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I would like to express my gratitude to the ZCAS University team, particularly to my supervisor Doctor Kapasa G. Mweshi, whose insight and understanding of the subject guided and kept me on track during my study.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving husband, Charles, who has been a continuous source of encouragement and support throughout my adult education journey. I am eternally grateful for your presence in my life. This work is also dedicated to my two lovely girls, who have inspired me during this journey.

Thank you for your unwavering encouragement and support, my family, and friends.

Above all, I am grateful to Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour, for giving me life and guiding me through my studies.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CSO – Central Statistics Office Zambia

PWC – PricewaterhouseCoopers

WBC - Women's Business Centre

ZCCM-IH – ZCCM Investments Holdings Plc

ABSTRACT

There has been much talk on the global stage around greater diversity and inclusion in all spaces. In the matter of representation, more specifically that of women representation in top management positions, has been ongoing. While the agenda is gaining traction, much work is still to be done.

This proposal outlines a study around women representation in top management positions in corporate spaces. Titled, “*Exploring the causes of low representation of women in key decision-making positions. A case study of ZCCM Investments Holdings Plc.*” Its overarching goal is to investigate what factors contribute to the low levels of representation of women in key decision-making positions at the institution. The study is meant to contribute to the body of knowledge and to give insight into the challenges for the broader Zambian context.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The conversation around women's representation in key decision-making positions has been gaining traction over the last few years. There has been a resurgence of initiatives to increase diversity in important decision-making areas (Medland 2016). There has also been a push from different key stakeholders to encourage the presence of more women in boardrooms and management roles. Policies have been put in place to encourage increased female participation; corporate organisations have begun to encourage women to apply for more of these bigger roles. In some instances, quotas have even been in place requiring that a certain number of positions be given to women.

Fundamental to this cause has been the belief that greater demographic diversity in the constitution of corporate boards, for instance, positively enhances board decision making and thereby increasing upward firm performance (O'Reilly and Main, 2012). This could be taken broadly to and applied to diversity in directorial, managerial, and other decision-making roles. If greater diversity does indeed lead to improved performance the need for this study cannot be overemphasised. This research is intended to investigate the factors that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in key decision-making positions in the workplace.

The following is an introductory chapter that investigates the topic of female representation. This chapter covers the study background, research problem, objectives of the study, research questions, and scope of the investigation, coupled with limitations of study, study organisation, and chapter conclusion.

1.1 Background of the study

Representation of women in the employment and leadership roles has increased dramatically during the last two decades. Over the last 20 years in Zambia for instance, employment is becoming less segregated by gender. Data in the labour market has corroborated this assertion. On the Copperbelt for instance, between 2001 and 2007, the rate of women that are in professional and technical employment increased from 7.7 per cent to 12.4 per cent, a greater increase than among men (CSO, 2020). Between 1990 and 2010, the percentage of women in

managerial roles increased from 12% to 29% in Zambia's suburban communities. Furthermore, in the Copperbelt, the percentage of employed women working in skilled labour-intensive jobs more than doubled between 2001 and 2007, from 3.5% to 7.9% (CSO 2010). The proportion of urban Copperbelt women in production and related work also doubled between 1980 and 2000 (CSO, 2001).

Several scholars have conducted investigations into the extent to which women's representation impacts team performance and team dynamics. Garanina and Muravyev (2019), for instance demonstrated that gender diversity may have a major behavioural effect on how a team works. A key aspect for businesses looking to improve both team and organisational performance. Investigating the antecedents of the low representation of women in key decision-making roles is critical particularly considering that women frequently make up most of the workforce and have a higher percentage of labour engagement.

According to THE GLOBAL ECONOMY 2020 figures, Zambian women participated in the labour force at a rate of 74%. When compared to the global average of 60 percent, this is extremely high. However, as of 2014, only 20% of women held decision-making positions (Longwe 2014). In comparison, the figures for women's representation are exceptionally low, especially given the high labour-force participation rate. This is despite efforts by the government, lobbyists, and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to change the dynamic. These efforts included the construction of government ministries devoted to gender issues, as well as the formation of organisations dedicated to advocating for women's inclusion, representation, and involvement (Kalinda and Chirwa 2015).

ZCCM-IH Plc

ZCCM Investments Holdings Plc is a world-class mining investment and operations firm. As an investment holding company, ZCCM-IH maintains important holdings in the mining and energy industries in Zambia, giving it a very distinctive and strategically favourable position. It also has substantial assets in various energy entities, gemstones, and real estate. ZCCM-IH's portfolio now includes eight (8) completely owned subsidiaries and sixteen (16) investee enterprises.

In its 2020-2026 Strategic Plan, ZCCM-IH has prioritized the generation of consistent and predictable income through investments in brownfield and greenfield projects, as well as

ensuring value is extracted from existing legacy and post-legacy portfolio companies through driving efficiencies and participation in the mine supply value chain (ZCCM-IH, 2022).

Men largely control mining, supply chain management, and investment management. According to Balance *et al.* (2020), the mining industry remains a de facto male preserve symbolized by pervasiveness of socio-economic restrictions on women. These predispositions and biases impact the activities of ZCCM-IH, and they incline it to homophily in terms of key decision-making responsibilities. If ZCCM-IH is to reap the full benefits of team diversity and input from women at all levels, this study is vital. It is crucial to understand why the agenda for women's representation has not reached critical mass, specifically in the case of ZCCM-IH.

1.2 Research problem

According to the Central Statistical Office, the proportion of women in decision making roles in Zambia's urban areas increased from 12% to 29% between 1990 and 2010. According to The Global Economy (2020), Zambian women participated in the labour force at a rate of 74%. When compared to the global average of 60%, this is extremely high. However, as of 2014, only 20% of women held decision-making positions (Longwe, 2014). When compared, the figures for representation of women in key leadership roles are exceptionally low, especially given the high labour-force participation rate. This is despite efforts by the government, lobbyists, and Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to change the dynamic. These efforts included the construction of government ministries devoted to gender issues, as well as the formation of organisations dedicated to advocating for women's inclusion, representation, and involvement (Kalinda and Chirwa, 2015). In 2020, the global gender gap index for Zambia was 0.73 index. Though Zambia's global gender gap index ranking fluctuated in last few years, it tended to increase through the 2008 - 2020 period ending at 0.73 index in 2020 (1=No inequality, 0=Maximum inequality). This rate, which reads on the higher end of the spectrum, is evidence of the challenges the country faces in matters of women's representation.

Despite the implementation of policy work by government ministries and CSOs, the current situation does not reflect the work that is being done in space. These inconsistencies must be explored if Zambia is to reap the benefits of the large demographic of women in the workforce and the wealth of skill they bring. It is also important for Zambia to stay current with global development trends and maintain its credibility on the global arena. Scholars from across the

globe, locally and otherwise have attempted to investigate this topic, but the vacuum in literature remains large, necessitating this inquiry.

1.3 Justification for the research

Organisational performance has become a major issue as organisations struggle to achieve their targeted performance due the ever-changing business environment (Muthuveloo and Teoh, 2020). To achieve optimal organisational performance, organisations must be efficient in managing their resources, especially human resources, particularly the women. This will require understanding the impact that their representation has and then managing it to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

It is therefore crucial for ZCCM-IH management to understand why there are fewer women than men in key decision-making roles, as well as how this can affect organisational performance. The research will also help policymakers understand the hurdles to representation and their potential consequences.

1.4 Research Aim

To explore the causes of low representation of women in key decision-making roles at ZCCM-IH

1.5 Research objectives

- (i) To assess how personal traits (including self-confidence and self-esteem, a willingness to take on new challenges, and a lack of drive) affect women's representation in decision-making roles at ZCCM-IH.
- (ii) To explore how structural variables (discriminatory practices, male opposition, a lack of policies, and a lack of opportunities) impact women's representation in decision-making roles at ZCCM-IH.
- (iii) To investigate the extent to which cultural factors (socialisation, gender roles, stereotypes) are relevant to the issue of low female representation in decision-making positions at ZCCM-IH.

1.6 Research questions

- (i) To what extent do personal factors (self-confidence and self-esteem, ambition to accept challenges and lack of motivation) affect women's representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH?
- (ii) How do structural factors (discriminatory practices; male resistance; absence of policies; and limited opportunities) affect women's representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH?
- (iii) Are cultural factors (socialisation, gender roles, stereotypes) relevant to the issue of the low women representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH?

1.7 Research Hypothesis

- H0: Personal factors do not affect women's representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.
- H1: Personal factors affect women representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH
- H0: Structural factors do not affect women representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.
- H2: Structural factors affect women representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.
- H0: Cultural factors are not relevant to the issue of the low representation of women in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.
- H3: Cultural factors are relevant to the issue of the low representation of women in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.

1.8 Research Significance

The knowledge gap chosen is a contextual gap as similar studies have been carried out around the world. Evans (2014) investigated the impact of growing Flexibility in Gender Divisions of Labour in Kitwe, Zambia. Katongo (2017) investigated the impact of quota systems in political parties on representation of women in politics. Wang and Muriaas (2019) also investigated the gender imbalance in political recruitment in Zambia. No study seems to directly address the lack of representation of women in corporate spaces, particularly in decision making roles in the mining industry. This created a lack of generalisability and hence

the need to extend the study to the Zambian context. The study will give input to governments and policy makers who shape policy around women's representation. It will also give input to management in corporations around women's representation and its impact on their businesses. Finally, it will contribute to the body of knowledge around women's representation in Zambia

1.9 Dissertation Layout

Chapter 1 - highlights the research problem statement, study objectives, research scope, research question and finally the significance of this study and outlines the structure of this study.

Chapter 2 – reviews literature by providing a historical and theoretical overview of representation of women in the body of knowledge. Precisely, it delves at important definitions, and theoretical approaches to understanding the factors that influence representation of women in decision making spaces. It also posits via reviewing literature a conceptual and theoretical framework and highlights gaps in the literature.

Chapter 3 – This chapter discusses the research approach and justification and implementation for the adopted research design/approach. It also discusses the population, sampling, and data collection procedures. It highlights, target population, sample frame and size, justification, and implementation for the adopted research design. It gives the deductive approach adopted in the study, data collection, processing, and analysis. Lastly it discusses validity, reliability, generalisability, and ethical concerns.

Chapter 4 – Chapter 4 highlights respondents Profiles. It gives an assessment of findings and analysis for each of the employed research Instruments. It also gives tests for validity and reliability.

Chapter 5 - Chapter five discusses key findings from the different hypotheses posited. It explores the practical/managerial implications of findings/Recommendations and discusses Limitations of the study and directions for future studies.

1.10 List of Key Terms and Definitions

Women - Adult female human beings, people with the qualities traditionally associated with females.

Representation- The description or portrayal of someone or something in a particular way, the presence of someone or something in a particular space or sphere.

Decision Making Position- Decision-making roles are those whose office bearers are required to take the lead in the selection of a course of action from among two or more alternatives in order to arrive at a solution for a given problem.

Gender Equality - is when people of both sexes have equal rights, responsibilities, and opportunities in the workplace and society.

Mining- is the process of extracting valuable minerals or other geological materials from the earth, typically from an ore body, lode, vein, seam, reef, or placer deposit. It is also known as mineral extraction.

1.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed women's representation and some of the issues that influence it. In addition, this chapter has highlighted the problem statement, objectives, scope, questions and finally the significance of this study. It has also been established what the study's framework will be, as this will provide the reader with a clear description of the study. A total of five chapters, including the introduction, are included in this dissertation. This section contains a general summary of the content of each of the chapters mentioned above.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter is a review of literature around the representation or lack thereof, of women in decision making roles. It discusses three key factors of personal characteristics, structural variables, and cultural factors and how these affect women's representation. It also highlights gaps in the body of knowledge around these factors and in data around women's representation in Zambia, and in the African contexts.

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1 The Context

Globally, (specifically in the USA) women currently in roles of CEO, 8.2% in the Fortune 500; 7.3% in the Fortune 1000; 6% in the S&P; 5.6% across the Russell 3000; and 7.4% at private companies with revenue over US\$1.0 billion (WBC 2021 Report). While the figures of women in decision-making roles are progressing in the positive trajectory, with the Fortune 500 up from 6.6% in 2019 to 8.2%, progress is still too slow and not reflective of the nation. Only one percent of CEO roles are held by women of colour across the Fortune 1000. In 2021, the number of women running businesses on the Fortune 500 hit a record of 41, with six more women joining the ranks of Fortune 500 CEOs (WBC, 2021).

According to PWC South Africa (2021), only 13% (81 women) of the Executive Directors (EDs) population are women (including CEOs and CFOs). The general level of female representation is also consistent across companies of different sizes (small, medium, and large cap). Although diversity (specifically gender representation) has become a greater area of focus, there is still significant under-representation of female EDs, particularly at CEO level.

Data on Women's Representation in Zambia

PWC Zambia (2020)'s Listed Companies Analysis report shows no data on the representation of women in key decision-making roles. It does however highlight that there are currently 24 companies listed on the Lusaka Stock Exchange. The report ranks ZCCM-IH as second in terms of market capitalisation. The lack of data around women's representation in corporate leadership in Zambia is symptomatic of the challenges around the issue.

2.1.2 Empirical Evidence

Scholars around the world have sought to understand what are the challenges that limit women's representation and how these can be managed. According to an American study around the low representation of African women in top leadership, a failure to make strategic employment decisions based on a career path and personal responsibility has a negative impact on the advancement of African American women into leadership roles. This position is corroborated by a study by Thomas (2006) which found that they often do not have effective career development plans; and consequently, are contributing to their lack of opportunity.

Researchers highlight that individual readiness can be hampered by a lack of strategic career planning in terms of making job choices that are aligned with short- and long-term personal organizational goals. As a result, for women who aspire to reach the pinnacle of the corporate ladder, making career decisions with a strategic intent rather than a sense of necessity becomes increasingly important. Beckwith *et al.* (2017) recommend that women should own the process of getting access to career advancement opportunities. They cite statistics showing that women who successfully advanced from mid-management positions have done so because they have demonstrated the following characteristics: job commitment, meaningful career progression, positive mentoring relationships, strong sponsorship, and a diverse network of professional contacts.

2.2 Factors Affecting Women's Representation

The following is a discussion of some of the various factors that studies have shown affect women's representation in roles of key leadership.

2.2.1 Personal Characteristics

Personality and personal characteristics are frequently mentioned in studies of human behaviour, organisational behaviour, and leadership. Personality refers to the distinctive sets of behaviours, cognitions, and emotional patterns that are brought about due to biological and environmental factors. While there is no universally accepted definition of personality, most theories concentrate on motivation and psychological interactions with one's surroundings. Personality is defined as traits that predict an individual's behaviour in trait-based personality theories, such as those defined by Jana (2017). More behaviourally based approaches, on the

other hand, define personality through learning and habits. Despite this, most theories regard personality as relatively stable.

Hogan and Sherman (2020) describe three main personality theories, each with a sub-type of theory within it. The first is the multiple versions of psychodynamic theory associated with clinical psychology. The second is trait theory, which concerns cataloguing dimensions of individual differences. The third is interpersonal theory which concerns career coaching and development, that is, applications to everyday life.

Furthermore, most theories on personality suggest that personality can be described using several entities that all have a unique stable component, personality traits and also variable aspects, which vary from time to time (Baumert *et al.*, 2017; Wrzus and Mehl, 2015). Personality traits are taken to be self-confidence, self-esteem, and motivation. Presently most psychologists have adopted a view of personality in which traits are a core feature (Costa 2019)

2.2.1.1 Self confidence

Self-confidence is the mindset one holds with regards to their skills and abilities. It entails self-acceptance, self-trust, and a sense of autonomy. It is the self-awareness to clearly understand one's strengths and weaknesses and think of oneself in a positive way. It empowers the capacity to set realistic expectations and goals, communicate assertively, and handle criticism (Coudevylle 2011).

Career researchers have highlighted how high levels of self confidence in the workplace can increase productivity exponentially. Employees are able to get more things done as they are aware of their capabilities and shortcomings. This means that they can use their strengths to their advantage and at the same time, improve and work on their weaknesses. It also enables effective communication, conflict management and resolution and enriches team dynamics.

Sandberg (2013) in her book *Lean In* speaks to what has come to be called the "Confidence Gap". Women are constantly second-guessing themselves and contemplating on their past failures. They hold back and will not express themselves even when asked for an opinion on something they probably a lot more. It is important to explore the existence and impact of such a gap in the Zambian context and on the levels of representation of women in Zambia.

2.2.1.2 Self esteem

Individuals' self-esteem is a measure of how they value and consider themselves. The foundation of this system is built on self-beliefs and opinions about oneself, which can be difficult to change at times. A sense of self-worth can be described as self-assurance in one's own worth as a human being. It is a highly positive factor in one's life; it is associated with accomplishment, positive relationships, and fulfilment. People who have low self-esteem are more likely to be depressed, to experience failure of their potential, or to put up with abusive situations and relationships (Psychology Today, 2022). Self-esteem is defined by how much people value themselves (Baumeister *et al.*, 2003).

2.2.1.3 Self Esteem Versus Self Efficacy

In comparing self-esteem to self-efficacy, Lane, Lane and Kypriabnou, (2004) argued that self-esteem and self-efficacy appear to be two distinct concepts, with the ability to carry out certain courses of action not necessarily being crucial for self-esteem. Both concepts, on the other hand, measure aspects of self-appraisal that are evaluative in nature. As a result, research has demonstrated that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and self-esteem but whether or not results of self-efficacy in terms of actual performance are significant for self-esteem is likely to depend on whether or not success and failure are associated with one's sense of self-worth (Lane, Jones and Stevens, 2002).

According to Corkley (2015), one of the most significant differences between males and females, is the way they perceive themselves as a whole, or their self-concept. Several researchers, including Ellemers (2015), have found that significant gender differences are frequently associated with gender stereotypes. Kimmelmeier and Oyserman (2001a) state that various studies have revealed that the male and female perspectives on their own identities as autonomous agents differ when compared to their perceptions of themselves as connected to and included in relationships with others. This self-concept gender difference is explored by Chiu and Wong (2015).

2.2.1.4 Desire to Take on Challenges

According to LinkedIn Learning, accepting challenges at work not only improves professional performance, but also provides the ideal opportunity to develop skills and advance one's future career prospects. Individuals will obtain vital skills and experience as a result of taking this strategy, which will allow them to transition effortlessly into new positions. Career growth experts assert that it is vital to be ready to take on new challenges if one is to advance to bigger roles. An assessment of the extent to which women have this trait is key for this study (Badariah 2017).

2.2.2 Structural Variables.

Structural variables which are essentially social forces external to women themselves are seen to drive their numeric under representation. These variables include factors such as stereotyping, discrimination, and exclusion from social networks (Cech and Blair-Loy, 2010). The study of Kenny and Verge (2013) demonstrates that in organizations such as political parties, where such structural variables are evident, little effort is made to encourage more women to run for office as candidates for their party. It has been demonstrated that political parties operate under both formal and informal rules that exclude women candidates to the benefit of men (Kenny 2013), that parties place a high value on seemingly gender-neutral criteria that puts women candidates at a disadvantage (Murray, 2014), and that they are resistant to feminization (Childs and Webb, 2012).

Scholars such as Lawless and Fox (2010) and Carroll and Sanbonmatsu (2013) have advanced a thought society contributes to women's low representation. Research has extensively documented how the process of gendered socialisation results in girls and women of virtually all ages having less interest in running for political office than boys and men who are of equal or greater intellectual ability.

2.2.3 Challenges for women in Leadership

Despite advancements in the economic sphere and some convergence in the amount of time both men and women spend on unpaid labour, women are still disproportionately likely to perform the majority of domestic and caring duties within the home, leaving them less time than men for the social activities required to mount a successful "leadership" career. (Kan et al. 2011).

Varies other studies have also highlighted the concept of structural critique which is the notion that inequality is socially created and sustained through systemic discrimination. Burns and Gallagher (2010) call it, “an awareness that outcomes are a result of systematic, structural disadvantage.” This means that the challenges that women will face go beyond simply just having quotas and filling them. If inequalities are embedded in society and are social constructs, then it becomes key to understand the extent of these constructs and how they impact women.

2.2.4 System justification

According to the existing studies, however, it appears as likely that women who have achieved success in the job or in education will favor meritocratic explanations for societal outcomes. Individuals who have achieved success within the current system are likely to regard it as legitimate and 'good, fair, inherently desirable, and even inevitable,' according to the expectations of system justification theory (Jost *et al.*, 2004). Jackman and Muha (1984) point out that members of discriminatory groups who are well educated can serve as 'state of the art apologists' for the system that has enabled them to achieve their goals.

2.2.5 Discriminatory Practices

Discriminatory practices include any direct or indirect act or practice of exclusion, distinction, restriction, segregation, limitation, refusal, denial, or any other act or practice of differentiation or preference in the treatment of a person or persons on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, sexual orientation, age, or national origin, including sexual harassment, as well as any other act or practice of differentiation or preference. These are unlawful. In addition, the term "discriminatory practices" makes reference to any policy, action, or lack of action that restricts or negates equitable rights to or benefits from a school's educational activities and programs, or that generates or allows oppression, biased, or otherwise inequitable treatment of students or staff on the basis of race, creed, age, national origin, ancestry, age, religion, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, or socioeconomic status (Law Insider ,2021).

In many cases, discrimination is the result of a predisposition to construct society as if everyone is the same as the people in power - all young, all of the same gender, all of the same race, all of the same religion, all of the same degree of skill. Failure to take into account a wide range of perspectives, or a failure to prepare to include everyone, may result in barriers to access for those who are designated by the Code. Such limitations, even if unintentional, constitute discrimination (Human Rights at Work, 2008). Discrimination can manifest itself in a variety of ways. Occasionally, discrimination is direct and purposeful, as in the case of a job applicant (for example, if a person or group treats another person differently on purpose because of a Code ground). This sort of prejudice is typically the result of negative attitudes and biases toward the basis of the discrimination (Human Rights at Work 2008).

2.2.6 Male Opposition

In the past in Zambia, Evans (2014) noted that group discussions of male mineworkers depicted women as difficult 'sexual objects', self-centred beings who are interested only in exploiting and extorting men of their money' Chauvinism was characterized as "extreme and unyielding.". While times have changed and many of these belief systems have died out, there remains a strong level of bias among males around women in management and key decision-making roles.

According to the Pew Research Centre (2015), despite the fact that both men and women are equally capable of being effective leaders in politics and business, it is widely believed that men have a better chance of achieving leadership positions in these disciplines. Other factors, such as family responsibilities, lack of experience, or women not being tough enough, are also quoted. In addition, when the C-Suite is male dominated, it is mostly that promotions will be given to fellow male colleagues like themselves.

2.2.7 Lack of Policies and Opportunities

In exploring the barriers that women experience in achieving leadership positions, one topic that frequently comes up is the lack of policies and opportunities for them to participate. A paucity of early leadership involvement opportunities, in particular, according to some studies, has been observed to exist. Women are unable to develop what is known as a "leadership attitude" as a result of this limitation (Chisholm-

Burns, 2017). Women's limitations that contribute to the difficulties they face in developing a leadership mentality must be acknowledged in order to paint a more vivid picture of why developing a leadership mentality is so difficult for them. Women are marginalised in a number of ways that disadvantage them in comparison to their male counterparts. Women are given fewer demanding jobs, and they are given fewer opportunities to participate meaningfully in high-level meetings, which serves as a further indication of this. As a result, they have little or no influence on important decisions, and as a result, they receive less recognition for their contributions, which are frequently overlooked and undervalued by those in authority (Mckinsey and Company, 2016).

2.2.8 Cultural Variables

Women's and men's choices and opportunities are shaped by cultural, organizational, and policy barriers, respectively. Women's underrepresentation in leadership has long been viewed as a barrier to their advancement into positions of authority. The glass ceiling effect is a phenomenon that has been identified as a barrier to women's progression from mid-management jobs to leadership positions (Chisholm-Burns, 2017). Despite the fact that there are opportunities for women in organizations to advance up the corporate ladder and eventually become leaders, those opportunities seem to vanish at different points along the way. Women at the top are rare, according to pipeline theory, since there are just not enough women in the pipeline to corporate power (Spencer *et al.*, 2019). Workplace practices, which are supported by societal norms have played a role in the creation of the glass ceiling. Men have established the policies and established the norms that are currently in use in the business world. A contributing factor is societal norms about the roles of women and men, which have not evolved to reflect "the current state" and continue to reflect a woman's role that is primarily focused on the home. (Beckwith et al., 2016).

2.2.8.1 Stereotypes

A stereotype is a broadly held, simplistic, and essentialist belief about a specific group that is held by a large number of people. Stereotypes are frequently applied to groups based on factors such as sex, gender identity, race and ethnicity, nationality (including age), socioeconomic status, language, and

so on. Stereotypes are firmly ingrained in social institutions as well as in the larger culture. Their presence is frequently noticeable even during the earliest stages of life, affecting and moulding the ways in which people connect with one another. A game platform for girls in pink, for example, was created by video game creators because it is what the parents (who purchase the game) felt their daughters wanted. Darker metallic colours were favoured by the ladies themselves (Rommès, 2006).

Gender stereotypes depict conventional ideas about femininity and masculinity, as well as the differences between men and women. However, like with all elements of gender, what constitutes archetypal femininity or masculinity differs from culture to culture and across the course of human history. Gender stereotypes generally portray femininities and masculinities as binary opposites or dualisms, such as the contrast between emotionality and reason, among other things.

2.2.8.2 Gender Stereotypes

Gender stereotypes can be either descriptive (assumptions about typical men and women's characteristics) or prescriptive (mandating how men and women should behave) (Evans, 2014). Whenever a member of a group participates in an activity or completes a task for which a negative stereotype about the group exists, the phenomenon known as stereotyping threatens to manifest itself. As a result, the individual may have anxiety about being judged or treated in a stereotyped manner. According to research, the presence of this threat may cause an individual to unconsciously underperform and conform to the very conventional behaviours that they were attempting to avoid in the first place (Nguyen and Ryan, 2008). When it comes to stereotype threat, those who closely identify with a particular group for which there is a negative stereotype are more likely to be affected (Nguyen and Ryan, 2008).

2.2.8.3 Gender Stereotypes and Leadership

The application of gender role stereotypes to leadership/decision-making responsibilities leads to the conclusion that female-stereotypical forms of

leadership are interpersonally oriented and collaborative, whereas male-stereotypical forms of leadership are task centred and dominant (Porter *et al.*, 2019). It is reasonable to conclude from these findings that the degree to which female leaders' behaviour is compatible with their gender role determines the degree to which they feel role conflict and breach other people's expectations about their behaviour (Zheng, 2018). The extent to which women adopt a male style increases the intensity of their role conflict and the likelihood of earning unduly negative reviews. According to Kark *et al.* (2012), the inclination to devalue female leaders was greater when women behaved autocratically rather than when they behaved in accordance with any other style of leadership behaviour.

2.2.8.4 Socialisation

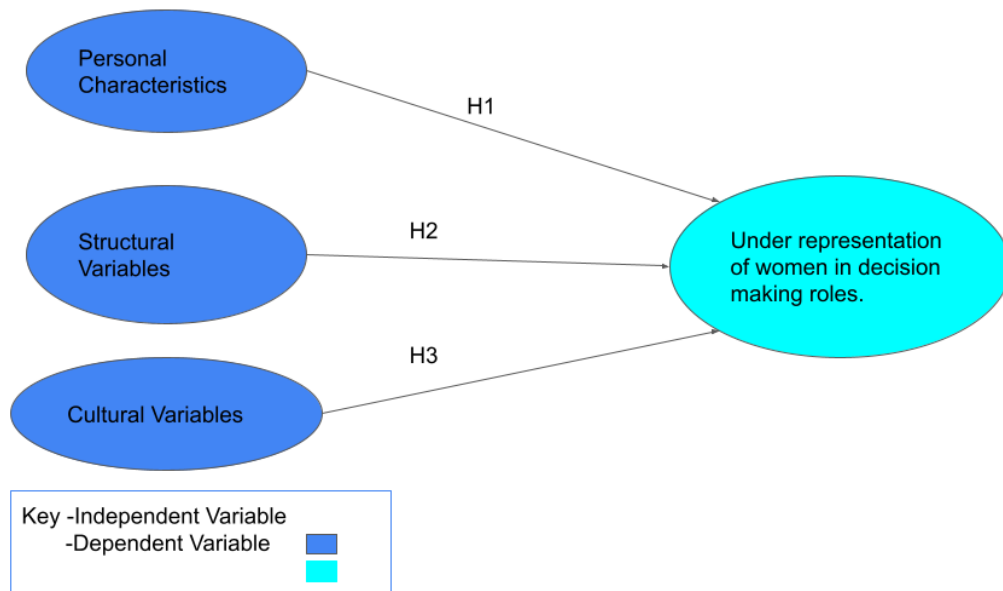
Human socialisation is the process by which people are taught how to function as valuable members of a society. It outlines the processes through which people come to understand and accept societal norms and expectations, as well as the manner in which they become conscious of societal ideals (Neundorff and Smets, 2017). However, socialisation is not the same as socialising (which includes engaging with other people such as family and friends, as well as co-workers); to be more specific, it is a sociological process that occurs as a result of socialising. It is important for both individuals and the cultures in which they live to have a positive socialization experience. That human beings and their social surroundings are inextricably intertwined is demonstrated by this example. First and foremost, it is via the teaching of culture to new members that a society ensures its own survival. If future generations of a civilization do not learn the ways of that culture, that society will eventually cease to exist (DeGregory, 2008).

Socialisation can have both positive and negative outcomes. For instance, that lag in women's involvement in STEM careers could be attributed to a negative socialisation. Girls are told and taught that STEM careers are meant for men and boys. This could also be the case with executive roles in organisations. Internal organisational cultures could be biased toward a socialisation that men are better suited to executive positions than women (Lumen 2018).

2.2.8.5 Gender Roles

The term "gender role" relates to the concept of how men and women are supposed to behave and how they should behave, as defined by society. These responsibilities are founded on social norms, or standards, which have been established by society. Female roles are typically linked with passivity, caring, and servitude in cultures where masculine roles are typically associated with strength, aggression, and dominance. The process of learning about one's role begins with socialization at birth (Lumen, 2018). Society is still ready to dress male infants in blue and female children in pink, even while a baby is still in the womb, as if gender is determined by the color of their clothing. (England *et al.*, 2011).

2.3 Conceptual Framework



Adapted from Osongo 2004

2.3.1 Hypothesis Development

2.3.1.1 Personal Factors

Personal factors include personality traits, self-confidence and self-esteem, ambition to accept challenges and lack of motivation. The resulting hypothesis.

H0: Personal factors do not affect women's representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.

H1: Personal factors affect women's representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.

2.3.1.2 Structural Factors

Structural Factors include discriminatory practices; male resistance; absence of policies; and limited opportunities. The resulting hypothesis.

H0: Structural factors do not affect women representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.

H2: Structural factors affect women representation in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.

2.3.1.3 Cultural Factors

Cultural factors include socialisation, gender roles, stereotypes. The resulting hypothesis.

H0: Cultural factors are not relevant to the issue of the low representation of women in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.

H3: Cultural factors are relevant to the issue of the low representation of women in decision making roles at ZCCM-IH.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

2.4.1 Feminist Theory

Scholars in feminist theory, such as Buchanan and Colebrook (2022), have proposed three main views in an attempt to explain the lack of women in top management positions in both the public and private sectors, respectively. Women's participation in the workforce is important for a number of reasons, and these provide insight into those factors. The first perspective is based on personal factors, in which the lack of representation of women in management positions is attributed to psychosocial characteristics such as personality characteristics, attitudes, and behavioural skills possessed by women themselves, rather than to the lack of representation of women in general.

Personal characteristics such as assertiveness, self-assurance, resourcefulness, inventiveness, loyalty, and dependability, on the other hand, assist women in their advancement to senior management roles (Yambwana, 2019). Structure or institutional factors are a paradigm that promotes the idea that women's unfavourable position in the organization's structure (small numbers, limited access to resources, low authority) is what moulds and controls their behaviour and roles. The underlying principle of this perspective is that both men and women are equally capable of and devoted to achieving positions of leadership in their respective fields and organizations. The problem is rooted in the organizational structure, and the solution is a fundamental shift in order to eliminate unacceptable discrimination in institutional policies and practices (Nyirenda, 2015).

In the last perspective, Owusu (2014) investigates the cultural elements that relate to gender and organizational structural factors in order to provide a more complete picture.

2.5 Gaps in the literature

The body of knowledge is lacking in several areas. Primarily, contextually there is little data around the representation of women in corporate spaces. This includes specific statistics on the numbers of women in executive positions in listed companies (PwC, 2021). While several studies have been conducted around women's involvement in political leadership, party structures and roles they play as well as quota systems and their performance (Longwe, 2014).

Data around corporate performance in the same regard is scanty. While scholars in the global north have substantive data around the impact of women representation on bottom line performance and the benefits of more inclusive teams, no such data exists in the Zambian context (Nyirenda, 2015). Policy makers, activists and lobbyists need such data if they are to effectively champion the cause for improving the levels of women's representation in key decision-making roles in corporate.

2.6 Chapter Summary

Chapter 2 – The preceding chapter has reviewed literature by providing a historical and theoretical overview of representation of women in the body of knowledge. Precisely, it explores key definitions, and theoretical approaches to understanding the factors that influence representation of women in decision making spaces. It also reviews literature, conceptual and theoretical frameworks and highlights gaps in the literature. The following chapter discusses the research methodology, research design and data collection methods.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Chapter two presented the conceptual model and discussed the hypotheses that are to be analysed. This chapter discovered the method used to collect data for the research. The data will be used for analysis in order to give this research empirical legitimacy. The Chapter also brings out the research design of the study, the population from where the sample was drawn, and the sampling procedure needed in selecting the sample. Additionally, this chapter underscores the instruments used to collect data.

3.1 Research approach

In the research process, research approaches refer to the precise procedures that are followed, such as data collecting, data processing, and report writing (Creswell, 2012). This study adopted a correlation design, as observed from the alternatives and research difficulties offered by this research, because the goal was to link the antecedents that lead to women's representation or under representation in decision making roles.

3.2 Strategy justification

This research was a case study which combined both quantitative and qualitative strategies. Case studies, as opposed to wide statistical surveys, are in-depth investigations into a specific event or situational occurrence. According to some, because a case study is such a restricted topic, the conclusions of a case study cannot be extended to fit the entire question, and they only reveal one specific example. As opposed to strictly statistical surveys, it has been asserted that case studies produce more realistic responses than the former. When compared to other research designs, the case study is the most adaptable since it allows researchers to keep the holistic qualities of real-life occurrences while analysing empirical events (Yin, 2018)

This study was a case study of ZCCM-IH and the factors that affect the levels of women's representation in key decision-making roles. The case study allowed for a more in-depth understanding of the factors that affect the variables under study. It also provided for a more in-depth understanding of the context. Generally, the findings were generalizable owing to the similarity in contexts among different Zambian businesses.

3.3 Research paradigm

A research paradigm is “the set of basic beliefs and agreements shared between scientists about how problems should be understood and addressed” (Kuhn, 1970). According to Creswell (1998), “Qualitative researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or worldview, a basic set of assumptions that guide their inquiries”. Thus, paradigms are world views that inform how researchers approach their work. Research paradigms can be understood by examining the way Scientists respond to three basic questions: ontological, epistemological and methodological questions” (Guba, 1990). According to Babbie (1998) social scientists can ground their inquiries in any number of paradigms. None is right or wrong, merely more or less useful in a particular situation. They each shape the kind of theory created for general understanding” Paradigms are models that serve as “exemplars” for how research is done in a given field. This usage is most familiar in the form of “paradigmatic examples” that show newcomers how a field addresses its central issues. (Morgan 2007).

This study took a postpositivist approach, essentially asking how researchers can go about finding out in this case, what are the drivers of low representation of women in decision making roles (Park *et al.*, 2020)

3.4 Deductive approaches

A deductive approach to research is typically associated with scientific investigation. A hypothesis is put forward based on existing theories and research literature, and then relevant data is collected to test the hypothesis (Khaldi, 2017).

This study took a deductive reasoning approach. Having stated the theories around women's representation, empirical evidence was gathered to corroborate the hypothesis here posited.

3.5 Time horizon

The study will be conducted over a two-month period, with data collection taking 2 to 4 weeks.

3.6 Research strategy

Employees were polled via questionnaires for this investigation. Questionnaires are the most commonly used methods when respondents can be reached and are willing to cooperate. These strategies can reach a huge number of people who can read and write on their own.

Closed-ended questions and a few open-ended questions will be included in the questionnaires. The closed-ended questions used a five-point Likert scale, which respondents were asked to fill out based on how much they agreed with the assertions (Ridder, 2017). Where close-ended questions are limited, unstructured questions will be utilised to urge respondents to give an in-depth response. There were two components to the questionnaires. The first portion collected demographic information, while the second section focused on the selected criteria

3.7 Sampling frame and sample size

A sampling procedure is a strategy or procedure for selecting a few individuals (referred to as a sample) from a large group (referred to as the population), with the few members serving as the basis for estimating and predicting facts or outcomes for a larger group (Taherdoost, 2016). Questionnaires were given to management of ZCCM-IH over the course of three weeks.

3.8 Data collection

Employees were polled via questionnaires for this investigation. Questionnaires are the most used methods when respondents can be reached and are willing to cooperate. These strategies can reach a huge number of people who can read and write on their own. Closed-ended questions and a few open-ended questions will be included in the questionnaires. The closed-ended questions used a five-point Likert scale, which respondents were asked to fill out based on how much they agreed with the assertions. Where close-ended questions are limited, unstructured questions were utilised to urge respondents to give an in-depth response. There were two components to the questionnaires. The first portion collected demographic information, while the second section focused on the selected criteria. The data was collected using self-administered questionnaires for employees. The questionnaires were administered electronically, and links were shared via online tools/platforms.

3.9 Data processing and analysis

For data analysis, the study used statistical program for social science (SPSS) version 24. Summary statistics such as mean, standard deviation and range was also used to describe quantitative variables. Participant's demographics and other categorical variables was

displayed using frequency tables and bar charts. The actual analysis was descriptive and correlation in nature as that used in the study of Paschal and Nizam (2016).

3.10 Reliability of research findings

The consistency, stability, and dependability of the data are referred to as reliability. In order to be confident that the data collected on a variable is trustworthy and consistent, an investigator must first measure the variable (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). The data collected will be subjected to an internal consistency technique based on Cronbach's alpha in order to determine the dependability of the data collection equipment used in the study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). It is the dependability coefficient of Cronbach's alpha that provides the most unbiased estimate of the generalizability of a set of data. It is considered reliable when the alpha coefficient is 0.60 or above since it implies that the data collected has a high level of internal consistency and can be generalized to represent the views of all respondents in the target group (Zinbarg *et al.*, 2005).

3.11 Validity of research findings

To assess the research instrument's dependability, the validity of the instrument used for data collection was arrived at by discussing the stated questions in the instruments with selected respondents from the target population. In the case of ZCCM, they would be expected to fill out questionnaires and assist in determining what factors influence the representation of women in positions of decision-making. The Content Validity Index was used to determine validity (C.V. I). The instruments are valid for the study if the content validity index is between 0.7 and 1. (Orodho, 2003).

3.12 Generalisability of research findings.

The degree to which a study's findings may be applied to different situations is known as generalisability. The limitation to the outcome of the study come in when they are only applicable to the group tested or in an extremely focused situation and this observation is supported by Noble and Smith (2015) in their study.

3.13 Ethical and access issues

Data was gathered anonymously from respondents. Before releasing data to the researcher, it was de-identified. All respondents were asked for consent prior to filling out the

questionnaire. And finally, all data collected will not be used to cause harm or discomfort. Reasonable efforts were made to ensure safeguarding and adherence to ethical research practices (Kumar, 2018).

3.14 Chapter Summary

This chapter has discussed the approaches that were taken to do the study. In the next chapter, the data analysis technique that had been mentioned was performed on the data obtained from the questionnaire.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This preceding chapter discusses the studies data analysis, presentation and discussion of results. Descriptive statistics, reliability test, regression analysis is all carried out in this chapter. Additionally, the chapter provides the basis for conclusions to the study. Data was collected through questionnaires that were distributed to ZCCM-IH management staff.

4.1 Profiles of Respondents

Questionnaires were administered to ZCCM-IH management staff members over a period of three to six weeks. The properties of the sample are shown in Table 4.1. According to the data in the table, 70.8 % were male and 29.2 % were female. It also shows that the majority of the population was between the ages of 41 and 50, with 45.8 % population falling within this age range. Finally, it demonstrates that the vast majority of these senior staff members held a master's degree or higher. They command 79.2% of the population, respectively.

Table 4.1: Frequency

Gender		
	Frequency	Percent
Male	17	70.8
Female	7	29.2
Total	24	100.0
Age Group		
	Frequency	Percent
31-40	6	25.0
41-50	11	45.8
Above 50	7	29.2
Total	24	100.0
Years in the Workforce		
	Frequency	Percent
Less than 5 year	3	12.5
5-10 years	4	16.7
10-15 years	4	16.7
15-20 years	3	12.5
20-25 years	2	8.3
25-30 years	4	16.7
Over 30 years	4	5.8
Total	24	100.0
Level of Education		
	Frequency	Percent
Degree	3	12.5
Masters Degree	19	79.2
Other	2	8.3
Total	24	100.0

4.2 Assessment of findings and analysis for each Instruments

4.2.1 Correlation Between Control Variable and the under representation of women

As reflected in table 4.2, gender has no significant effect on the under representation of women. This entails that from the data one's gender does not determine whether or not they should be appointed to a key decision-making role.

The value of the correlation coefficient can range from -1.00 to 1.00 . This value will indicate the strength of the relationship between the two variables. A correlation of 0 indicates that there's absolutely no relationship at all, a correlation of 1.0 indicates a perfect positive correlation, and a value of -1.0 indicates a perfect negative correlation. Cohen (1988, pp. 79–81) highlighted the following guidelines: small $r=.10$ to $.29$; medium $r=.30$ to $.49$ and large $r=.50$ to 1.0 (Pallant, 2011).

4.2.2 Correlations Between Women's Representation and its Independent variables

Table 4.2 confirms the proposed conceptual model. All three antecedents showed that they were significant. The three antecedents namely Personal Characteristics, Structural variables and Cultural factors were positively significant ($p < 0.01$). The correlations were as follows: Personal Characteristics ($r=0.392$), Structural variables ($r=0.459$) and Cultural factors ($r=0.486$). The effect sizes are generally medium to large based on Cohen's criteria i.e., small = 0.10 to 0.29 , medium = 0.30 to 0.49 and large = 0.50 to 1.00 .

Table 4.2: Correlation Among variables

#	Variable	Mean	Std. Dev	N	1	2	3	4
1	Under Representation of women	3.740	0.534	24	-			
2	Gender	0.292	0.464	24	0.018	-		
3	Personal Characteristics	3.865	0.680	24	0.392**	0.060	-	
4	Structural Variables	3.198	0.906	24	0.459**	0.010	0.046	-
5	Cultural Factors	3.521	0.903	24	0.486**	0.044	0.052	.693**
**sig < 0.01 (1 percent); *sig < 0.05 (5 percent)								

4.2.3 Regression Analysis among Women's Representation and its Antecedents

This section presents and discusses regression analysis results testing control variables, mediating variables and antecedent variables. Table 4.2.3 is a multiple hierarchical regression analysis table which shows the results of the test conducted.

Table 4.2.3: Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analysis

Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4		
	Beta	SE (1)	Beta	SE (2)	Beta	SE (3)	Beta	SE (4)	VIF
Control Variables									
Gender	0.017	0.145	0.039	0.127	0.034	0.125	0.034	0.126	1.029
Independent Variables									
Personal Characteristics			0.490**	0.085	0.333**	0.127	0.332**	0.133	1.048
Structural Variables					0.280*	0.119	0.271**	0.140	1.196
Cultural Factors							0.357**	0.120	1.191
F	0.110		19.518**		16.138**		12.840**		
F Change	0.110		58.267		4.795		0.002		
R	0.034		0.490		0.510		0.510		
R Square	0.001		0.240		0.260		0.260		
R Square Adjusted	-0.01		0.228		0.244		0.239		
R Square Change	0.001		0.239		0.019		0.000		
** significant at p<0.01			* significant at p<0.05						

Firstly, model 1 shows the base model with control variables being gender and age group. The control variable makes no significant contribution with an adjusted R² of -1.0% and R of 0.034.

Secondly, in model 2, besides the control variable, personal characteristics are introduced, and a significant combined effect occurs (R² change of 23.9% from 1% to 24%) with R of 0.490, representing a combined medium effect size.

In the succeeding model, which is model 3, besides personal characteristics and the control variable, structural variable is introduced, and a significant combined effect occurs (R² change of 1.9% from 24% to 26%) with R of 0.510, representing a combined large effect size.

In the fourth and final model, besides structural variables, personal characteristics and the control variable, cultural factors are introduced, and a combined significant effect occurs (R² change of 0% from 26% to 26%) with R of 0.510, representing a combined large effect size.

4.3 Assessment of Validity and Reliability

Table 4.2 displays mean and standard deviation values for the current research as well as inter-correlation coefficients between dependent, independent and control variables obtained from a survey sample. As a statistical phenomenon, multicollinearity is defined as the presence of two or more predictor variables that are highly correlated (with correlation coefficients typically ranging from about 0.80 to 0.90), that is, one can be linearly predicted from the other(s) with a non-trivial degree of accuracy in a multiple regression model (Pallant, 2011). This occurrence indicates that some variables are actually measuring the same thing, and that only one of them may be required to accurately measure the phenomenon.

In the current study, there were low inter-correlations among variables. This entails that multicollinearity should not be a problem among the variables (Pallant, 2010). This means that multiple regression analyses can be undertaken without worrying about biased or inflated estimates of regression and correlation coefficients; the resulting coefficients of determination (R^2) will not be over-inflated.

4.4 Chapter summary

Before proceeding to Chapter 5, all the analysis of data had been completed through Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 24. Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.23 present the results of the tests conducted on the three hypotheses proposed in this study. A multiple regression analysis was used to assess the hypotheses that were proposed in chapter three, and all three hypotheses were supported and accepted. Additionally, these antecedents were confirmed to be significant through the use of linear regression. The results of the study, as well as its ramifications, limitations, and recommendations, will be examined in greater depth in the following chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The prior chapter's findings guided this chapter. The chapter is the project's final component, which looked at the project's summary of findings, conclusion, and policy tool recommendations.

5.1 Personal characteristics and women's representation in decision-making roles at ZCCM-IH

As per the regression analysis conducted in chapter 4, personal characteristics were seen to have an impact on the representation of women in key decision-making positions. This means that self-confidence and self-esteem, desire to take on challenges, and motivation in women themselves can affect whether or not they get into decision making positions. It is therefore important for women who have managerial aspirations to cultivate these traits if they are to go up the ladder in their respective organisations.

5.2 Structural Variables and women's representation in decision-making roles at ZCCM-IH

Similar to the factor personal characteristics, our study also showed that structural variables impact women's representation in the workplace. The structural variables include discriminatory practices, male opposition, a lack of policies, and a lack of opportunities. The conclusion is that, at ZCCM-IH these factors can limit the extent to which women can rise to decision making positions. It is vital that policies are put in place to address these issues in order to create a more enabling environment for women's career progression.

5.3 Cultural Variable and women's representation in decision-making roles at ZCCM-IH

Cultural variables which include socialisation, gender roles and gender stereotypes have also been seen to have a significant impact on the representation of women in key decision-making positions. This means that there are some biases in perceptions about women in the workplace. These biases stand to limit women's progression in their careers. However, these also stand to limit the extent to which women can contribute meaningfully to the achievement of organisational objectives. It is important that these issues are addressed, otherwise the organisation will not get maximum use out of its human resources.

5.4 Practical/managerial implications of findings/Recommendations

The findings highlight the need for greater efforts to be directed towards encouraging women in the workplace. This will include ensuring governance structures and policies support the representation of women in key roles. This will also look like encouraging an organisational culture geared toward breaking the biases and stereotypes that exist around working women. Organisational culture plays a vital role in creating enabling environments for women. Ensuring that culture supports this enabling environment is beneficial not just for women, but also for the organisation because better team dynamics will positively affect the bottom line. Continued support from policy makers in organisations as well as in government for this cause is vital.

5.5 Limitations of the Study and Directions for Future Research

The research was conducted as a case study of ZCCM-IH. This meant that it was limited in terms of industry as well as in terms of the number of respondents as the sample size was small. This could limit the generalisability of the research findings to other sectors. Future studies could consider exploring the influence of these factors in a larger population sample. The study could also be done in other sectors, specifically in the STEM fields which are male dominated.

5.6 Conclusions and Summary

The findings of this study broaden the scope of the theory and, as a result, contribute to the body of knowledge and augment the current literature on women's representation, particularly in the context of Zambia. This is despite the constraints that have been discussed above. Beckwith et al., (2017) posit that women need to take charge of their careers, that they need to be proactive about defining their career trajectories and being proactive about making these a reality all the while controlling and strategizing as need arises.

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