ENHANCING TALENT MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN DIRECTORS IN SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN MINING COMPANIES

RESEARCH PROPOSAL SUBMITTED

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DECLARATION REGARDING PLAGIARISM

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this research proposal entitled:

**ENHANCING TALENT MANAGEMENT TO IMPROVE THE REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN DIRECTORS IN SELECTED SOUTH AFRICAN MINING COMPANIES**

is my own original work and that I have acknowledged all additional sources I have used and/or quoted directly.

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22 April 2015
1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Contemporary organisations are faced with competitive pressures, ranging from changing demographics, the globalisation of economies, changes to the psychological dimensions of the modern employment contracts, advancement in technology, to the shortage of skilled workers, which all adversely affect their performance (Axelrod, Handfield-Jones & Michaels, 2002; Brink & Nienaber, 2014; Buckingham & Vosburgh, 2001; Gandossy & Kao, 2004; Walker & Larocco, 2002). Consequently, talent management (i.e. the recruitment, development and retention of the right employees) across occupations and hierarchical levels to execute strategy and reach organisational objectives is at the top of business agendas (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; CIPD, 2014; Michaels, Handfield-Jones & Axelrod, 2001). Despite the increased attention to talent management, these efforts seem ineffective due to various global talent challenges such as talent shortage, talent surplus, locating and relocating talent, and the compensation levels associated with talent (Schuler, Jackson, & Tarique, 2011). In terms of higher echelons, at board level specifically, the attraction and retention of female talent at board level remains a global challenge (Catalyst, 1995; Catalyst, 2013; Cook, 2013). According to the Catalyst (2013:2) “in both 2012 and 2013, less than one-fifth (20%) of Fortune 500 companies had 25% or more women directors, while one-tenth (10%) had no women serving on their boards”. In the South African context, the statistics are comparable. By the end of 2013, for example, males occupied at least 79.5% of board positions, while women accounted for 20.5% (CEE Report, 2014).

The women on boards (WoB) research revealed several potential benefits from women representation on the board of directors, such as (a) increased diversity of innovative ideas (Catalyst, 1995; Faku, 2014; Catalyst, 2014), (b) bringing different skills, insight, principles, norms and understanding to the board (Miller & Triana, 2009; Ruigrok, Peck & Tacheva, 2007), (c) improved strategies and improved decisions (Stephenson, 2004), (d) improved company reputation (Burke, 2003), (e) operative problem solving and increased prospects for international associations (Carter, Simkins & Simpson, 2003), (f) improved communication and better overall financial performance (Catalyst, 2007), (g) better understanding of the marketplace, market products or female-oriented products (Burke, 2003; Carter et al, 2003; Catalyst, 2013; Daily, Certo & Dalton, 1999; Sweetman, 1996), (h) improved risk management and audit control, increased ethical oversight and a broader more accurate assessment of the company’s success (Faku, 2014; Hawarden, 2010; Stephenson, 2004), and (i) providing women role models and mentors (Catalyst, 2014). All these benefits show that the appointment of women directors does more than merely satisfying equal opportunity and demographics, social justice and fairness, but it has strategic implications on the improvement
of competitive advantage, sustainability and the long-term performance of a company (Catalyst, 2007; Faku, 2014; Sweetman, 1996).

Despite these benefits, the global progress of women representation on boards shows little improvement (Catalyst, 2013). The 2013 catalyst census on Fortune 500 companies showed that women held 16.9% of board seats in that year compared to 16.6% in 2012, indicating a stagnant change when compared to the 14.7% in 2005 which indicated slight growth (Catalyst, 2005; Catalyst, 2013). This has led researchers to suggest that the dominance of males on the boards creates an inhospitable environment which is unreceptive to the membership of women and a few women are appointed to boards as token appointments (Brandt, 2013; Scherer, 1997; Onal, 2013).

The ‘Glass ceiling’ is a prevalent research finding in WoB research in that women are prevented representation in board positions (Hawarden, 2010). This implies that although the prospects for women's development are evident, women are unable to penetrate the glass ceiling due to prohibitions created by a dominant male culture at board level (Hawarden, 2010). Although it has been proposed that the way to erode the glass ceiling is to encourage the inclusion of women on boards of directors (Onal, 2013:1), women still struggle to enter the boardroom (Catalyst, 2013; Grant Thornton, 2013). A flawed board recruitment and selection process exists, which includes too much dependence on the “old boys’ network” (Burke, 1997; Miller & Triana, 2009; Simpson, Carter & D'Souza, 2010). In addition to that, women who obtain board appointments are difficult to retain as they are faced with self-similar, robust and change resistant networks characterised by a male-dominated culture (Burke, 1997; Davidson, 2002; Strauss, 2002; Hawarden, 2010). In addition to the male-dominated “old boys” network culture, “queen bee” behaviour prevents the development of women within organisations to obtain board membership (Hawarden, 2010:3). “Queen bee” behaviour is a term used to describe women executives who alienate other women in junior positions from advancing through the ranks (Hawarden, 2010). These pressures limit women networks and productivity levels, and often experience more difficulties in displaying their competence than male directors (Huse & Solberg, 2006). These difficulties indicate the need to correct gender imbalances on the boards of organisations to remove barriers for the recruitment, development and retention of women directors in order to achieve gender diversity.

Thus, generating a change in the representation and status of women on boards would require companies to change the procedures employed to recruit, develop and retain women directors (Burgess & Tharenou, 2002).
The focus of this research is on enhancing talent management to improve the representation of women directors on the board of directors in the most reported and historically male-dominated industry globally, the mining industry, which makes information accessible which is not the case with other industries. A study (2014) jointly conducted by Women in Mining (Wim) in the UK and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) showed that globally, the mining industry has the lowest number of women on company boards when compared to any other industry. This study also showed that JSE-listed mining companies in South Africa are leading worldwide in terms of women representation on the board with a 21.05% representivity (Buthelezi, 2013; PWC, 2014). However, when compared to other JSE-listed companies in South Africa in all sectors, the mining industry still lags behind because of the inability of this industry to identify a talent pool and develop and retain women directors (Buthelezi, 2013; Shabangu, 2010; PWC, 2014). Against this background, the main aim of this study is to qualitatively evaluate talent management as an intervention in selected mining companies with the objective of improving the membership of women directors in South Africa. This will be achieved through a multiple-case study of how women directors are recruited, developed and retained in selected mining companies.

This proposal is structured as follows; it starts by interpreting the purpose of the study, followed by a discussion of the problem studied and the importance and contribution of the study. Research questions as well as research objectives developed are followed by a preliminary literature review. The research paradigm, the research design and methodology, as well as research limitations and delineations will be presented. The definitions of key terms and the timelines for the research process conclude this proposal.

2. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the proposed research is to use a multiple-case qualitative research to explore talent management in the South African mining industry. To report on whether the intended audiences (women) were covered as planned in the selected mining case companies (Mouton, 2003:158). This will be achieved through the qualitative programme evaluation of talent management, which include recruitment practices, development opportunities and programmes and retention efforts for women directors.

3. PROBLEM STUDIED

According to Mouton (2003) the problem statement includes what to study (or unit of analysis, i.e. talent management which is considered an intervention) and to what purpose (qualitative evaluation). What is studied within this research is talent management as an intervention to enhance the membership of women directors in the board of directors of mining companies.
The mining industry is considered to be the most male-dominated industry in the world, including in South Africa (PWC, 2014). The mining industry has a character popularly known as the “greybeard phenomenon” which describes the common age and gender of employee demographics (Gibson & Scoble, 2004). According to PWC, women make up just 10% of the global mining workforce and 5% of board positions in the top 500 globally-listed mining companies (Cook, 2013). Women are reported to be facing several challenges within the mining environment, which in turn prohibit their appointment to board positions. Such challenges include a gender bias, a male-dominated culture, women having to work extra hard to prove themselves, non-flexible hours for women (Cook, 2013), and a lack of mentors that support women in the industry (Motshegwa, 2013). Women in mining also face challenges related to the ‘glass ceiling’ leading to the inability to reach higher levels (Ramahlo, 2014).

To this end, governments worldwide have instituted governance mechanisms using a gender quota system with the aim to improve gender diversity for all listed companies as a regulatory measure. In South Africa, the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 and the Mining Charter aim to improve gender imbalance across all occupations in mining companies. The King III Report (2009) on governance in South Africa requires companies to report on how they create conditions and opportunities that enable women appointment on boards, as part of their disclosure. However, numeric targets do not assist in ensuring diversity as these open doors for tokenism (Brandt, 2013). This plays a major role in the negative sustainability of women directors in board positions (Motshegwa, 2013).

From an academic point of view, a research gap has been identified regarding the talent management of women directors (Terjesen, Sealy & Singh, 2009). Past research has focused on stipulating board composition and analysing the impact of diverse boards on company performance (Carter et al, 2003; Catalyst, 2014; Krus, Morgan & Ginsberg, 2012). This previous research has also focused on providing the demographic gender profiles of women on boards, for example, company board profiles of Fortune 500 companies (Catalyst, 2013; Catalyst, 2014). Furthermore, much recent research points to the influence of women leadership in the mining industry (Ozkan & Beckton, 2012), and to understand the robust change-resistant networks and to probe gender-director networks (Hawarden, 2010). These studies do not focus on elements of talent management collectively, that is, recruitment, development and retention of women directors in a single study. Moreover, no research has been done on talent management at board level in the South African industry, let alone the mining industry. Dominant studies on talent management reflect more on senior, middle management and other technical or specialised disciplines, or in an organisational context. This is a concern as past studies have shown that having more women board members has demonstrated several benefits, According to PWC (2014), there is a correlation between
having more women directors and company improvements such as governance, sustainability and company performance (Faku, 2014).

### 4. IMPORTANCE AND CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

This study is important as the board directors have a strategic role to play and are seen as a pivotal part of the governance structure (Baysinger & Butler, 1985; Campbell & Minguez-Vera, 2008; Louw & Venter, 2010; Malherbe & Segal, 2001). Issues of critical importance to the board of directors are overall performance and the long-term survival of organisations. Performance concerns of the board of directors are growth, sustainability, growing capabilities, efficient use of resources and ultimately maintaining a competitive advantage (CIPD, 2012; CIPD, 2014; Main, O'Reilly & Wade, 1995; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978; Westphal & Zajac, 1995).

Given all these roles, it is unarguable that the knowledge, expertise and capabilities of board members to make sound decisions are desirable (Ruigrok et al, 2007). Despite legislator influence, it has been largely reported that the presence of women on boards has several benefits to an organisation, however, this talent is untapped (Catalyst, 2013). This indicates that the recruitment and selection of women board members is of critical importance (Kakabadse, Kakabadse & Kouzmin, 2001), not as a regulatory measure, but as a business imperative (Catalyst, 2014; Faku, 2014). Companies are faced with challenges in the recruitment and selection process that entail finding women directors with competitive skills and the distinctive capabilities that enable contribution to the performance of an organisation.

Individual skills and competencies are also valuable as they lead to distinctive capabilities and that result in competitive advantage (Coff, 1999; Huselid & Becker, 1997; Louw & Venter, 2010:253). Huselid (1995) reported that a rigorous recruitment process is a key attribute to superior performing organisations. Once talent is identified through the rigorous recruitment process, companies will be able to identify development areas to achieve results (Rothwell, 2012). Additionally, Rothwell (2012) suggested that talent needs to be retained in organisations by establishing how measurable goals for a retention programme will clarify how retention will meet organisational needs, clarify the roles to be played by key stakeholders in retaining talent, establishing accountability systems to make sure stakeholders play their parts in achieving measurable retention goals, and targeting which individuals or types of individuals are most important for retention. Directors of both genders can be employed in several capacities as either executive (inside) or non-executive (outside) or simply as independent directors. This is based on the day-to-day and operational responsibilities (Farrel & Hersch, 2005; Hermalin & Weisbach, 1988; IoD, 2009).

This research is important as it will offer an exploratory insight into and understanding of the talent management of gender diversity in the most male-dominated industry in the world. Using
a multiple-case study approach, both male and female board members will be interviewed to gain insight into talent management. This research makes a contribution to the body of knowledge in the literature on board governance; firstly by integrating talent management as a human resource function to support calls for boardroom gender diversity, and secondly by the development of a framework for talent management based on best practices, with a special focus on enhancing talent management to improve the representation of women directors on board level.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

A research question seeks to refine the specific components of the problem (Mouton, 2003). In light of the problem statement studied, contribution and importance of the study, the following research questions have been set and will be attempted to be answered at the end of the thesis.

- Does a talent management intervention aimed at board level exist in selected companies?
- What is the talent management process followed as an intervention for the participation of women in the board of mining companies?
- How are women directors recruited to the board of directors with reference to the selection criteria and process followed for appointment? Does the process differ for males and females? If so how, and why?
- How do mining companies employ initiatives for the development of women board members to effectively discharge their responsibilities? What are the development opportunities and how are the most appropriate ones selected?
- What methods and approaches are followed, if any, to ensure that organisations retain women directors?
- What are the daily experiences of women directors in the boardroom influencing their decisions to serve or leave the boardroom?
- What should the elements of a talent management framework include?

6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

A research objective is what the research seeks to have achieved by the end of the thesis (Hofstee, 2006). The research objectives of the proposed research are presented in primary (main) and secondary objectives.
6.1 Primary objectives

The primary research objective of the study is to explore the talent management intervention on the boards of mining companies to improve the representation of women on the boards of South African mining companies.

6.2 Secondary objectives

The secondary objectives of the study are to:

- explore the recruitment efforts for women directors’ representation on the board based on the recruitment criteria and recruitment process followed;
- understand the development initiatives applied for women directors;
- describe which strategies are executed for the retention of women directors and how these strategies are experienced by women directors;
- develop a conceptual framework of talent management to include women directors on the board of directors based on best practice for the mining industry;
- make recommendations to the mining companies regarding the appointment, development and retention of women directors in boardrooms; and
- contribute to the body of talent management knowledge.

7. PRELIMINARY LITERATURE REVIEW

A literature review is a review of existing scholarship that covers a comprehensive, critical, and contextualised theory base to learn from other scholars on how they have theorised and conceptualised on issues, what they found empirically, instruments used and to what effect (Hofstee, 2006:91; Mouton, 2003: 87). The literature review in this proposal is preliminary with the aim to introduce a contextual theory base for the research. The purpose of this literature review is to describe the importance of integrating talent management within board gender diversity requirements into a coherent whole. Mayer and Sparrowe (2013:917) argued that many research questions will not be addressed by focusing on a single theory. They suggested four approaches to the successful integration of theory. Firstly, two theories can speak to the same phenomenon but from different perspectives. Secondly, two seemingly disparate streams of research can be proven to not be disparate after all. Thirdly, two theories may address different phenomena, but applying one theory to the domain of the other may generate new insights, and lastly, two theories may address related phenomena but draw on a related or common set of explanatory terms. In this study these approaches apply, as the theories of gender diversity and talent management are cross-disciplinary, but can be
integrated to draw on a set of common explanatory terms to answer the research objectives (Mayer & Sparrowe, 2013).

7.1 Gender diversity and women on boards (WoB) research

Talent management on the boards of directors is essential as many boards of directors worldwide have been encouraged, some through enforced compliance, to reflect gender diversity on their boards (Erhardt, Werbel & Schrader, 2003; Hawarden, 2010; Jackson, Joshi & Erhardt, 2003; Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004; Ruigrok et al, 2007). This regulation is enforced in most parts of the world, such as USA, UK, Canada, Norway, Spain, France, Israel, Jordan, Tunisia, Iceland, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, where current research is taking place (Vinnicombe, Singh, Burke, Bilimoria, & Huse, 2008 in Hawarden, 2010:16). Whether for political or economic control, Maitland (2009) suggested that having a gender mix on the board of directors is invariably better than a single gender board as it encourages diverse perspectives. Past research has motivated a powerful business case in support of gender diversity and why corporate boards should bring more women to the board table (Burke, 1997; Carter et al, 2003; Carpenter, Geletkanycz & Sanders, 2004; Erhardt et al, 2003; Faku, 2014; Golden & Zajac, 2001; Goodstein, Gautam & Boeker, 1994; Ruigrok et al, 2007; Ruigrok, Owtscharov & Greve, 2005; Stephenson, 2004). This development has necessitated the growing research and interest in women on boards.

WoB research evolved as a result of the slow progression of women in the boardroom globally (Daily & Dalton, 2003:8, Fouché; 2005; Hawarden, 2010). It was also motivated by the absence of literature on this topic (Terjesen et al, 2009) and the limited research taking place in few countries (Vinnicombe et al, 2008 in Hawarden, 2010:16). Although active research is evident in a number of academic or non-profit organisations, such as the Catalyst, the Cranfield centre for developing women leaders, Korn/Ferry International, the New Zealand bi-annual census of women’s participation, and in South Africa, the “South African business association” to influence women on boards’ participation (Hawarden, 2010). However, various studies show that women on boards face a range of challenges including inequalities of pay (Conyon & Mallin, 1997; Motshegwa, 2013), gender bias, stereotyping and tokenism (Catalyst, 2013; Erhardt et al, 2003; Hawarden, 2010). Inadequate experience and the unavailability of suitable women for the boards of directors have been used as excuses to justify the low board representation of women. However, in contrast, Daily et al (1999) and Hawarden (2010) differed by stating that the opportunities for women to enter the board are narrow. Whilst the empirical research of Pearce and Zahra (1991) reported on the disadvantages of having women on the board, such as more debates, arguments and clashes, it also reported that the most powerful boards had a higher percentage of women directors. A stream of research after
also showed that the benefits far outweigh the disadvantages (Burke, 2003; Carter et al, 2003; Catalyst, 2013; Catalyst, 2014; Daily et al, 1999; Hawarden, 2010; Miller & Triana, 2009; Ruigrok et al, 2007; Stephenson, 2004; Sweetman, 1996).

The objective of this section was to present the growing need for women on boards and the research supporting that notion. It is not the aim of this literature review to consider male board members as ineffective, but to advocate for different perspectives on the board. Theories supporting the women on boards are discussed next.

### 7.2 The agency theory

The agency theory seeks to protect shareholder interests by suggesting the appointment of directors to act as mediators between the management and shareholders. As a fundamental internal governance mechanism (Ruigrok et al, 2007; Yeh & Taylor, 2008) a structured board has the responsibility of corporate control and monitoring (Carter et al, 2003; Company's Act, 2008; Donaldson & Davis, 1991; IoD, 2009; Yeh & Taylor, 2008). Therefore, to achieve greater independence the board has to be in engagement with the external environment to keep the organisation in balance compared to the sole monitoring function of the agency theory. Hillman, Canella and Paetzold (2000) show how four agency roles of boards, namely, a board as insider, business expert, support specialist or community influential, in one board would respond to differing environmental conditions. Thus, the agency theory does provide an insightful consideration of different director demographics (such as women) on the board in order to respond to different environmental conditions.

### 7.3 The resource dependence theory

The resource dependence theory is a social dependence theory of linking the organisation to other resources (Hawarden, 2010). The empirical studies of Hillman et al (2002) showed that most women directors did not come from business environments like male directors, but held advanced degrees. The resource dependence theory states that the success of the organisation is influenced by its ability to connect the organisation to external, but important resources (Randøy et al, 2006; Yeh & Taylor, 2008). Women directors may be included as outside directors on the board as it would be less costly if companies need to seek external advice (Daily et al, 2003). This argument clearly supports the recruitment of women directors to link the organisation to other resources.

### 7.4 Talent management

Previous research has not been able to provide a definition of talent management consistently or even concisely (Ashton & Morton, 2005; Brink & Nienaber, 2014; Chuai, 2008; Lewis &
Heckman, 2006). Many definitions have been used to describe talent management, and such
definitions regard talent management as a “mind-set” (Creelman, 2004:3), an effective
component for succession planning (Cheloha & Swain, 2005), and an attempt to ensure that
everyone at all levels works to the top of their potential (Redford, 2005:20). Other authors
define talent management as a collection of typical human resource department activities
(Byham, 2001; Chowaneck & Newstrom, 1991; Heinen & O’Neill, 2004; Jackson & Schuler,
1990; Lermusiaux, 2005; Mercer, 2005; Olsen, 2000; Rothwell, 1994). However, a call by
various authors (Armstrong, 2007; Bratton, 2006; Kock & Burke, 2008; Morton, 2006;
Sistonen, 2005) to distinguish talent management as the act of integrating attraction,
recruitment, and retention across functions gave birth to some consensus regarding the
formulation of a definition for talent management as the recruitment, development and
retention of talent (Oosthuizen & Nienaber, 2008; Nilsson & Ellsstrom, 2012). For the purpose
of the study, the definition offered by Nilsson & Ellsstrom (2012) is adopted.
The meaning for talent also varies (Nilsson & Ellstrom, 2012) and can be viewed from an
exclusive or inclusive approach (CIPD, 2012). In the exclusive approach, talent is seen as
gifted and high-performing individuals (Beechler & Woodward, 2009; Tansely, 2011) and can
be related to crucial positions (Whelan & Carcy, 2011) or even exceptional teams in
organisations. The inclusive approach views talent as a combination of different skills,
attitudes, competence, and the behaviour of all people in an organisation because interactions
between and among people impact performance. Other considerations like specific or generic;
malleable or fixed; as these considerations impact recruitment, development and retention of
talent (Brink & Nienaber, 2014) have been listed. In this research, the board of directors is
considered as talent using the inclusive approach due to a set of different skills, attitudes and
competences required at board level.

7.5 Recruitment of women directors
As early as 1988, Hermalin and Weisbach (1988) argued that it is important to understand
how directors are chosen to enable understanding of the corporate organisation and
governance. It is accepted that recruitment processes differ globally and “inter-country
comparisons need to be considered in light of differing business norms and institutional
structures” (Hawarden, 2010:16). Krus et al (2012) recommended for each country to institute
its own board recruitment procedure. Historically, chief executive officers (CEOs) were
responsible for the selection of the board of directors (Burke, 1997; Hermalin & Weisbach,
1988; Lorsch & Maclver, 1989). A common current practice entails organisations using
nomination committees whereby a director is identified, evaluated, nominated and elected by
all the members of the board (Burke, 2007; Conyon & Mallin, 1997; Krus et al, 2012; The
In the South African context board governance is guided by the King Reports on governance and the Companies Act 71 of 2008. King III (2009) does not endorse nomination committees but recommends for the board of directors to undertake the duty for the appointment and the development of directors as well as the entire board team. Nevertheless, if nomination committees are chosen, these committees should be involved in the re-election of the board of directors (IoD, 2002; IoD, 2009). The King III Report (2009) further recommends that the process of board recruitments and selection to be officialised, transparent and inclusive of every member of the board. For the representation of women on boards, the King III Report (2009) requires companies to report on how they create conditions and opportunities that enable women appointment on boards, as part of their disclosure to improve diversity and independence.

Furthermore, King III addresses other aspects such as other directorships held by directors, rotation of non-executive directors, tenure of independent non-executive directors, director development, and board, director and committee evaluation. It also provides guidance on the appointment and duties of the CEO and chairman of the board (IoD, 2009). However, the Company’s Act does not address these matters. The major difference between the Act and King III is that King III categorises and defines directors as either executive, non-executive or independent non-executive. But the Act does not apply the same terminology thus impacting on board composition for companies that apply to King III. Furthermore, the Company’s act requires a financial statement report, including any matter that is privy to shareholders’ interests, whilst the King III requires a detailed report by the board of directors, such as internal control systems, risk management disclosures and the interactions between the board and all its stakeholders (PWC, 2011).

Early scholars recommended that directors be appointed on merit based on a strong track record, business linkages, business sense and an advanced education (Baysinger & Butler, 1985). Other competencies include leadership qualities, impartiality, diplomacy and tact, communication competence, acumen and integrity (Burke, 1997; Gillies, 1992; Mattis, 1993). Hawarden (2010) reported that most women do not possess these skills required to serve on boards. Contrary to that, it was largely reported that there were varying criteria for the appointment of men and women (Sethi, Swanson & Harrigan, 1981). It is also difficult to ascertain the possibility of women being appointed as token appointments to satisfy regulatory requirements (Burke, 1997; Brandt, 2013). The aim of the present research is not to determine whether women are appointed as token appointments but to explore the talent management intervention process followed in the recruitment, development and retention of women directors.
7.6 Development and retention of women directors

Ozkan and Beckton (2012) conducted a study of board gender diversity in the Canadian mining industry. The Canadian mining industry is comparable to the South African mining industry due to its similar women rankings on the board of directors (Catalyst, 2013). The results of the study showed that the development and retention of women directors in the mining industry is complex (Ozkan & Beckton, 2012). They also observed that the male-dominated workplace culture in mining has affected the cultural values and styles, as well as the flow of communication. This male-dominated environment has also provided a lack of support for women in handling family responsibilities. It further provides the main obstruction for women to advance to board positions (Ozkan & Beckton, 2012).

In the South African’s context one recurring issue which prohibits women’s chances of reaching top positions in the mining industry is a gender bias (Motshegwa, 2013; Ramaehlo, 2014). Mining companies do not provide climates which are conducive to attracting women to occupy top management positions (Motshegwa, 2013). And this makes the retention and development of women more challenging. Males are reported to exclude women in their network activities such as golf days and other networking opportunities. Motshegwa (2013) reported minimal coaching and mentoring of female talent to support the progression of women to the top positions and a lack of capacity-building programmes for women. Disparities for women and men, although they have similar qualifications, have been reported (Motshegwa, 2013).

7.7 A summary of the South African mining industry

According to the Chamber of Mines (2014) the mining industry in South Africa directly accounts for 8.3% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Although the industry’s contribution to GDP has decreased (from 21% in the 1970s), it continues to make a valuable contribution to the economy of South Africa (BMI Report, 2014), particularly, in terms of foreign exchange earnings, tax and exports, fixed investment and employment activities. Nominal mining GDP of R279.7 billion was recorded in 2013, up when compared to R270.2 billion in 2012 (Chamber of Mines, 2014). The major industry commodities are gold, platinum, iron ore, copper, chrome, manganese, diamonds, and coal. The Profiles Stock Exchange handbook (2015) showed that generally the boards of JSE-listed companies are mostly independent (non-executive). Executive positions are mainly reflected in the following positions; CEO, Financial director, Human Resources director and Company Secretary.

With the brief literature review as background, attention is focused to the way in which the current problem will be investigated. To develop an appropriate research design for the proposed research, three important issues were considered, namely, the philosophical view
that will underpin the research effort, the inquiry strategy (research approach/ research methodology) to be used, and the specific methods or procedures (research method) to be used to collect, analyse and interpret data (Creswell, 2008:5). The research paradigm follows in the next discussion.

8. RESEARCH PARADIGMS, ONTOLOGICAL AND EPISTOMOLOGICAL POSITIONS

Ponterotto (2005:127-128) defines research paradigm as “a set of interrelated assumptions about the social world which provides a philosophical and conceptual framework for the organised study of that world”. It is as a set of basic beliefs that present a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world”, the individuals place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that of the world and its parts (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105; Neumann, 2006; Schnelker, 2006:44; Weaver & Olson, 2006:460). Worldviews or paradigms play a significant role in scientific research as they guide the research process (Babbie, 2007:33). Creswell (2007) notes that researchers need to be cognisant with their own experiences, methodological values, beliefs and particular philosophical assumptions when undertaking research. The basic beliefs of inquiry paradigms can be summarised in three words, namely, the ontology question, the epistemological question and the methodological question. These inquiry questions could influence the research process and stipulate the “research setting” in which the research will be undertaken (Lincoln & Guba, 1994). In order to explain the paradigm of the study, the three inquiry questions are summarised as follows:

Ontology inquiry questions the nature of reality, denotes what to study and what is there and can be known about it (Creswell, 2007:21; Lincoln & Guba, 1994). I am studying talent management as an intervention to improve the representation of women directors in boards. I am aware of gender disparity in the boards of mining companies but know little about the process of talent management in the mining industry to improve the representation of women directors.

In the epistemological inquiry questions emanate to understand what is the truth about talent management (the truth about the reality of what is being studied), the nature of the relationship between the knower or the would-be knower and what can be known. The epistemological position holds that the theoretical knowledge of researchers diverges to some extent, and allows for interchange on how interpretations of social phenomena are perceived and how knowledge can be demonstrated (Creswell, 2007). I have concerns for women’s development and empowerment and support equal opportunities for women in employment. Thus I situate my values to the ideologies of feminism (within a critical theory paradigm) and hope that this research will improve gender inequality on the board of directors. Feminism implies that a
researcher seeks to ask “new” questions that place women development at the centre of social inquiry (Hesse-Biber, 2007) and acknowledges that the ‘personhood’ of the researcher is significant to the process of data collection and the research product (Letherby, 2003). Furthermore, there are multiple, equally valid and socially constructed realities in search for knowledge and the truth. Reality is seen as a projection of human imagination and reality is viewed as a social construction (Ramazanoglu & Holland, 2002).

Due to the complexity of the proposed research, there was no single paradigm that could satisfactorily deal with research objectives and research questions. Thus, I found it necessary to combine my feminist approach (within critical theory) with the constructivism-interpervitism paradigm. This will be feasible as research in both the critical and interpretivist paradigm is ‘qualitative’ in nature. Within the constructivist-interpretivism paradigm there is the need to recognise differences among individuals in their role as social actors (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:893). My aim is to be cognisant of the participant’s responses rather than own views and understanding as suggested by Creswell (2007:8). I will interact with participants (board members) through a qualitative inquiry with the goal of understanding the phenomenon (talent management) from the participants’ perspective. This implies that meaning will be created by researcher and participants in consultation, rather than from an outward observation in this instance, feminism in the critical theory paradigm (Hansen, 2004). I will construct and interpret the phenomena (findings) in their context through being close to them with the aim of understanding and building theory (Creswell, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The nature of interpretation is primarily through inductive reasoning in order to develop constructs.

The methodological inquiry sets to understand how the inquirer can go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known. The research methodology in this research will be set out in a systematic methodically and rigorous manner following a qualitative research methodology owing to its exploratory nature and philosophical approach. I will conduct interviews with mining executives (both men and women) who serve on the board of directors (as social actors) since this is considered appropriate for this research in order to study the talent management intervention from both male and female perspectives.

The research design and methodology is discussed next.

9. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

9.1 Research design

A research design is defined as the framework or blueprint of the research project (Mouton, 2003:55). It is the strategic plan for a research project which outlines the methods of data
collection and analysis, and displays how the research strategy addresses the specific objectives of the study (Creswell, 2008; Gorard, 2013, 5; Marshall, 1998:566; Zikmund, 2003). This research is exploratory in nature due to the little research available on talent management as an intervention at board level as indicated in the literature review; the small representation of women directors on the boards of mining companies; the limited literature available on talent management of women directors; the challenges to retaining women board members; the absence of development strategies in literature to the appointment of women board members; and the location of paradigms in the study. In exploratory research a little-understood phenomenon is investigated to identify and discover the important categories of meanings and to generate hypotheses for future research (Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

9.2 Research methodology: qualitative research

Research methodology can be described as the research process, tools and procedures to be used to collect and analyse data. The research method suitable for this study is qualitative owing to its exploratory approach, the problem being investigated and research paradigms in which the research is located. Visagie (2012) states that qualitative research is descriptive in nature (what happened), concerned with process (what happened over time) and interpretive (what was the meaning to people of what happened). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) and Sinkovics, Penz and Ghauri, (2008:690) offer that qualitative research is associated with an interpretive philosophy, since researchers need to make sense of the subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomenon being studied.

9.3 Research inquiry: qualitative evaluation research

In qualitative evaluation research, the selection of cases is determined by the nature of intervention and the type of process evaluation (Mouton, 2003; Patton, 1990; Patton, 2002). According to Patton (2002) qualitative evaluation research tells the programme’s/cases’ story (talent management intervention) by capturing participant’s stories and may encompass interviews, focus groups, narrative data, and field notes from observations, and other written documentation. Qualitative evaluation research in this research is characterised by the following characteristics (1) inductive approach to data gathering, interpretation, and reporting; (2) a holistic approach: finding gestalts for the evaluation results; (3) an understanding the subjective lived experiences of programme stakeholders (discovering their truths); (4) using natural language throughout the evaluation process; (5) an in-depth, detailed data collection (6) multiple use of case studies (7) the researcher as the primary measuring instrument; and (8) a naturalistic approach which does not explicitly manipulate the setting.
9.4 Research strategy: multiple-case design

The qualitative research evaluation will be administrated by the use of multiple case studies as they are useful in evaluation research (Yin, 2014:2). Furthermore, at a doctoral level, academic research requires multiple cases especially when theory creation is involved (Remenyi, 2012:124). A multiple case study further establishes whether findings can be replicated across cases (Saunders et al, 2012). Each case study will be analysed separately and then I will attempt to compare and contrast the findings from each study (Remenyi, 2012).

Case studies explore a phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Saunders et al., 2012; Yin, 1998 in Remenyi, 2012:2; Yin, 2014:2). Using the case study approach will enable me to gain a rich understanding of the context of the research and the process being sanctioned (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Case study research (1) investigates a contemporary, dynamic phenomenon and its emerging, rather than pragmatic, body of knowledge (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003); (2) copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be more variables of interests than data points (Yin, 1994:13); (3) has the ability to provide explanation when the causal links are too complex for a survey of experimental methods (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003); (4) relies on multiple sources of evidence with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion (Yin, 1994:13; Perry, 2001), and (5) benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide the data collection and analysis (Yin, 1994:13). The phenomena under study in the current proposed research meet these criteria. The notion of talent management intervention is a highly contemporary issue taking place in a current dynamic business context.

Many case studies are based on interviews piloted over a short period of time (Saunders et al., 2012), thus labelled as cross sectional. This study will be conducted as a cross-sectional study which will be done within a “snapshot” time horizon.

9.5 Population, selection of cases and sampling

According to Cooper and Schindler (2008) a population is the total collection of elements about which inferences can be made. The population selected for the study includes all JSE-listed South African mining companies at the time of the study. The JSE-listed mining companies have been selected to partake in the study due to their significant contribution to GDP at 8.3% directly (Chamber of Mines, 2014), the employment opportunities they present, their contribution to downstream economic activities, for example, manufacturing, tax and exports revenues, as well as the challenges of women representation on board of directors when compared to national counterparts (PWC, 2014; Motshegwa, 2013; Faku, 2014). Furthermore, information on board profiles is available on these companies’ annual reports due to their JSE
and Institute of Directors (IOD) requirements for adhering to best practice governance principles such as transparency in its board compositions. Research has also shown that JSE-listed mining companies showed improvement compared to their international counterparts (Buthelezi, 2013; Faku, 2014; PWC, 2014). This finding provides a sound source of information to select outliers, in other words, the best performing mining companies on gender diversity and by contrast those companies who are performing badly on women representation on the board.

9.6 Sampling strategy: purposive

Generally, all types of sampling in qualitative research are purposeful (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 1990). Sampling on its own can be explained as a “selection of some elements in a population, to draw conclusions about the entire population (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Case companies and participants in the study will be selected by means of theoretical sampling whereby I select the participants according to the needs of the study (Morse, 1991). These sampling techniques are purposeful to suit the needs of the study (Patton, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

Selection of cases and sampling

Eisenhardt (1989:545) states that there is no set number of cases for a research project, any number between four and ten should suffice. She suggests that less than four cases may enable difficulties in generating theory and its empirical grounding is unlikely to be convincing. This view is supported by Perry (2001:313) that an accepted range is between four and ten cases, as more than 15 cases may result in an unmanageable study. In the pursuit of a robust theoretical replication and in-depth understanding, this study will focus on six cases, selected from a list of JSE-listed mining companies. The choice of case companies is based on their board gender profiles. Three mining companies displaying gender diversity denotes information-rich cases for the talent management intervention of the study with a focus on best practice findings (Patton, 1990). The other three mining companies with the least representation of women on the board will be regarded as contrast cases.

Regarding interviews, Perry (2001:313) recommended that approximately 35 interviews across a doctoral study are required to provide a credible representation of the phenomenon. However, he warns that researchers should not follow the rule without due contemplation. The validity, significance and comprehensions generated from the qualitative inquiry have more to do with information-richness of the cases selected and the observational/diagnostic capabilities of the researcher rather than the sample size. Participants to partake in interviews will be selected according to “pre-determined criteria relevant to research objectives (Guest, Bruce & Johnson, 2006:61). Interviews will be held with board members at case companies
and they commonly include the inside and outside directors as prescribed in the King III Report (IoD, 2009). Eisenhardt (1989) suggested interviewing at least six participants per case while Guest et al (2006) recommends 12 interviews given the prediction that data saturation occurs at a sixth interview (Guest et al, 2006). Since the average board in a mining industry has nine members (Moraka, 2013) the number of interviews will be guided by the equal representation of participants in selected case companies implying that possibly a minimum of nine participants per case (company) will be interviewed. This gives the possibility of interviews of up to 54 board members.

9.7 Research approach: inductive

The inductive approach holds that the research is designed in such a way to develop a richer theoretical perspective than the one existing in literature. The inductive approach holds that data collection will be used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework (Saunders et al, 2012). With this inductive approach codes will be generated during the coding process for the development of themes, categories and constructs, which will be used in the development of the framework for talent management.

9.8 Unit of analysis: talent management intervention

A unit of analysis refers to the object, phenomenon, entity, process or event under investigation (Mouton, 2003; Yin, 2014). For the purpose of this research a unit of analysis refers to the “talent management”, selected companies will be referred to as “cases” and individuals in the study will be referred to as “participants” or unit of observation, as individuals will provide the data to study the problem at hand.

9.9 Data collection: triangulation (board profiles reports, interviews, and field notes)

Yin (2014) emphasises the importance of stating the processes and procedures followed in data collection. Although data can be collected in various forms (Maree, 2007:55), for the purposes of this research, triangulation will be used to collect data from three lenses (Remenyi, 2012). The first set of data will be sourced from the annual reports of all JSE-listed mining companies to determine gender profiles in order to select outliers (best diverse boards and non-diverse boards’ cases). The second set of data will be collected narratively, guided by an interview protocol with selected participants in the study. Interviews will follow a consistent line of inquiry however the structure of questions will likely be “unstructured” resulting in intensive or in-depth interviews (Yin, 2014). The third set of data will be collected from field notes made during the interview and transcription of interviews. Field notes will be used as reflections after the interview has taken place to specify the researcher’s personal impressions of what has happened during the interview (Remenyi, 2012). These field notes
will address specific topics in a comprehensive field note such as; (1) key evidence or learning point; (2) evidence supported by the interview; (3) evidence contradicted by the interview; (4) uncovered new sources of data, and; (5) clues regarding new lines of inquiry, new hitherto unthought-of interviewees or sources of documents (Remenyi, 2012:97).

10. DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Data analysis is the process of generating meaning from the collected raw data (Coldwell & Herbst, 2004:92). Following a combination of feminism and constructivist-intreprevist approach and social constructivism, data analysis will be interpreted differently, with multiple constructs (Charmaz, 2006). The transcribed data of the interviews will be subjectively interpreted by a process of thematic analysis whereby coding is used as a way of indexing or categorising the text in order to establish a framework of thematic ideas about it (Gibbs, 2002). Coding involves assigning numbers or other symbols to answers so that the responses can be grouped into a limited number of classes or categories (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:424; McDaniel & Gates, 2000). Categories will be identified and coded according to issues of relevance to research questions (Granehiem & Lundman, 2004). Categories and the coding scheme will be developed from rich texts, and conclusions from the coded data will be made (Graham, 2012). Once categories are defined, themes will be created. Graneheim and Lundman (2004:107) consider a theme to be an expression of the latent content of text whereby a condensed meaning unit, a code, or a category can fit into more than one theme. At the final stage of analysis, text narratives will be built from categories or themes identified (Sinkovics et al, 2008:691). All the text coded with the same label will be retrieved to combine passages that are all the same phenomenon, idea, explanation or activity. This will ensure the easy management and organisation of data which will enable the researcher to manage the data in an organised way. A list of codes will be used in the form of a hierarchy, to examine further kinds of analytical questions, such as the relationship between the codes and case-by-case comparisons. The process of coding and forming categories will be performed in Atlas.ti.

11. MEASURES FOR ACHIEVING TRUSTWORTHINESS

Measures of trustworthiness in a qualitative study are concerned about the ability of the researcher to gain access to the participants’ insight and experience, and whether they are able to deduce the participants’ intended meaning, and the ability of the research instrument to generate consistent findings at different times and under varying conditions (Cooper & Schindler, 2008:292-293; Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Saunders et al, 2007:319). These requirements depend on the ability of the interviewer to possess certain behaviours and skills, such as being familiar with the subject and the field of research, having multidisciplinary
knowledge and good research and interviewing skills (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I have experience in performing qualitative studies, interviews and qualitative data analysis. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985) measures of trustworthiness comprise of dependability, credibility, transferability and conformability. Various authors (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008:294; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Shields & King, 2001) explain the measures of trustworthiness as follows:

Dependability (in preference to reliability) refers to the researcher's responsibility to offer information to the reader that the research process has been logical, traceable, and documented. Dependability means considering both factors of variability and factors of the phenomenal or design-induced changes (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:299). Yin (2014:46) emphasised that dependability demonstrates that data collection procedures can be repeated with the same result. All interview audios and transcribed interview data will be made available when reporting results. Ethical consent approval will be requested from the College Ethics Committee. Hard copies of signed ethical consent forms from participants (interviewees) will be part of documentary evidence. To meet dependability requirements in case study research, a case study protocol and case study database have been recommended (Yin, 2014). A case study protocol will be used as an agenda for the researcher's line of inquiry. This protocol will contain four aspects which are: the overview of the case study, data collection procedures, data collection questions and the guide for the case study report (Yin, 2014). Case study databases will be created for each case company whereby a case study report per case is formulated. This will be combined with field notes per case as well interview transcripts.

Credibility (in preference to internal validity) refers to an assurance on how well the data and analysis process address the research objectives (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Triangulation will be used to enhance credibility by collecting data from more than one source and even asking one question in different ways during the interview and checking whether responses are similar. The researcher will triangulate between sources in cases and across participants to compare for consistency. Credibility will also be ensured by means of construct validity. Construct validity implies that the researcher will check with interviewees whether their intended meaning was accurately captured by the researcher after the interview has occurred. Construct validity also implies ensuring a logical, progressive process which can be reconstructed and predicted by an external audit (Sinkovics et al, 2008:703). This measure will be conformed through use of multiple chains of evidence established through documentation, archival records, interview audios, direct observations, participants' observation, and physical artefacts (Yin, 2003 in Sinkovics et al, 2008:667).

Credibility, furthermore refers to the key questions to ask from your research when evaluating research which are: whether you are familiar with the topic and whether the data is sufficient
to merit your claims. And whether you have made strong logical links between observations and your categories; whether any other research can, on the basis of your materials, come relatively close to your interpretations or agree with your claims. To adhere to these requirements I will ensure that the data gathered from interviews will be linked to the research objectives and research questions. Results from data analysis will be provided through solid and rich descriptions. My supervisors’ support, expert peer review and consultation will be sought during the process of coding, theme development, analysis and final report writing to assist my analysis and presentation.

Transferability (external validity/generalisability) is concerned with validating “the extent to which findings can be transferred to other settings or groups” (Pollit & Hungler, 1999:717). Transferability is thus not about replication, but rather whether some sort of similarity could be found in other research contexts. As mentioned previously, the analysis of data will contain rich and solid descriptions to fulfil the concerns for transferability. This implies that the researcher will give valued and strong diverse descriptions of the culture and context, selection and characteristics of participants, and also data collection and analysis (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110). Thus, I will make recommendations for transferability, but it is up to the reader to determine whether the findings would be transferable to another context (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004:110).

Confirmability (objectivity) refers to a practice to establish if the analysis can be confirmed by someone else and that data and interpretations of an inquiry are not just imaginary. Confirmability will be enhanced by making the research process transparent with enough details for the reader to check if they would have reached the same or similar conclusions. Confirmability is also concerned about linking findings and interpretations to the data in ways that can be easily understood by others. Primary documents of original audio, transcripts, complete electronic assessment trace of coding, code families, memos, and networks will be made available to enhance the dependence in the confirmability of records.

12. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I will observe ethical considerations in undertaking this research. An application for ethical clearance approval will be requested from the College Research Ethics Committee upon the approval of this proposal. I will then request permission from each mining company for participation in this study. Permission will also be required from individual board members to partake in the study. Since human subjects form part of this study, special care for protecting human subjects who participate in the study will be adhered to, and as such I will apply principles of respect in my engagement with participants (Yin, 2014; UNISA, 2014). Through informed consent, the participants will be able to make a decision whether or not to participate
in the study, based on the disclosed purpose and study objectives, on a voluntary, anonymous and confidential basis.

For confidentiality purposes, pseudo names of both companies and participants will be used. The transcriber, data analyst experts, language and technical editors will be required to sign confidentiality agreements. Participants of the study will be protected from harm, and the use of any deception in the study will be avoided. Lastly, participants will be selected equitably to partake in the study, to avoid groups of people who have been unfairly included or excluded (Yin, 2014:78). I will strive for the highest ethical standards while doing this research (Yin, 2014). As suggested by Mouton (2003:238), I will avoid inappropriate research practices like describing the research problem to suit hidden agendas, compromising the research design, wary misapplication of statistics, fabricating information, misinterpreting results to protect a corporate point of view, and the hiding of information. Overall, my aim is to be ‘value explicit’, acknowledging the significance of my personhood, that it fits with my critical, constructivist-interpretivist, feminist approach (Letherby, Scott & Williams, 2013).

13. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of the study are limited to the case companies and may not necessarily represent the mining industry as a whole. However, the results of the study offer a valuable in-depth insight of the exploration of the problem. Furthermore, the nature of the study (qualitative data) requires interviews to be conducted with directors on the boards; these have some time limitations as these high profile candidates are not readily available for interviews and have limited time available to partake in the study. After ethical clearance is granted, I will identify possible case companies during the writing up of the literature review and set up appointments as early as possible with the relevant participants.

14. DELINEATIONS OF THE STUDY

Delineation explains why the researcher is responsible or not responsible for something. A delineation states explicitly what falls inside or outside the research or thesis statement (Hofstee, 2006:87). The study is limited to the talent management on the board to improve the representation of women directors on boards.

15. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this proposal was to provide the background of the proposed research and a roadmap for the entire research. It was discovered in literature that the board of directors is important in organisational performance and women can make a meaningful contribution due
to the different perspectives they can bring to the board. Not much is known except that females are a minority on boards and that males continue to dominate boards. Furthermore, no framework was found in literature which reports on the best practice for the recruitment, development and retention of women directors.

This study envisages making a contribution in terms of the (qualitative) evaluation of talent management in purposively selected South African mining companies regarding the implementation of talent management and to explore whether all parties were covered as intended. Within a critical theory in the context of feminism and constructivist-interprevist paradigms, the proposed study will apply a multiple-case design approach to explore talent management in selected case companies. The findings will contribute to a talent management framework which may assist organisations in properly implementing relevant and appropriate talent management efforts that cover all stakeholders adequately.
16. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

**Board of directors** refers to a governing body comprising a group of elected members who are elected normally by the shareholders of an organisation, generally at an annual general meeting (AGM) to govern the organisation and look after the shareholder interests (IoD, 2002, 2009).

**Case study** is an empirical enquiry that investigates a phenomenon within its real life context when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1998; Yin, 2014).

**Constructivism interviewism** is the epistemological position that believes the need to recognise differences among individuals in their role as social actors (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009:893).

**Critical theory** is founded upon the belief that phenomena must be studied in the context of historical, social, political, economic and other influences to enhance the quality of life of minorities such as women, homosexuals, and other traditionally silenced, ignored, marginalised, and repressed groups (Jarvie & Zamora-Bonilla, 2011; Ponterotto & Grieger, 2007:410).

**Epistemology** seeks to understand the truth about the reality of what is being studied, the nature of the relationship between the knower or would-be knower and what can be known (Ponterotto, 2005:131; Saunders *et al.*, 2009:110)

**Feminism** implies that a researcher seeks to ask “new” questions that place women development at the centre of social inquiry (Hesse-Biber, 2007). Feminists are concerned with undertaking research for women rather than about women (Letherby, 2014). Feminist research makes methodological transparency essential so that the research process and the product are clear and open to critical scrutiny by others (Letherby, 2003; Hesse-Biber, 2007).

**Inductive reasoning** implies that the research is designed in such a way as to develop a richer theoretical perspective than the one existing in literature. The inductive approach holds that data collection is used to explore a phenomenon, identify themes and patterns and create a conceptual framework (Saunders *et al.*, 2012).

**Ontology** is the branch of philosophy that focuses on the nature of reality and being. Ontology addresses the following question: “What is the form and nature of reality and what can be known about that reality?” (Ponterotto, 2005:130; Saunders *et al.*, 2009:110).

**Research paradigm** refers to a set of basic beliefs that presents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the “world”, the individual’s place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts, comprising philosophical approaches namely; ontology, epistemology and methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994:105; Ponterotto, 2005:127-128).

**Research design** is defined as the framework or blueprint of the research project and includes surveys, case studies, programme evaluation, etc. (Mouton, 2003:55). A research design for this study is a qualitative programme evaluation.

**Talent management** refers to the recruitment, development and retention of talent (Nilsson & Ellsstrom, 2012). It is an integrated set of activities aimed at ensuring that the organisation attracts, retains, motivates and develops the talented people it needs now and in the future (Armstrong, 2007).

**Women directors** refer to female directors who occupy board positions either as insiders (executive), outsiders (non-executive) or independent directors.
### OUTLINE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH REPORT
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18. LIST OF REFERENCES


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