tired. Because the diplomas and everything I did by correspondents so that meant taking off time which you're supposed to be with the family, and, and doing some studying.

Although Woman 2 indicated that her husband was not supportive and that she overcame his resistance through assertiveness, she still believes that good communication between husband and wife is a critical factor for career advancement. She says,

My late husband was a lecturer in history, he was really resistant, I remember one time when we were in Nigeria he actually struck me and I told him that was the last time he did that. And he was taken aback actually. The husband and wife should communicate and agree on how they want to handle the situation, the two of them; it's not about competition or denouncing our cultural roles.

Woman 3 also says that the most influential factor in her attainment of a management position was her husband's support. She commended,

My husband was very very supportive, Oh my God, very very supportive. If anything he would have wanted even to write the thesis for me. He was very supportive and I remember he would send material to me when I was in Britain, by DHL, for my assignments. He would call me every day at 6 pm checking on my progress asking what grades I got in every assignment.

Woman 4 also attributes her career advancement to the support of her husband; she indicates that without husband support, a woman can not achieve career advancement. She commended,

But then again I got a lot of support from my husband and my family. I went into it when we were starting an organization. Actually I had a lot of support and assistance from my husband. Eh, it was a sacrifice to leave the family for long periods of time but with the support and encouragement of the husband. When it was necessary he would look after the children in my absence. He would do everything for the children, even cook for them. In fact he did everything when I was away. The immediate extended family, the brothers and sisters of my husband, the brothers really supported me.

Woman 5 also states that her husband played a major role by being understanding.

Some relatives would be supportive and some relatives would not understand why you have to work that hard. Because it also involved a lot of traveling, leaving your family behind and all that. So it's a bit of 50 /50. My spouse, uh, very understood.

According to Woman 6, her husband's financial and intellectual support was

important in the advancement of her career. She stated,

Yaa, my husband could afford to take care of all of the expenses for that time. Yea from my husband, (mumbling) yea he gave me a lot of support. Because he is very good with assessments and policy analysis so some of the work and some of the ideas and so on, he helped me.

Woman 7 expresses her views in the following narrative.

I think I was married quite early in my career. You know, so I was like coming from the university and I think it was the same year that I got married. And I think one of the things that helped me a lot was also my husband who was very supportive of my work. And because my work included a lot of travel within Zimbabwe and outside, but I think he was someone who was always supportive. There wasn't a time when there was animosity or tension, you know that tension that because you have not been around for some time you know that tension that is very common. And I think that really helped me a lot. Such that when I was doing my work, I didn't have any guilt conscience of any sort. You know if you leave home and go to work and you know someone is not very happy with what you are doing you end up with some guilty conscience that maybe what I'm doing is not right or maybe I'm not doing the best for my family or I am depriving my family of something, which may affect even the way you approach some of these things. So I think his attitude also helped me quite a lot. You know I was free to do my work without any fear, without any misgiving or fear that if I do this now or if I go to this meeting or if I finish work late, you know, my husband is going to be angry, you know. I believe it helped me.

Similar to Woman 2 and Woman 9, Woman 8 indicates that her husband resented her being absent all the time and having to leave him with all of her domestic duties. She however thinks that her husband's willingness to carry the family's financial load on his own while she was pursuing a higher career in a way contributed to her advancement.

Uh mm not particularly but it was more from my husband, he would think ohh you are going out again and leaving me to do all this, like the things you should be doing. Sometimes he understood but in the long run, it was (stutter) difficult. He would always complain about "I have to do this ehh to do the groceries, ferry the children to school". I think to some great extent, certainly when I started into business my husband in a sense

supported me because he had to foot all the bills while I was looking for jobs and waiting for those months that were not so productive.

Woman 9's story seems inconstant, although at the beginning she states that her husband was resistant at times, she feels that her children and husband helped her advance her career. In her own words she has this to say,

Also when we had visits from the IMF and the World Bank, things like that, you know because there would be a lot of work and meetings and my family was very supportive. I remember my daughter whom I was talking to you about. I would come in some cases about 12am, 1am that sort of a thing. They would both be asleep. Then tomorrow morning my daughter will tell me that she helped her younger brother with home work all I needed to do was to sign. I will tell you the truth and it will help you in your research and in life, what I used to tell my husband was that, one time he was very angry at me because I came home late and he was complaining and I said look, there is one thing I know for a fact, marriage can end but I have to develop my career because my job will take care of me for ever, as if I knew that the marriage will break. Now after divorce, I managed to send all my kids to school because I had a good job. So from the home front I would then say, let's talk about anything else but my job. If you discuss with them, they can understand, my husband for example was generally supportive and would go with me to conferences and remained with kids when I went to trips overseas. We divorced not because of my work but because of some extended family issues. He was a lecture and used to actually say we support the job that brings more money into the house. He was very supportive.

Woman 10 also attributes her career advancement to the support she got from her husband.

I do get a lot of support from my spouse. As an agriculturist most of my work is out in the rural areas and commercial farms. Sometimes he covers the portions that involve traveling. Those that do not require my presence in person he takes care of outside his own work schedule or we go together, it depends. When I go away he plays the father & mother role and takes the children to school, checks their homework etc. He also gets to proof read some material that I write.

Humbling Oneself at Home

Half the participants responded that one of the strategies they used was to humble themselves to their husbands and overplaying the domestic role. This way the husbands did not feel that their position as heads of the households was being threatened. Woman 1 stated,

So sometimes we cause our own problems as women. Men know that we women rule the home in most cases and in a home that is run by the man there is no development. Men know that in terms of medulla oblongata we are better than them but they do not want us to say that to them. Another thing that can help women have mileage is if we approach them differently, for example, you suggest something, even with the male boss and you hear them argue with it, just leave it, three days later the boss comes back with what you suggested as if it's his baby, it's OK just as long as you achieved your objective. That's where we women go wrong, just let it look as if it was his idea and it's implemented and things work. Just butter their ego and things will work for you and you do not end up arguing for nothing. Let him think it's his idea. The fact that he thought about it even if he came back to you behaving as if it was his idea, to me it suggests that I have superior thinking and I will let him take the credit but we will achieve our objective.

Woman 3 also said she made it a point to maintain her role in the marriage so as not to raise questions from her husband. She commended,

What I discovered is this, people would ask my husband, "your wife talk's gender, how is she is the house?" I made sure that I treated my husband in the biblical way, what the bible says, I am a Christian. I remember one woman saying to me that I do not get good jobs in NGOs, because I am passive, I am not aggressive and yet I was trying to proceed with caution. I said to myself, my husband allowed me to go for masters abroad and more so for gender studies and I said I must give him that respect. I do not want to be different when I come back. What I did much as my application of gender in the family, it is more towards making sure that all my kids both girls and boys do the same chores. But I made sure that my husband will not question if I was being influenced by my gender studies. He never complained, because I remained a wife in the home and I also think that my spiritual life has helped me a lot. I believe the word and

practice it. Gender should be approached from the development perspective rather than revamping the whole culture because ours is tough to change.

Woman 4 indicated that one of the strategies that helped her most was maintaining or even overplaying her role as a woman in the family.

But at home I think I even exaggerated my simplicity to my husband and my family. To make them realize that this thing there's nothing wrong with it. I really over did it. I really did play my role as expected.

Woman 8 mentioned that when she was present, she over played her role to make up and try to please her husband.

If I'd been away, then I come back then I try to make up sort of to really go out of the way to cover up, to try you know, to try to cover up as it were.

Although divorced, woman 9 still thinks that men need to be treated according to traditional expectations. She says that women need to humble themselves to their husband and that aggression should only apply in the work environment and not at home.

That's a very, very difficult situation. It's difficult and unfortunate. My advice is you should not be aggressive in your approach. You can do this at work with you colleagues; it does not work at home. At home, it will be nice if you could sit down and talk over this matter and see why your spouse is resistive to your advancement because some of them it's just a control issue which is a cultural matter. Our men are not like men from advanced countries. You therefore need to sit down with them and ask if there is a problem and what it is all about.

Hiring Extra Domestic Help

Half the participants cited hiring domestic workers to assist with child care and/or housework as one of the strategies they used. Such domestic help contributed to the women's ability to preserve time for family and to maintain domestic tranquility. They

reported that having domestic help decreased resentments and incidents of tension in the marriage. The comments were,

We can afford domestic labor here; it's a completely different game. When I come from work I do not have to do dishes, as a top executive I can afford 2 maids. If your husband does dishes here it will be news, you can't have that, and you will have serious issues with in-laws saying what did you do to our son or whatever. Zimbabwean men have it easy. You also have to adopt what's applicable to you; you can't even generalize what someone does with her husband because your husband may be different (Woman 5).

It may also help to have more than one domestic to help you cover, to cover some of the cleaning on weekends (Woman 6).

Yea, yea, I (stuttering) I always had a maid and actually two, one maid and a gardener. I think because there are two of them, so that if one takes time off one will still be around. I've always had some help. And I remember also at times when I went out because my kids were still young, at times I would also ask for some of my relatives like one of my aunts who is not married, like if I travel outside the country. I ask her if she can come and stay with the family so there would be an adult woman in the house (Woman 7).

For a long time I had to employ 2 maids, and to me that gave me a sense of you know, um comfort and uh that things were ok at home even if whatever happened, and also incase one fell ill, and someone one would cover up for them. For a long time I had to make an investment and say "look I'll pay double salary for 2 maids." That was one thing that I (stutter) did and of course I proposed other strategies like employing a driver but that was resisted. But to me it would have worked as a solution, you know, the picking up (Woman 8).

Tell him that you can make arrangements or even have your mother or somebody very close come and take care of the kids while you go to school or whatever it is. So that your husband is not burdened by taking care of kids (Woman 9).

Lack of Support from Extended Family and Society

Woman 1 did not feel that the extended family played a role in her advancement. She had this to say:

They didn't have much of a part to play, if anything I had to chase them away (laughs). I would say, I would say to my sister you've got 5 minutes to get out (Chuckles softly). The most important thing is not to let the relatives meddle because usually like, they will start saying "how can you let a woman do that" which can pose problems. So the two of you have to sit down and try as much as possible to understand each other.

Woman 2 feels that the society and culture continue to hold women back. She captures societal barriers in the following words:

Society is ambivalent, but because our society is very patriarchal, they tend to listen to men even the women that you think are progressive they tend to take the position of society, they listen to what a man says more than they listen to women, that's our society,. They are resistant in fact to things coming from women.

The following extract also described societal and cultural experiences that made it difficult for Woman 3 to fully realize her dreams.

Let me share with you one of the experiences I have, maybe you will get your answer from there. I am the first child in a family of 9. During the time I went to school, I went to school during a time when girls were not so much allowed to pursue education. I grew up in the rural area and my father after I finished grade 7 he said that he did not have any money to send me to school. I had really done very well in one of the remote areas in the primary school there, I was one of the best students in grade 7 but my father said I have no money for you, if you were a man I would have sold my livestock but because you will get married its non of my business.

Describing the role her extended family played in her advancement, Woman 5 said,

Some relatives would be supportive and some relatives would not understand why you have to work that hard. Because it also involved a lot of traveling, leaving your family behind and all that. So it's a bit of 50 /50.

In the following extract Woman 5 described the challenges she encountered in the society that made it difficult as she tried to advance her career,

But in society at large you just have to work harder. Well people would

(stutter) normally just judge you before you perform they will say you're a women, you're a young person so they pre-judge, they preempt your effort before you even do anything. So that's when you have to prove yourself.

Although she suggested networking as one of the strategies women could use to advance themselves, Woman 8 realizes that there are limitations due to societal and cultural norms and expectations commenting thus,

Clearly there are some you know, eh, restrictions in terms of cultural expectations. Uh personally, I like the networks, I then think, you know I've got to go home, I have to go and supervise homework. I also have to see about the children, so evenings are not really good unless there is formal things like a cocktail party of course I will go, but if it's something on an individual basis it's a bit difficult. For instance you know lunch meetings are also quite an avenue for networking, even (stuttering) with colleagues or potential you know, business partners and so on and also of course the usual workshops you get a chance to meet people. Sometimes you might be invited to a function and you want to go because that's a chance for you to meet with other people and hear ideas and hear what's going on and you know what they're trying to, you know, push forward. But definitely I also feel a limitation and also one thing is you know going out in the evening, sometimes you think if I ask a potential business partner and go to diner (laughs) its really, it actually has certain connotations. Yea sometimes I've done it but sometimes you start thinking what will people think. You start thinking can I stay here for three hours? you can't do it. Particularly because you don't only network with women, sometimes you want to partner and the partner who is suitable is a gentleman, you (stutter) can do it but then at the same time you feel divided, you think no I'd better go home. One time I made a contact at the embassies and each time I talked to him he would say oh it would be good to have lunch, and then I would say do I invite him to lunch? You just feel funny about the whole thing.

In the narrative below Woman 9 describes how she characterizes the attitude society has towards women's advancement. She commented,

As you know, the society was saying how she can leave a baby. People talk. One thing I have known in our society is that people will always have something to say regardless of what you do, you just do what you are convinced is right, if something will make you happy or will develop your

career.

Woman 10 had this to say about societal characteristics that she had to work against,

Males think they know everything. That is the culture in Zimbabwe.

Work Family Interface

Another key issue which seems to affect women in senior positions is the need to balance family and professional demands. The women managers in this study believed they successfully negotiated both domains and that helped them to advance their careers.

Balancing Professional Role and Traditional Domestic Role

The aspect of the balancing act is captured in the following statements,

You have to fulfill your social responsibilities. I was actually chatting to some men today and, they were saying "my wife must iron my shirt for me." And I'm saying she is equally coming from work, where she's probably earning more than you and she probably has a more taxing job. Then they say, "but socially she is still my wife. If she doesn't do it then I will go to the small house" (find a second wife), so you want to try and (chuckles) so you are trying to balance your being a boss or manager at work at the same time when you come home you have to sort of like humble yourself and start ironing his shirt (Woman 1).

Other women had this to say,

You should balance African family life and your work but not being subservient. Women have to stand on their two feet and realize that they are asserts to their families and within the society (Woman 2).

I remember one woman saying to me that I do not get good jobs in NGOs, because I am passive, I am not aggressive and yet I was trying to proceed with caution, balancing the two worlds (Woman 3).

So I combined work and marriage. To look after my children, look after my family and my husband. So you have a family commitment competing with your professional commitments (Woman 4).

Although there are certain things that you as a mother will have to attend to and not delegate to anybody so I think if you just are able to manage

your time and play your roles efficiently, that will not be a problem at all (Woman 5).

You come from church, and you are trying to cook breakfast and then try to read. But a lot also goes with the way you organize your home life (Woman 6).

You also need to be very organized, it's a very difficult thing but you just have to be organized. Sometimes you get a good paying job and there's going to be your son's birthday or some important play. You have to organize time to do things with them and to supervise (Woman 8).

And then you have also the problem of trying to reconcile your roles as well, you are professional woman, senior manager at work, you are a mother, in some cases like some of us we could also be a father if you are coming from a divorce and you've got children, you are both a mother and father at the same time, and you have to reconcile all those roles. It's important to make sure that you balance your roles, as a mother and as a Professional (Woman 9).

Separation of Equal Rights in the Domestic Front and the Professional Front

Half the women believe that equal rights should only apply in the public domain and that when applied in the domestic domain the result is lack of support from the husband. This in itself will hinder advancement. They commented,

I think there is a general tendency by women to misunderstand what equal rights mean. To me equal rights are actually equal opportunity not rights because if I am a woman, I can never be a man. Sometimes we women get it wrong because we misinterpret what equal rights mean. Therefore in the home we are saying we are equal therefore you must also cook. We must always remember our culture; we are different from the western world. If you go to a man nicely and say "dad" can you take the spoon and turn the meat because I am changing the baby, depending on how you approach him, he will be willing to help. But if you do it as a matter of fact and say because I work too so you have to do it the men will not do it (Woman 1).

About family, in women's organizations we talk about not influencing women to do things that are not compatible with our cultural expectations or what we will not do ourselves but influence others to do so, which may break their marriages (Woman 2).

What I did as far as my application of gender equality is concerned in the family is more towards making sure that all my kids both girls and boys do the same chores. But I made sure that my husband will not question if I was being influenced by my gender studies (Woman 3).

Woman 4 also does not think that women have to radically assert their rights in the home. She advocates for communicating respectfully with the husband. She explains,

Then I think in human rights in the home, you don't have to say do this, but when it was necessary he would look after the children in my absence. He would do everything for the children, even cook for them. In fact he did everything when I was away. So I didn't have to fight for my rights in the home. It came naturally because I think there was good communication.

Woman 5 strongly asserts that the concept of equal rights does not apply in the African domestic front and when applied, it may result in a lot of problems for women.

I find a lot of women confuse the 2 issues, women's liberation as well as their places in the home. I think the two roles are completely separate. Yea, I think so because most women think that now because they are top executives, they can not take their children to bed or they cannot do the dishes in the home or set the table for the husband. But I don't think that's what we're talking about when we talk of women advancement. You're talking about better, I mean, even broader issues like at work. You know equal pay for equal salary. That is what I would actually go for. Not this thing of holding a dish for my husband to wash hands, I feel better if I do it myself, you know. I think that is my role as wife as well as taking my children to brush their teeth, I want to do that as a mother. So we should not really confuse ourselves by mixing the 2 issues.

Answer to research question 1 and 2

What family dimensions empower women to advance to senior management positions? What societal characteristics contribute to women advancing to senior management positions? The importance of the family to the Zimbabwean culture and the maternal role obligations associated with it was emphasized. The participants believed

that support from husbands was very important to their career advancement. Without exception, women credited their husbands with influencing their career advancement aspirations mostly by, allowing, supporting and encouraging them. There was consensus that “without a supportive husband you can’t do it.”

Most of the women noted that one of the strategies they used to gain support of or overcome resistance from their husbands was to humble themselves and continue to play the expected domestic role. The majority of the women were married and reported that “As a woman, there are certain duties that you have to do.” Five of the women indicated that equal rights have no place in African marriages. They emphasized that equal rights should only be applicable in the workplace and not in an African home because they are not compatible with African values. They made comments such as “I find that a lot of women confuse the two issues, women’s liberation as well as their places in the home. I think the two roles are completely separate.” Most of the women reported role conflicts between domestic duties and their professions but there seemed to be no questions in their minds that their husbands are not to be burdened because culturally, these are women’s duties. Rather, these women hired domestic help or asked some of their female relatives to help with domestic duties.

Although the extended family is very important in the Zimbabwean culture, most of the women did not cite extended families as having played much of a role in their career advancement. In the extended family setting, some of the women reported that they faced numerous problems because they could not attend certain family gatherings

due to the demands of their work. This, however, did not hinder these women; rather they developed numerous strategies to deal with these attitudes. Assertiveness and sometimes aggression were some of the strategies used to overcome resistance from extended families.

No societal characteristics were reported as having contributed to career advancement of the participants. Societal attitudes towards women's positions and abilities were perceived to have restrictions on career advancement for women. The participants expressed that the society, traditional cultural values and stereotypes continues to hold women back and that there is strong bias against women in leadership positions as evidenced by the attitudes the women report to receive from male coworkers and sometimes female coworkers. Women are perceived through the lens of several enduring stereotypes and these women said they had to find ways to challenge these myths, which perpetuate the male co-workers advantage and hinder women's rise to the top management levels. As one woman put it, "Society is ambivalent, because our society is very patriarchal, they tend to listen to men, even women who seem to be progressive, they are resistant to things coming from women." One of the women felt constrained by societal norms and cultural values to participate in informal networks.

Organizational Support

Some women mentioned organizational support as having helped them in the attainment of management positions.

Support from Supervisors

Participants who reported having been supported by their organizations mentioned that their supervisors were open to new ideas.

Because in our organization I think there were some bosses who really were fair. It was like emm what do you call it? (Stutter) equal opportunity employer. It's what you are bringing with you. That's why (pause) even a number of us felt we could advance if we bettered our qualifications. So you find that you would have bosses who will really encourage, who were male for that matter (Woman 1).

I had a good director, I felt that he understood, sometimes he would say that, "you should remember that you are dealing with Africans and Africans are resistant to some of these things" (Woman 2).

So I was supported by the first director who was open to new ideas but the second one was a conventionalist (Woman 3).

Like in that I had support from the department; I was getting a lot of funding in terms of computer and computer papers and computer at home and internet at home. So that was not a problem (Women 6).

Maybe I can say my organization helped me because they allowed me to attend part time classes (Woman 10).

Resistance from Coworkers

Other women reported facing resistance from male coworkers and sometimes even from female coworkers. The following are a series of challenges which the women faced as managers.

I actually had men that used to come up and say, "I've got problems being supervised by a woman". Yaa, I know one guy for sure we had to transfer him to another department, he had major problems being supervised by a woman. Yes, he came out in the open and just said it. Hum, then in some instances, you will find, you fellow women will be

trying to pull each other down (Woman 1).

Reflecting on the challenges she faced Woman 2 said,

Oh yes, you would find that you know, for instance even drivers and messengers, they would you know, drag their feet to carry out orders. But if they are given instructions by the director you know, they would (stutter) fly! But if it was me, eh hh they would do something else or they will tell you that, "oh I'm still doing a, b, c, d, I will do that later" (Woman 2).

As a woman, I would say what I discovered, especially when you are talking about gender, men still trivialize it, they are not very forthcoming and accepting gender being spoken of by a woman. They are seeing us as a threat; they never take us serious (Woman 3).

In the following extract Woman 5 described the challenges she encountered from male coworkers,

So before you do anything, they have already placed you in a category of just saying that you're women (Woman 5).

In the section below Woman 7 narrates her experiences with male coworkers as a woman in senior management,

What I have noticed is that men normally, they can intimidate you (stutter) saying "what do women know?" or even to judge before they even see you saying "haa it is Mrs. 7 who is going to be doing this", they say because it's a woman possibly it won't be done. You know, and for me I (stutter) have experienced it quite a lot that someone coming to a meeting saying it is Mrs. 7 who has called for this meeting. So they come relaxed, because it's a woman saying "haa, we can always talk our way through" (Woman 7).

She also indicated that male coworkers tend to view her as a sex symbol rather than a professional woman.

And being very open with these guys that you know you don't cross this line, that we may joke etc but this is where you end and once they see that that's your attitude, they will respect you for that (repeating) they will

respect you for that. So for me the advice I would give to women is be principled and make sure you draw the boundaries yourself and the boundaries that you set will determine if you are going to remain a professional woman who gains respect from her colleagues or you are going to be "one of those women" you know, something like that. You know, for me I had that experience, for me it was really surprising (repeating) it was really surprising because like I said, everywhere I worked its either I was the only woman or there was just one other woman and I would travel with all these men either abroad or in the rural areas but you will be thinking that its just a colleague but you see them approaching you with sexual requests. I said to myself maybe these guys when they look at you even after you reach such a level, they still see, they don't see you as a working person, they still see other things that at some point they should be able to, you know, take you to bed.

Woman 9 also faced resistance from male coworkers.

Eh well, my experience over the years is that um, yes you (stutter) you could have problems with subordinates, particularly men saying "I don't want to have women uh senior than me, I can't be told what to do by a women (Woman 9).

Answer to Research Question 3

What organizational characteristics do women identify that empower them to attain senior management positions? Having a fair and open-minded supervisor was reported as the major organizational characteristic that empowered women to attain senior management positions. Male coworkers were reported as being resistant to women managers. The five women who reported that their organizations contributed to their career advancement cited their supervisors as being open-minded and modernized people. Organizations as systems were not viewed as being supportive. It was the individual supervisors who were viewed as having been supportive. The other six women said that they did not receive any support within the organizations they worked because occupying

the high ranks of the organizations were men who were biased against them. These women said that they had to work hard and prove their competence.

Most of the women reported facing hostility from their male subordinates and sometimes being subjected to forms of sexual harassment. Male subordinates were reported as having problems taking directives from women and one woman said that “I know one guy for sure; we had to transfer him to another department because he had major problems being supervised by a woman.” Some of the women encountered resistance from their supervisors as well as from other women. One of the women reported that she was constantly being viewed as a sex object even by her high ranking counterparts to which she responded by remaining principled and professional.

Government Implemented Women Advancement Mechanisms

Ambivalence about government support

An issue which most of the women seemed ambivalent about was whether they benefited from affirmative action and other advancement mechanisms implemented by the government. Most of the women did not feel that affirmative action played a big role in their career advancement. They had this to say,

On paper yes, but when it comes to practice, it really depended on who the particular male person is because you know; in most of our structures it's mostly male. So in terms of putting it down (stutter), like the law is there, gender equality and everything but in actual practice it's difficult (Woman 1).

In the following section, Woman 2 illustrates her ambivalence about government

mechanisms to advance women. She expresses the argument as follows,

In a way yes they have. But then you know in decision-making positions, man are the decision makers. Lets take for example the ah permanent secretaries in Zimbabwe, you know they are the ones who are in positions of authority and when there are decisions to be made, they do not report back to the laws. They make decisions and then later on they say that you women are not making use of that, the 30%. It is mainly because men are in decision making positions and because they come from our society where they are reluctant about women being in positions of authority (Woman 2).

Woman 3 was ambivalent about whether she benefited from affirmative action implemented by the government.

Yaa I would want to think so because if a donor comes and says we are giving you this money provide that say, 30% of the beneficiaries are going to be women and the government agrees to sign that, I think to me that's being very supportive and many people have climbed the ladder because of the government. That way it really assisted me because I remember many people took advantage of so many things like where they say these courses we want women and many women took advantage so I think our government was very supportive. Although I also think that, this is my own assessment, I think that as long as supporting women was not going to make them loose power, that they are comfortable, they will support you but at a point where you are going to take power from them, there is a bit of resistance (Woman 3).

That affirmative action and other mechanisms implemented by the government is not viewed as a definite way to advance women is apparent in the way Woman 4 reflects on the role affirmative action and gender policy might have played in career advancement.

There were the laws that I could use whenever I wanted to do something. There would be the resistance and I think I was, I mean I'm not the type that gives up easily. And I would tell people I know my rights and the law says that. You have something to lean on when you need support. But it was not easy. And I think I had the advantage that, I being in a

legal education organization, I knew what was there. And I could use them and they helped quite a lot (Woman 4).

Woman 5 does not think that government mechanisms such as affirmative action had anything to do with her advancement. She said,

Uhh not at all, I did not come across any that helped me, although there was a lot of talk about trying to balance the number of women having top jobs and all that. But I didn't feel any of them contributing to how I got to the top because it was really on my own merit. I didn't get any special service from what ever things that the government is putting through. Maybe that is more applicable in government.

Woman 7 said,

Affirmative action, that's it. Yea there was this affirmative action for women within the system in order that women should be pushed through to management positions. I want to say it could have been a factor which also facilitated my rise within the system given that our sector had a few women. And what is the other thing that I can think of, I don't know (pause) umm, what was the other thing, I can't remember now. Yea, I suppose that could be one of them. But I'm not saying that it's exactly what happened, because I remember when I went to these interviews, I think there were many of us and there were both men and women and you know it was like you would go through the normal process and you would go for interviews and after interviews then you are selected for that. So, I want to believe that it could also have been a factor at some point even maybe I'm equal with someone, because of affirmative action I could have been pushed forward.

In the extract below, Woman 9 examines the role that government mechanisms such as affirmative action might have played in promoting her to senior management. She tends to think that it played a role but thinks that the problem was with implementation at the organizational level.

In some cases I tend to think that the government did a good job when it came into power, no two ways about it. They uplifted women, for example when we joined my organization, you could not acquire a loan from the bank to buy a house or a car etc, all those things were denied but because of the pressure from the government, we managed to access

some of those things. One can argue that you are just looking at the reward system but it does not benefit all women. But I would argue that it's a start for better things to come. You start with rewards; we used to earn less than man anyway. Then they also looked at positions. The government's intentions were good. It's the application that becomes a problem which may not be the government's problem because at times it's difficult because all those offices are full of man (Woman 9).

Woman 10 did not find government mechanisms helpful to her advancement. She says,

I did it all on my own, the government and organizations were not supportive at all. There are men up there who are constantly working against women. Maybe I can say my organization helped me because they allowed me to attend part time classes.

Answer to research Question 4

What are the institutional mechanisms that assist in the advancement of women to senior management positions? Most of the women were ambivalent about the role played by government mechanisms in their career advancement. They indicated that the mechanism implemented by the government may have helped them but on the other hand they said that the implementation at organizational level was not effective. As one woman puts it, "On paper yes, but when it comes to practice, it really depended on who the particular male person is because you know in most of our structures it's mostly male." Some of the women felt that they made it through their own merit and that the government mechanisms did not help them at all.

Personal Characteristics

When talking about traits that helped them to advance their careers, the majority

of the women listed toughness, assertiveness, perseverance, principled, confidence, communication, vision, hard work, competence and self determination.

Traits, Skills and Abilities

In the section below the women narrated how personality traits, skills and abilities helped them to climb the organizational ladder,

Which I think if (stutter) if you don't step your foot or stamp your foot down with your spouse I think you've got problems. Mm mm, my approach was, if a man can do it, I can also do it. But at the same time it wasn't like antagonistic. I would work (stutter) work my butt off, excuse my language (Woman 1).

For Woman 2, assertiveness was the way to overcome her husband's resistance to her advancement, she also said that she had to be tough at work in order to get subordinates to take directives from her but at the same time used good listening skills.

My late husband was a lecture in History, he was really resistant, I remember one time when we were in Nigeria he actually struck me and I told him that was the last time he did that. And he was taken aback actually. I, being a social worker, I always have to listen you know to others in order to empathize. I've always been very authoritative and you know, when I was with organization X, in fact eh I was called Mrs. T and I thought that they were saying Mrs. T, being short for my name. It was Mrs. T really for Margaret Thatcher, I discovered later. Somebody whispered and said you know it's not like they are saying T for your name because I used to lay down rules.

Other women said,

It was tough for me. But I was determined. I am one person who when I would see my mother working in the fields I would say, I would never live this type of life. I did not want to live a life of farming, I hated farming. You would get married at the age of 16 you know and in 4 years you have 3 or 4 children and you get old very fast. So that really inspired me and I kept on saying that I will not stop at anything. This I was telling myself. Those who have power do not want to lose it and those who are not

empowered they also want to get the power. So you have to be very aggressive so to speak. You have to have a vision first and then not to turn your eyes left or right because there are so many hurdles that will be thrown in their way. They must not listen to what men say because they will call you names because men do not want with their territories. I had a friend who studied engineering and they used to make her cry and she persevered. When she got pregnant they would say, "so that is a pregnancy from another woman?" Have a vision and walk on the right path, they should not listen to these men and whoever. I have been called names but I just push in my point until they accept it (Woman 3).

Well to persevere. I've learned that there is no one way of getting up to the top. We all have various ways. If something fails, you don't give up, you look at it from another angle. And another thing I think helped me which I would advice others is when something has failed, try to look for something to jump start you (Woman 4).

But in society at large you just have to work harder (Woman 5).

I always thought that I worked very hard. I work hard. So if you are working hard it shows that you are as good as any other person, any man I think (Woman 6).

What I know is um, I have managed the environment that I have worked in by being technically competent, knowing your job, you know, being able to articulate yourself very well, by being able to articulate yourself very well and being confident. That is why one needs to be principled and a person who can say who am I in this position (Woman 7).

Those situations have to be managed. Sometimes you really have to show that you are in the position depending on what it is that you are handling. Certain things push your patience and you have to be really assertive. (Woman 9).

They need to be firm and assertive, to be good communicators and be focused on a measurable result (Woman 10.)

Qualifications

Formal education was considered to provide unique opportunities by half of the participants. One participant explained,

If you haven't got the qualifications and you're really ambitious, get the qualifications that are required for whatever job you want to gun down. That helps, you know, like in my age group a number of us didn't further our education either because the parents did not see the need or

whatever. Yeah so you get yourself qualified so that by the time you're there and you want to apply for a job, (stutter) you don't wait to be looked at in terms of gender sensitivity to say it's a quarter system yeah. You (stutter) want to be able to be there, you are standing there with MBA or your PhD's that's what the job requires, and Jonathan might be standing by you and may the best person win, rather than wait to be given the crumbs because you are a woman (mumbling) and that to me that's a major issue (Woman 1).

Other women stated,

The director said, "let me warn you, you can go to school but by the time you come back your husband will be gone to somebody else", and I told him that weather I am there or not if he was to go he will go and these husbands when they leave us they leave us with nothing so its better for me to pursue my career for my own security (Woman 3).

Yea and also you find that sometimes you even have to have better qualifications, more years of experience for you to be considered for same positions as the men (Woman 5).

That's why I though maybe if I got a masters, it might help (Woman 6).

My advise would be never give your family as an excuse for not furthering your qualifications, particularly during the time you are new at a job because some of those decisions will haunt you later in life (Woman 9).

I self finance studies that should have been financed by employer and attained credentials from one of the best agricultural institutes which helped a lot (Woman 10).

Working Harder than Men

A majority of the women indicated that in order for a woman to be recognized and be promoted she has to word harder than men.

I would work (stutter) work my butt off. Excuse my language to prove that (repeating) to prove that I can do it, and I can be trusted, and if you give me a position, I can handle it equally well like a man. And I (stutter) to give the example of a black, I don't know, you call them African, Americans a black footballer in the U.K, for him to be in the super league they have to work three times as hard as their white counterparts. So that was my approach. In areas where people would shout nepotism and whatever, I always used to joke to say "By the time they finish all their

relatives, I want to be the next person they look at.” So (stutter) some of those issues, they really bother me, because I would say if I work hard enough somebody somewhere will notice. My approach was, if a man can do it, I can also do it. But at the same time it wasn't like antagonistic (Woman 1).

And as women you have to work hard because at home you're expected to do your home things, and at work you're expected to do your work things. So I find that for women to get to the top, I think that they have to put much more effort than the men, yea. It's quite a challenge because with children and being married and being a young women you have to work extra hard to get to that position, So that's when you have to prove yourself, that you're capable (Woman 5).

But in society at large you just have to work harder. Well people would (stutter) normally just judge you before you perform, they will say you're a women, you're a young person so they pre-judge, they preempt your effort before you even do anything. So before you do anything, they have already placed you in a category of just saying that you're women. In order to qualify over a man, I think you always have to perform better. I think that's the way you overcome that. I have a friend who has done very well, who works in the evening the all the time, so you really feel that you have to put in more (Woman 6).

You can see that haaa (stutter) some of these men you know, they are at an advantage because they wear trousers, it's a forgone conclusion that you know, anybody who wears a trousers is a performer. So they really don't have to do anything. But for a women half the time, you find that you have to be assertive, you have to thumb down your authority, you have to prove a point, its not you know given as it will (woman 9).

I proved to some of my male counterparts that I can also do better than them when I used to get higher marks in the assignments and they ended up respecting me. I used to argue my case during any discussion and justify any contribution I made in class. Constant challenge from the male gender made me work harder. I needed to demonstrate (Woman 10).

Answer to research questions 5 and 6

What are the strategies utilized by the women to overcome perceived barriers to career advancement? What do women consider to be factors that would empower other

women to advance in management positions? The participants developed strategies such as assertiveness, working hard, aggression, perseverance, competence, pleasing their husbands to gain support, maintaining cultural role expectations, balancing professional role with domestic, not applying equal rights in the home, hiring domestic help, working harder than men and advancing their credentials to overcome barriers to their career advancement.

Most of the women practiced assertive behaviors to overcome resistance at work and sometimes at home. Most of the strategies used centered on maintaining the status quo so as to gain support of their husbands. Even those women who reported that their husbands were not always supportive; they still implemented the strategies to try and enlist their husband's support knowing that it would make their pursuits easier.

Aspiring women were advised to maintain their traditional roles in the families and to develop the personal characteristics mentioned in the answer to research question 5. A few women advised aspiring women not to take a radical stance because they say this stance will not work in the Zimbabwean context. Aggression was referred to as a strategy but some of the women warned that aggression should be in terms of pursuing one's vision and goals and not directed towards one's husband or supervisor because being aggressive with men in the Zimbabwean patriarchal system may hurt one's career pursuits.

This chapter presented the findings of the data analysis. The presentation focused on the major themes that emerged from the data analysis. Five major themes were

identified (1) Maintaining Cultural Role Expectations (2) Work Family Interface (3) Organizational support (4) Government Implemented Women Advancement Mechanisms (5) Personal Characteristics. At the end of each theme, answers to the research questions from which the themes evolves were presented. Citations from the interviews were used to support the themes. With the themes identified and results presented, the study will now presents conclusions derived from the finding of the study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose for this study is to show the Zimbabwean context of women in senior management positions. It is the intent to contribute to the literature and to identify factors which enabled the women to advance to their current positions. With more women entering the Zimbabwean workforce, knowledge of strategies to advance women in the workforce is of critical value to Zimbabwe's development. Literature review revealed that there is a scarcity of specific literature on Zimbabwean women managers. Research is needed to help develop advancement strategies that are appropriate for the Zimbabwean context. Most of the studies of the advancement of women to senior management positions in the past 30 years have been conducted in North American and European organizations (i.e., Davidson & Burke, 1994; Davidson & Cooper, 1992; Tanton, 1994; White, Cox & Cooper, 1992).

Studies from other parts of the world may have limited application to Africa and Zimbabwe specifically for cultural reasons. Therefore, it is vital to study and understand the experiences of Zimbabwean women in senior management positions within their own cultural context. Amott & Matthaei (1996) make a case that it is crucial that research investigates the factors that lead to becoming a woman senior manager within a particular context so as to incorporate historical, cultural, organizational, political and socio-

economic factors in women advancement programs.

Chapter Two examined the literature related to factors associated with the advancement of women to management positions. The focus was on factors related to the advancement of women in management in Zimbabwe. The outcome of the literature review was that Zimbabwean women continue to face cultural barriers in attempting to advance their careers despite the implementation of numerous laws. Reviewed literature also revealed that there is scarcity of literature explaining factors that could contribute to the advancement of women in the Zimbabwean context. Hence, to answer the research question, this study developed a phenomenological view of women senior managers in Zimbabwe by gathering and analyzing original data.

Chapter Three explored the appropriateness of the phenomenological qualitative methodology for this study. The chapter discussed the choice of research design, rationale, research trustworthiness, research participants, data collection and analysis. Chapter Four presented findings of the interviews.

This chapter presents conclusions derived from the findings reported in Chapter Four. It also examines the implication of the study for theory and practice. The chapter will start by presenting a discussion of the findings of each of the six research questions, including their relation to the literature. Following the discussion, the chapter will present a section on the implications of the findings to the field and current or emerging theory. The chapter will conclude by presenting recommendations for future research and a researcher's reflection on the study.

Discussion of the Findings from the Research Questions

Discussion of Research Question 1

What family dimensions empower women to advance to senior management positions? As perceived by the participants of this study, they managed to attain senior management positions by effectively negotiating and reconciling the paradoxes of being a professional woman and a traditional woman. They had to navigate between the tradition role and the professional to find ways of successfully managing the two worlds. They all agree that they managed this mostly by adhering to cultural norms and continuing to play their roles as wives and women in the society. Regardless of attaining senior positions in organizations, women are still expected to retain traditional domestic duties. By adhering to their traditional roles as wives and mothers, these women managed to gain support from their husbands which is reported to be crucial for career advancement in this context. Thus women in this study tend to subscribe to traditional gender roles of men and women, and most of the participants do not subscribe to equal rights in the domestic domain but say equal rights are only applicable in the professional domain.

Most of the women reported role conflicts between domestic duties and their professions but they still did not expect their husbands to be burdened because culturally, these are women's duties. Rather, they hired domestic help to avoid conflict with their husbands. In none of these cases does the woman directly challenge established gender norms. This seems to be a sensitive matter and non-antagonistic approaches seem

preferable. These women's husbands are generally supportive of their career advancement pursuits although there are a few who reported that their husbands were resistant at times. However, those women who encountered resistance from their husbands still continued or even exaggerated their domestic role and looked for domestic help so as not to over-burden their husbands with domestic responsibilities as well as trying to enlist their support. Thus a husband's support is viewed as a means to career advancement.

According to other studies, having family support does support career advancement for women. However, the women in this study tended to attribute the contribution from the family mainly to their husbands. Moreover, the support in this context is defined more in terms of being granted permission to pursue careers as opposed to sharing household duties.

Discussion of Research Question 2

What societal characteristics contribute to women advancing to senior management positions? Collectively, participants in this study did not report any societal dimensions as having contributed to their career advancement. They encountered obstacles to their advancement such as being pre-judged and stereotyping from the society. One of the women felt constrained by societal norms from informal networks. She said that she could not participate due to cultural constraints. This is perhaps an even greater handicap for the married women senior managers, who by virtue of being married are not expected to associate with other men outside the workplace. This is contrary to

the literature review findings that indicated that virtually all women who make it to the top have at least one mentor or sponsor or effective networks from the powerful, influential group. In the workforce such as the Zimbabwean, especially in senior management, where there are few senior women available to act as mentors, networks and models, these strategies may not be as applicable. Research also shows that people generally prefer to work with mentors and role models who are like themselves, probably because they perceive that these models will have experienced difficulties and challenges similar to their own (Kalbfleisch 2000).

The participants provided important insights to the human resource profession regarding developing career advancement strategies appropriate for women in Zimbabwe. It is apparent that the Zimbabwean culture is not changing much in terms of gender roles and gender relations as evidenced by the participants' narratives. The findings agree with Muller's (1994) study that Zimbabwean women continue to face constraints in entering and retaining management positions within different sectors. The critical factor that emerged from the interviews that was not revealed in the literature was the need for women to maintain the status quo due to the culture of their society.

Discussion of Research Question 3

What organizational characteristics do women identify that empower them to attain senior management positions? Organizations are only found to be supportive of women's advancement if the ones occupying the top positions are open to equality of genders. The participants expressed that people who are supposed to implement

mechanisms such as affirmative action are the top executives in organizations and these positions are still largely occupied by men who for the most part are not supportive of gender equity. Most of the women said that even with the laws defending the rights of women, the culture that created them continues to exert a tremendous influence over behaviors. Hence the laws and mechanisms are rendered ineffective. Ultimately women who make it to the top are those who are lucky to get supervisors who are open to change, those who are persistent or have support from their spouses. Organizational support has been cited in the literature as a factor that contributes to women's career advancement.

Discussion of Research Question 4

What are the institutional mechanisms that assist in the advancement of women to senior management positions? There is a general feeling that political and legal mechanisms are not effective due to persisting negative attitudes and lack of accountability for the people who are supposed to enforce them. The implications projected by this finding is vital in that while legislation is important in changing policies and practices, people's attitudes play a much stronger role in promoting the status of women in organizations. Beliefs supporting the subordinate role of women in the society are still prevalent in Zimbabwe. Both men and women in the Zimbabwean society seem to be slow in changing their views about gender roles. Hence laws and programs for women advancement have not been effective.

Discussion of Research Questions 5 and 6

What are the strategies utilized by the women to overcome perceived barriers to

career advancement? What do women consider to be factors that would empower other women to advance in management positions? Furthering one's qualifications was cited as a major factor to women's career advancement. Because the society views them as being inferior, women have to obtain superior qualifications in order to be promoted. They also have to prove their competence and be willing to work harder than men. Traits, skills and abilities such as assertiveness, self confidence, determination are also referred to as having helped women transcend in a male dominated domain. All women in this study seem to be of strong characters. Some of the findings in this study corroborated with previous studies that reported that personal characteristics such as assertiveness are critical components for women's advancement. It is however important to note that some of the women warned that aggression should be in terms of pursuing one's vision and goals and not directed towards one's husband or supervisor because being aggressive with men in the Zimbabwean patriarchal system may hurt one's career pursuits.

Implications

The influx of women into the Zimbabwean workforce and professions are part of the transforming social fabric that can create more opportunities for Zimbabwean women to advance to management. However, Zimbabwean women in senior management positions have to navigate between two roles, the traditional role and the professional, and find ways of successfully managing the two worlds.

The findings of this study suggest that regardless of numerous mechanisms implemented by the government after independence, struggle over these paradoxes for

Zimbabwean women has lasted for more than 20 years, and will continue to challenge women advancement efforts for the foreseeable future. Thus there may be need for organizations and human resource professionals to develop policies compatible with Zimbabwean women's dual roles, for example, scheduling all business meetings within working hours or not demanding long hours from women.

The findings suggest that there is strong support in the Zimbabwean society to keep gender roles separate. Adhering to cultural norms in the society by both men and women seem to concur that the professional role of women is secondary to their domestic roles. Hence gender roles are kept in place because all parties involved subscribe to the belief. This suggests that developing effective career advancement strategies for Zimbabwean women may be an issue that needs social transformation rather than the western models of affirmative action or equal opportunity. There may be need for mechanisms which encourage change in how men and women view the role of women.

While legislation is important in changing organizational practices, people's attitudes play a much stronger role in promoting or impeding women's career advancement. Legislation as well as attitudinal changes may be critical in promoting women career advancement strategies in Zimbabwe. This implies that for women advancement programs to be effective in Zimbabwe, gender, along with population-specific, culturally based attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, must be considered in interpersonal and organizational strategies.

The findings of the study also suggest that without the support of the senior

management in an organization, an equal opportunity program is unlikely to be successful. All human resource management policies must have top-level commitment from within the organization if they are to be effective. Managers and supervisors at all levels within the organization must also make this commitment. Thus there may be need to develop programs to sensitize top level human resource professionals and the public at large about the significance of the role played by both men and women in economic development.

One of the findings of this study is that the current mechanisms are ineffective due to lack of accountability and transparency. Thus there may be need for policies and machinery that ensure transparency and accountability in hiring and promotion procedures.

Skills and personal characteristics such as assertiveness, confidence, competence, hard working and improving qualifications were found to be some of the strategies used by women to climb the organizational ladder. This suggests that developing training programs targeted to equip women with these skills may be necessary. Since there are women who may not have as strong characters as the women in this study to help them overcome the reported barrier, there is need to increase awareness in those who have power to make changes. Individual women can promote their own career advancement through continuously improve their credentials and willingness to work hard.

The study suggests that culture dictates gender role expectations and in turn these expectations drive career planning and outcomes. The study therefore encourages policy

makers and human resource professionals to incorporate cultural dimensions into advancement strategies on the understanding of reality of the women in question. The study suggests that truly empowering women advancement strategies must be anchored in cultural and world views and not imported ones which are not necessarily compatible with local realities. This has theoretical implications. There is need for more inclusive theories about women career advancement that explicitly addressed women in specific contexts. From a practical point of view, the study encourages policy makers to view the people's cultural system as an approach to advance women in the workforce. Thus equal opportunity and affirmative action policies may need to be tailored towards the specific barriers faced by Zimbabwean women.

Conclusion

It is hoped that this study has added to the knowledge on women career advancement in Zimbabwe and as well as filling a gap in women in management literature. The adaptation or adoption of strategies from the west or other countries to advance women's careers in Zimbabwe may result in social dislocation and strategies that are not sustainable as they may not embrace specific obstacles faced by women in Zimbabwe. The study suggests that the effectiveness of women career advancement efforts and the ability to sustain them are dependent on the implementation of strategies that make use of the historical, cultural, organizational, political and socio-economic experiences of women. Hence the study calls for the development of culturally attentive women advancement strategies that are embedded in the social structures of a particular

context.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of this study include time constraints, the use of phone interview and being limited to one demographic area in Zimbabwe. The research was conducted as part of a doctorate program thus there were time constraints. The availability of funds was the determining factor for conducting the interviews over the telephone. Although phone interviews are time efficient and cheaper than face to face interviews, they have the limitation of the inability to establish rapport and lack the observation of nonverbal communication. There are contextual materials that can only be caught by physical presence. Because these women are not a statistically representative group, caution must be exercised in generalizing the results. Despite the limitations, this study provided insight and understanding of the experiences of women senior managers in Zimbabwe.

Future Research

Based on this study, recommendations for future research are made. This research study recommends a study to determine whether the unique attributes of these women can be generalized to a larger group and how such characteristics may vary according to employment sectors, marital status, age, organizational types, and by region within Zimbabwe. Their needs may not be representative of younger women managers, who may have experienced different sets of challenges and opportunities. In this regard, further research will be useful. The study also recommends a study on the relationship between men's level of education and attitude towards change. It is also recommended that future

studies conduct a survey of the general attitude of man towards change. I am hopeful that other researchers will find interest in exploring these and other facets of this subject.

Epilogue

In qualitative research, the researcher is an instrument (Glesne, 1999), and his/her perspectives or philosophies may have an impact on the research process. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) stated that the constructivist paradigm involves the construction of social meanings which involves inter-subjectivity among individuals. This assumes a subjectivist epistemology where the researcher and the participants co-create the understanding of the phenomenon (Ernest, 1999). Hence, the researcher is part of the context of the phenomenon that is being studied, and brings personal experience and perspectives to the study (Streubert & Carpenter, 2003). I, the researcher in this study, am a woman doctoral student majoring in education and human resource studies. I am from Zimbabwe, a society that is largely patriarchal. I was fortunate to be born into a family that was open-minded about the education of both girls and boys. After earning a Bachelor of Arts degree, I worked as a high school teacher for seven years before coming to the United States of America doing graduate studies. Over the years, I realized how fortunate I was to have had a father and a husband who allowed me to pursue my dreams. I have met so many women, who faced several constraints in an effort to pursue desired career pathways. As a result I have found myself preoccupied with the position of Zimbabwean women in society.

Being a woman from Zimbabwe, who is concerned about the position of women,

I realized that I may have difficulty separating myself from the participants and the research and that this may lead to bias as an insider researcher. That could jeopardize the validity of this research. I addressed this by bracketing myself as discussed in the validity section. Furthermore, Field and Morse (1998) stated that even when doing research in one's own society, the linguistic variations that carry social information are network specific. Society is formed by many sub-groups; hence no researcher is likely to be a complete insider (Field & Morse).

This process was one of the most humbling experiences I have ever gone through. It made me realize how, throughout our lives we assume to be aware and conscious of certain issues and remain uninformed without skillfully inquiring into the assumptions. We make assumptions because we think, speak, react and respond from a foundation of beliefs and experiences that have shaped us. As we become more skillful, we are more aware of the beliefs and assumptions that shaped us and how they affect our perceptions.

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APPENDIX A: PHONE INVITATION

My name is Farai Makombe, and I am a doctoral student at Colorado State University in the US. I am conducting a study on the perceptions of Zimbabwean women in senior positions. I am hoping to gain insight into the perceptions that these individuals may have about factors that contributed to their career advancement. The research could contribute to the knowledge base about women's career advancement strategies that are appropriate for the Zimbabwean context which could have policy implications. I got your information from the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network's directory of women at work. Due the positions you have held in organization, I believe that you will help answer questions pertaining to this issue and I was wondering if you would be willing to participate in this study. If you wish to participate in the study, I will send a letter of participation and consent form to you. These two documents will contain more details about the study and what is expected of you. After reading these two documents please sign and return the consent form. After receiving your consent, I will arrange a time to interview you over the phone at a time that is convenient to you. The interview will last approximately an hour and half.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Farai Makombe

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPATION LETTER

Dear Participant

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my research project. The purpose of this research project is to explore the experiences of Zimbabwean women senior managers from their own perceptions. For my study, I would like to interview you and have you share your career advancement experiences with me. Specifically, I am interested in hearing about your perception of the personal, family, organizational, societal or institutional factors that helped you advance your career. I will ask you to describe, as fully as possible, those experiences to me. In the course of the interview I may ask additional questions about your career advancement experiences.

I feel very grateful to you for your participation in this research project. I would like to assure you that our conversations will be confidential. As a researcher, I will treat all the information you give me with a lot of respect. I look forward to talking with you. In the meantime, if you have any thoughts about factors that contributed to your career advancement, I invite you to write them down for me. All of your thoughts and experiences regarding your career advancement will provide me with the valuable "data" I need for this research project.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled

Attached is a consent form that I need you to sign if you agree to participate in this study. Thanks again for your time and support. I will call you or email you next week to arrange a time and place that is convenient for you to talk with me.

Sincerely,

Farai Makombe
Co-Principal Investigator

(970)492-9264

makombef@lamar.colostate.edu

Dr. Garry D. Geroy
Principal Investigator

(970) 491-5097

geroy@lamar.colostate.edu

APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study
Colorado State University**

TITLE OF STUDY: Seeking culturally attentive career advancement strategies for women:

Perspectives from Zimbabwean women.

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Gary D. Geroy: geroy@lamar.colostate.edu
School of Education: (970) 491-5097

CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Farai Makombe: makombef@lamar.colostate.edu (970)492-9264

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?

You are being asked to take part in this interview because the purpose for this study is to show the Zimbabwean context of women in senior management positions with a view to identify factors and strategies that enabled the women to advance to their current positions. We believe that your position as a woman manager in Zimbabwe will help answer questions pertaining to this issue.

WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?

Under the direction of Dr. Geroy, the principal investigator, Ms. Makombe, the co-principal investigator, will conduct the interview and synthesize the information obtained from the interview.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose for this study is to show the Zimbabwean context of women in senior management positions with a view to contribute to the literature in this field and to identify factors and strategies that enabled the women to advance to their current positions.

WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?

The interview will be conducted by telephone. Ms Makombe will call you from the US during a time you are at home and not at your work site. You will be interviewed for approximately one hour and half hours at a time and place that is convenient to you.

WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?

You will be asked to participate in a tape-recorded or email interview in which you will answer a set of questions asked by Ms. Makombe, the co-principal investigator. The questions will ask you to discuss your experiences as woman manager and factors that helped you to advance your career. The questions will also ask you to discuss some of the strategies you have utilized to overcome perceived barriers. The interview will be tape-recorded.

ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are no reasons that you should not participate in this interview. The co-principal investigator assures confidentiality regarding all information obtained during the interview.

Page 1 of 3 Participant's initials _____ Date ____

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?

The loss of confidentiality is the only known risk for subjects. Risks of breaches in confidentiality are minor as they are unlikely to occur because primary investigator and co-investigator will take various actions to ensure that confidentiality is maintained.

- All interviewees will be referred to by the pseudonym throughout all areas of the research study, including in transcripts, on tapes, and in analysis and publication. No research materials will be marked with interviewees' names.
 - Tapes and transcripts of interviews will be kept in a locked drawer in Dr. Geroy's office.
 - Ms. Makombe will be the only person who knows the link between each interviewee and his or her pseudonym.
 - Ms. Makombe will code anything in interviewee responses that could be identifying. For example, if a manager mentions at Zimbank the transcription will say that she works at a local bank.
 - There will be no category of interviewees in which there is only one candidate. This point ensures that no interviewee will be identifiable according to the characteristics for which she was included in the study.
- It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

WILL I BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There is no known benefit in participating in this study, but we hope you will after participation in this study you will have acknowledged the experiences of your career advancement the strategies that helped you become managers. Thereafter, you may become an informed mentor to aspiring women managers.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?

Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

WHAT WILL IT COST ME TO PARTICIPATE?

There are no costs to participate.

WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?

We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study.

When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep your name and other identifying information private.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. For example, your name will be kept separate from your research records and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key.

Page 2 of 3 Participant's initials _____ Date _____

CAN MY TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?

Your participation in this interview is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time during the interview without penalty.

WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

Although you will receive no monetary or material compensation for your participation, we hope you will be making a significant contribution to the overall body of knowledge on this topic.

WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH? The Colorado

Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr. Gary D. Geroy at geroy@lamar.colostate.edu or (970) 491-5097
CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Farai Makombe aMakombef@lamar.colostate.edu or (970)492-9264

APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What family dimensions empower women to advance to senior management positions?
2. What societal characteristics contribute to women advancing to senior management positions?
3. What organizational characteristics do women identify that empower them to attain senior management positions?
4. What are the institutional mechanisms that assist in the advancement of women to senior management positions?
5. What are the strategies utilized by the women to overcome perceived barriers to career advancement?
6. What do women consider to be factors that would empower other women to advance in

APPENDIX E: THEMES AND INTERVIEW EXTRACTS

Themes and interview extracts

Master Themes	Interview extracts
<p>I. Husband's support</p>	<p>I think he was very supportive from that perspective, hum, even the studying with the kids and all, he really, he was playing a big part, yeah, in giving me the opportunity (Woman 1).</p> <p>About family, in women's organizations we talk about not influencing women to do things that are not compatible with our cultural expectations or what we will not do ourselves, which may break their marriages or result in being told to stay home. The husband and wife should communicate and agree on how they want to handle the situation; it's not about competition or denouncing our cultural roles (Woman 2).</p> <p>My husband was very very supportive Oh my God very very supportive (Woman 3).</p> <p>But then again, I got a lot of support from my husband and my family without a supportive husbands you can't do it (Woman 4).</p> <p>My spouse, uh very understanding (Woman 5).</p> <p>Yea from my husband, yea he gave me a lot of support (Woman 6).</p> <p>I think he was someone who was always supportive; there wasn't a time when there was animosity or tension (Woman 7).</p> <p>My husband in a sense supported me because he had to fit all the bills while I was looking for jobs (Woman 8).</p> <p>He was very supportive (Woman 9).</p> <p>I do get a lot of support from my spouse (Woman 10).</p>

<p>II. Humbling oneself at home</p>	<p>If you go to a man nicely and say “dad’ can you take the spoon and turn the meat because I am changing the baby, depending on how you approach him, he will be willing to help (Woman 1).</p> <p>I made sure that I treated my husband in the biblical way, what the bible says, I am a Christian. I said to myself my husband allowed me to go for masters abroad and more so for gender studies and I said I must give him that respect. I do not want to be different when I come back (Woman 3).</p> <p>But at home I think I even exaggerated my simplicity to my husband and my family. To make them realize that this thing, there’s nothing wrong with it. I really over did it. I really did play my role as expected (Woman 4).</p> <p>If I’d been away, then I come back, then I try to make up, sort of to really go out of the way to cover up (woman 8).</p> <p>My advice is you should not be aggressive in your approach. Our men are not like men from advanced countries (Woman 9).</p>
<p>III. Hiring extra domestic Help</p>	<p>I can afford two maids. If your husband does dishes here it will be news, you can’t have that, and you will have serious issues with in-laws (Woman 5).</p> <p>It may also help to have more than one domestic to help you cover some of the cleaning on weekends (Woman 6).</p> <p>I (stuttering) yea, I always had a maid and actually two, one maid and a gardener. At times I would also ask for some of my relations like one of my aunt who is not married to come and stay with the family so there would be an adult woman in the house (Woman 7).</p> <p>For a long time I had to employ 2 maids. I proposed other strategies like employing a driver but that was resisted, but to me it would have worked as a solution (Woman 8).</p> <p>Tell him that you can make arrangements or even have your mother or somebody very close come and take care of the kids while you go to school or whatever it is. So that your husband is not burdened by taking care of kids (Woman 9).</p>

<p>IV. Lack of Support from Extended Family and Society</p>	<p>They didn't have much of a part to play, if anything I had to chase them away (laughs) I would say to my sister, you've got 5 minutes to get out (chuckles softly). The most important thing is not to let the relatives meddle because usually like relatives will start saying how you can let a woman do that and this can pose problems. So the two of you have to sit down and try as much as possible to understand each other (Woman 1).</p> <p>Society is ambivalent, but because our society is very patriarchal, they tend to listen to men, even the women that you think are progressive, they tend to take the position of society for instance in politics etc. They are resistant to things coming from women (Woman 2).</p> <p>I had really done very well in one of the remote areas in the primary school. I was one of the best students in grade 7 but my father said I have no money for you, if you were a man I would have sold my livestock but because you will get married its none of my business (Woman 3).</p> <p>Some relatives would be supportive and some relatives would not understand why you have to work that hard. Because it also involved a lot of traveling, leaving your family behind and all that. So it's a bit of 50 /50 (Woman 5).</p> <p>But definitely I also feel a limitation and also one thing is you know going out in the evening I like to dine out but sometimes you think if I ask a potential business partner and go to dine (laughs) its really, it actually has certain connotations. You feel, you really feel the need to go for a drink. Yea sometimes I've done it and um yea you do it and sometimes you start thinking what will people think? (Woman 8).</p> <p>As you know, the society was saying how can she leave a baby? People talk. One thing I have known in our society is that people will always have something to say regardless of what you do, you just do what you are convinced is right (Woman 9).</p> <p>Males think they know everything. That is the culture in Zimbabwe (Woman 10).</p>
	<p>You have to make sure the children have done the homework; you</p>

<p>V. Maintaining cultural role expectations</p>	<p>have to make sure everything is in place. You can't rest as much as men can (Woman 1).</p> <p>I do not know how we can get to a point that we as women can support each other while at the same time stand firm on certain issues and appreciating what our values are in our African families (Woman 2).</p> <p>Gender should be approached from the development perspective rather than revamping the whole culture because ours is tough to change (Woman 3).</p> <p>And you know as a woman and as a member of the family you are expected to attend all funerals. So you have a family commitment (Woman 4).</p> <p>I think as women frankly there are certain duties that you have to do. No, I don't believe in this thing of saying the men have to cook as well. And I think people are now trying to mix different culture (Woman 5).</p> <p>Clearly there are some you know, eh restrictions in terms of cultural expectations. I have to go and supervise homework for example (Woman 8).</p> <p>Men need to be given their place in society, just say lets discuss and find how we can best work this out. Most of the time they will understand (Woman 9).</p>
<p>VI. Balancing professional role and traditional domestic role</p>	<p>You have to fulfill your social responsibilities. So you want to try and (chuckles) so you are trying to balance your being a boss or manager at work, at the same time when you come home, you have to sort of like humble yourself and start ironing his shirt (Woman 1).</p> <p>You should balance African family life but not being subservient (Woman 2).</p> <p>I remember one woman saying to me that I do not get good jobs in NGOs because I am passive, I am not aggressive, and yet I was trying to proceed with caution, balancing the two worlds (Woman 3).</p> <p>So, I combined work and marriage. To look after my children look after my family and my husband. So you have a family commitment competing with your professional commitments (Woman 4).</p>

	<p>Although there are certain things that you as a mother will have to attend to and not delegate to anybody, so I think if you just are able to manage your time and play your roles efficiently, that will not be a problem at all (Woman 5).</p> <p>You come from church, and you are trying to cook breakfast and then try to read. But a lot also goes with the way you organize your home life (Woman 6).</p> <p>You also need to be very organized, it's a very difficult thing but you just have to be organized (Woman 8).</p> <p>And then you have also the problem of trying to reconcile your roles as well, you are a professional woman, senior manager at work, you are a mother, in some cases like some of us, we could also be a father if your coming from a divorce and you've got children, you are both a mother and father at the same time, and you have to reconcile all those roles. It's important to make sure that you balance your roles, as a mother and as a professional (Woman 9).</p>
<p>VII. Separation of equal rights in the domestic front and the professional front</p>	<p>I think there is a general tendency by women to misunderstand what equal rights mean. To me equal rights are actually equal opportunity not rights, because if I am a woman, I can never be a man. Sometimes we women get it wrong because we misinterpret what equal rights mean. Therefore in the home we are saying we are equal therefore you must also cook (Woman 1).</p> <p>About family, in women's organizations we talk about not influencing women to do things that are not compatible with our cultural expectations or what we will not do ourselves which may break their marriages (Woman 2).</p> <p>In other words I did not assume a radical approach (Woman 3).</p> <p>Then I think in human rights in the home, you don't have to say do this, but when it was necessary he would look after the children in my absence (Woman 4).</p> <p>I find that a lot of women confuse the 2 issues. Women's liberation as well as their places in the home. I think the two roles are completely separate. Yea I think so because most women think that now because they are top executives they can not set the table for the husband. But I don't think that's what we're talking about when we talk of women advancement. You're talking about better, I mean even broader issues like at work. You know equal pay for equal qualifications (Woman 5).</p>

<p>VIII. Traits, skills abilities</p>	<p>If you don't step your foot or stamp your foot down with your spouse I think you've got problems (Woman 1).</p> <p>I've always been very authoritative. You should be principled and valued (Woman 2)</p> <p>It was tough for me. But I was determined. You have to have a vision first and then not to turn your eyes left or right because there are so many hurdles that will be thrown in the way. So you have to be very aggressive so to speak, aggressive in the sense of pursuing a vision (Woman 3).</p> <p>Well to persevere. I've learned that there is no one way of getting up to the top. If something fails, you don't give up. Try to look for something to jump start you (Woman 4).</p> <p>But in society at large you just have to work harder (Woman 5).</p> <p>See, I have no problem with working hard. I work, hard, hard, hard. So if you are working hard, hard, hard...it shows that you're as good as any other person any man I think (Woman 6).</p> <p>What I know is um, I have managed the environment that I have worked in by being technically competent, being able to articulate yourself very well and being confident. That is why one needs to be principled (Woman 7).</p> <p>Certain things push your patience and you have to be really assertive. In some cases you have to be aggressive. But for a woman, half the time, you find that you have to be assertive, you have to thumb down your authority, you have to prove a point, its not, you know, given as it will (Woman 9).</p> <p>They need to be firm and assertive, believe in yourself and be positive be good communicators, work smart, not only hard and be focused on a measurable result (Woman 10).</p>
<p>IX. Qualifications</p>	<p>You have, if you haven't got the qualifications and you're really ambitious, get the qualifications that are required for whatever job you want to run for, that helps (Woman 1).</p> <p>The director said let me warn you, you can go but by the time you come back your husband will be gone to somebody else and I told him that weather I am there or not if he was to go he will go and these husbands when they leave us they leave us with nothing so its better for me to pursue my career for my own security. (Woman 3).</p>

	<p>Yea, and also you find that sometimes you even have to have better qualifications, more years of experience for you to be considered for same positions as the men (woman 5).</p> <p>That's why I though maybe if I got a masters, it might help (Woman 6).</p> <p>My advise would be never give your family as an excuse for not furthering your qualifications, particularly during the time you are new at a job because some of those decisions will haunt you later in life(Woman 9).</p> <p>I self finance studies that should have been financed by employer and attained credentials from one of the best agricultural institutes and that helped a lot (Woman 10).</p>
<p>X. Working harder than men</p>	<p>I would work my butt off to prove that I can do it, and I can be trusted, and if you give me a position, I can handle it equally well like a man (Woman 1).</p> <p>So I find that for women to get to the top. I think that they have to put much more effort than the men (Woman 5).</p> <p>I think it's sort of understood here that women always have to work harder in order to qualify over a man. I think you always have to perform better. So I think that's the way you overcome that (Woman 6).</p> <p>You can see that haaa (stutter) some of these men you know, they are at an advantage because they wear trousers, it's a forgone conclusion that anybody who wears a trousers is a performer. But for a women half the time you have to prove a point, its not you know given as it will (Woman 9).</p>
<p>XI. Resistance from coworkers</p>	<p>You find, I actually had men that used to come up and say "I've got problems being supervised by a woman". Yaa and in some instances we would try and arrange, I know one guy for sure we had to transfer him to another department because he had major problems being supervised by a woman. Yes, he came out in the open and just said it. Hum, then in some instances, you will find, you fellow women will be trying to pull each other down (Woman 1).</p> <p>Oh yes, you would find that you know for instance even drivers and messengers. They would, you know, drag their feet to, you</p>

	<p>know, carry out orders. But if they are given instructions by the director, they would (stutter) fly! But if it was me, eh they would do something else or they will tell you that ohhh I'm still doing a, b, c, d you know, I will do that later (Woman 2).</p> <p>As a woman, I would say what I discovered, especially when you are talking about gender, ah, that time when I was talking about gender it was like ah, men still trivialize it, and they are not very forthcoming and accepting gender being spoken of by a woman. They are seeing us as a threat; they never take us serious (Woman 3).</p> <p>So before you do anything, they have already placed you in a category of just saying that you're women (Woman 5).</p> <p>What I have noticed is that men normally, you know, they can intimidate you (stutter) saying "what do women know?" or even to judge before they even see you saying " haa it is Mrs. 7 who is going to be doing this", they say because it's a woman possibly it won't be done. So they come relaxed, because it's a women saying "haa, we can always talk our way through" (Woman 7).</p> <p>Eh well, my experience over the years is that um, yes you (stutter) you could have problems with subordinates, particularly men saying "I don't want to have women uh senior than me, I can't be told what to do by a women (Woman 9).</p>
<p>XII. Support from the organization</p>	<p>Because in our organization I think there were some bosses who really were fair? It was like emm, what do you call it? (stutter) equal opportunity employer, it's what you are bringing with you. That's why (pause) even a number of us felt we could advance if we bettered our qualifications (Woman 1).</p> <p>I had a good director, I felt that he understood, sometimes he would say that you should remember that you are dealing with Africans and Africans are resistant to some of these things (Woman 2).</p> <p>So I was supported by the first director who was open to new ideas but the second one was a conventionalist (Woman 3).</p> <p>Like in that I had support from the department. I was getting a lot of funding in terms of computer and computer papers. So that was</p>

	<p>not a problem (Woman 6). Maybe I can say my organization helped me because they allowed me to attend part time classes (Woman 10).</p>
<p>XIII. Government Implemented Women Advancement Mechanisms</p>	<p>On paper yes, but when it comes to practice, it really depended on who the particular male person is because you know in most of our structures it's mostly male. So in terms of putting it down (stutter), like the law is there, gender equality and everything but in actual practice it's difficult (Woman 1).</p> <p>In a way yes they have. But then you know in decision-making positions, man are the decision makers. You will find that you are, lets take for example the ah permanent secretary in Zimbabwe, you know they are the ones who are in position of authority and when there are decisions made, they do not refer back to the laws. They make decisions and then later on they say that you women are not making use of that, the 30%. It is mainly because men are in decision making positions and because they come from our society where they are reluctant about women being in positions of authority. There is no mechanism for monitoring, the monitoring is not there, so even when they are not applied no body checks why it's not happening (Woman 2).</p> <p>Yaa I would want to think so because if a donor comes and says we are giving you this money provide that say 30% of the beneficiaries are going to be women and the government agrees to sign that kind of you know, I think to me that's being very supportive and many people have climbed the ladder because of the government, these ideas. That way it really assisted me because I remember many people took advantage of so many things like where they say these courses we want women and many women took advantage so I think our government was very supportive. Although I also think that, this is my own assessment, I think that as long as supporting women was not going to make them loose power, they are comfortable, they will support you but at a point where you are going to take power from them, there is a bit of resistance (Woman 3).</p> <p>There were the laws that I could use whenever I wanted to do something. There would be the resistance and I think I was, I mean I'm not the type that gives up easily. And I would tell people I know my rights and the law says that. You have something to lean on when you need support. But it was not easy. And I think I had the advantage that being in a legal education organization, I knew what was there and I could use them and they</p>

helped quite a lot (Woman 4).

Uhh, not at all, I did not come across any that helped me. Although there was a lot of talk about trying to balance the number of women having top jobs and all that. But I didn't feel any of them contributing to how I got to the top because it was really on my own merit I didn't get any special service from what ever things that the government is putting through. Maybe that is more applicable in government (Women 5).

In some cases I tend to think that the government did a good job when it came into power, no two ways about it. They uplifted women, for example when we joined my organization, you could not acquire a loan from the bank to buy a house or a car etc. All those things were denied but because of the pressure from the government we managed to access some of those things. The government intentions were good. It's the application that becomes a problem which may not be the government's problem because at times it's difficult because all those offices are full of man (Woman 9).

