TURNOVER OF WOMEN AUDIT MANAGERS IN AUDIT FIRMS

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation titled **TURNOVER OF WOMEN AUDIT MANAGERS IN AUDIT FIRMS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the dissertation to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other education institution.

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ABSTRACT

Approximately half of the people in the world is female and yet women hold just more than one in every five senior management positions. This underrepresentation is a worldwide phenomenon that is also evident in the audit profession where there are few women at audit partner level. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of women audit managers – to gain an understanding of the reasons why they resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level. It was anticipated that this understanding could enable audit firms to develop and implement effective retention strategies to retain women in audit partner positions and to overcome the potential barriers to the equal representation of men and women in senior management positions in audit firms. An exploratory qualitative research approach and an interpretative phenomenological analysis design were used to explore and interpret the lived experiences of the women audit managers to understand the reasons why they resign from audit firms. The study found that unclear progression paths due to uncertain timelines, as well as the black economic empowerment pressures experienced by the audit firms, explained some of the women's resignations from the audit firms. Unhealthy supervisor relationships, discrimination, no female role models and the "old boys club" as part of the audit firms' leadership and organisational culture also played a prominent role in the women audit managers' experiences. Moreover, unsatisfactory compensation together with no work-life balance were found to have influenced the majority of the women's decisions to resign from the audit firms. Finally, the study also found that some of the participants' aspirations to become audit partners were not distinct and that other matters were more important to them than their careers.

Key terms

Audit profession; chartered accountant; exploratory qualitative research; glass ceiling; interpretative phenomenological analysis; retention; turnover; underrepresentation of women; women audit managers; women in management positions.

ABSTRAK

Alhoewel ongeveer die helfte van die wêreldbevolking vrouens is, is net een uit elke vyf senior bestuurders 'n vrou. Hierdie onderverteenwoordiging is 'n wêreldwye fenomeen, ook in die ouditberoep waar daar net 'n paar vrouens op ouditvennootvlak is. Die doel van hierdie studie was om die ervarings van vroulike ouditbestuurders te verken – om 'n begrip te kry van die redes waarom hulle bedank uit ouditfirmas voordat hulle tot ouditvennootvlak bevorder word. Die verwagting is dat hierdie begrip ouditfirmas in staat kan stel om effektiewe behoudstrategieë te ontwikkel en te implementeer om vrouens in ouditvennootposisies te behou en om die potensiële struikelblokke tot die gelyke verteenwoordiging van mans en vrouens in seniorbestuursposisies in ouditfirmas te bowe te kom. 'n Eksploratiewe, kwalitatiewe navorsingbenadering en 'n interpretatiewe, fenomenologiese ontledingsontwerp is gebruik om die geleefde ervarings van die vroulike ouditbestuurders te verken en te interpreteer om te kan verstaan waarom hulle uit ouditfirmas bedank. Die studie het bevind dat onduidelike progressiebane as gevolg van vae tydlyne, asook die druk van swart ekonomiese bemagtiging wat oudifirmas ervaar, kan verduidelik waarom sommige van die vrouens uit die ouditfirmas bedank. Ongesonde toesighouerverhoudings, diskriminasie, geen vroulike rolmodelle en die stelsel van baantjies vir boeties as deel van die ouditfirmas se leierskap- en organisasiekultuur speel ook 'n prominente rol in die vroulike ouditbestuurders se ervarings. Boonop is bevind dat onbevredigende vergoeding asook geen werk-lewebalans die meerderheid van die vrouens se besluite beïnvloed om uit die ouditfirmas te bedank. Die studie het ten slotte bevind dat dit nie sommige van die deelnemers se kennelike ambisie is om ouditvennote te word nie, en dat ander aangeleenthede van groter belang vir hulle is as hulle loopbane.

KAKARETSO

Tekanyetšo ya seripa sa batho mo lefaseng ke basadi efela basadi ke fela o tee godimo ga maemo a mahlano a bolaodi bja godimo. Kemedi ye ye nnyane ke setlwaedi sa motlalanaga seo se bonagalago ka go mošomo wa tlhakišo fao go nago le basadi ba bannyane maemong a bolekane bja tlhakišo. Mohola wa phatišišo ye e be e le go nyakolla maitemogelo a basadi ba balaodi ba batlhakiši – go kwešiša mabaka a go re ke ka lebaka la eng ba tlogela mešomo difemeng tša tlhakišo pele ba ka hlatlošetšwa maemong a bolekane bja tlhakišo. Go be go lebeletšwe gore kwešišo ye e ka kgontšha difeme tša tlhakišo go tlhabolla le go phethagatša maanotšhomo a maleba a go dula le bona sebaka mo go maemo a molekane wa tlhakišo le go fediša tšeo e ka bago mapheko go kemedi ya go lekana ga banna le basadi maemong a taolo ya godimo ka go difeme tša tlhakišo. Mokgwa wa diphatišišo tša boleng bja go nyakolla le tlhamo ya kahlaahlo ya ditiragalo tšeo di hlaloswago di be di šomišwa go nyakolla le go hlatholla maitemogelo ao balaodi ba tlhakišo ba basadi go kwešiša mabaka a go re ke ka lebaka la eng ba tlogela mošomo mo difemeng tša tlhakišo. Thuto ye e hweditše gore ditsela tša go se bonale tša kgatelopele ka lebaka la ditatelano tšeo di se nago bohlatse, go tee le matlafatšo ya ikonomi ya bathobaso tšeo di itemogetšwego ke difeme tša tlhakišo, e tlhalositše tše dingwe tša ditlogelo tša mošomo ka basadi go difeme tša tlhakišo. Dikamano tšeo di sa lokago le balebeledi, kgethollo, basadi ba go se tšewe bjalo ka mehlala le “old boys club” bjalo ka karolo ya boetapele bja difeme tša tlhakišo le setšo sa sehlongwa le tšona di ralokile karolo ya bohlokwa go boitemogelo bja balaodi ba basadi ba difeme tša tlhakišo. Go feta fao, tefelo yeo e sa kgotsofatšego go tee le tekanyetšo ya bophelo bja mošomo di hwetšagetše di na le khuetšo go bontši bja diphetho tša basadi tša go tlogela mošomo go tšwa go difeme tša tlhakišo. Mafelelong, phatišišo e hweditše go re ditumo tša batšeakarolo ba bangwe tša go ba balekane ba tlhakišo di be di sa bonale le go re merero ye mengwe e be e le bohlokwa kudu go bona go feta mešomo ya bona.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGSA	Auditor-General South Africa
APA	Auditing Profession Act no. 26 of 2005
APC	Assessment of Professional Competence
BBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CA	Chartered Accountant
CA(SA)	Chartered Accountant (South Africa)
CEO	Chief executive officer
CTA	Certificate in the Theory of Accounting
DELOITTE	Deloitte Touché Tohmatsu Limited
E&Y	Ernst & Young
HRM	Human resource management
IFAC	International Federation of Accountants
IRBA	Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors
ITC	Initial Test of Competence
JD-R model	Job Demands-Resources Model
JSE	Johannesburg Stock Exchange
KPMG	Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
PAA	Public Accountants' and Auditors' Act no. 51 of 1951
PAAB	Public Accountants' and Auditors' Board
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
SAICA	South African Institute for Chartered Accountants
Unisa	University of South Africa

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

"The higher up you go on the workplace ladder the fewer women you find." The late Professor Botman, in his capacity as the then Rector and Vice-Chancellor of Stellenbosch University, South Africa included this phenomenon in his blog shortly before he died (Botman, 2014). Researchers have endeavoured to uncover the rationale behind this phenomenon and, in many cases, they have found the *glass ceiling* to be a prominent cause of the low representation of women in management positions (Wallace, 2009; Broadbent & Kirkham, 2008; Dambrin & Lambert, 2008; Twomey, Linehan & Walsh, 2002; Monks & Barker, 1995; Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). The concept of the glass ceiling is used as a metaphor for the obstacles faced by women in their careers to explain why there are so few women in senior management positions, regardless of occupation (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). For the purposes of this study the glass ceiling refers to the obstacles faced by women audit managers that explain why so few women reach partnership level in audit firms. Twomey et al. (2002) describe the glass ceiling as a barrier that is so subtle that it is transparent, yet so strong that it prevents women from moving up the managerial hierarchy.

As is evident from statistics reported in several studies, the underrepresentation of women in management positions is a worldwide phenomenon. Approximately one in every two people in the world is female, yet women hold just more than one in every five senior management positions (Grant Thornton, 2017). Terjesen, Aquilera and Lorenz (2014) reported that in 67 countries, females represented 10.3% only of board directorships in 2013. In 2016, 17% of executive committee members were women, while women comprised 32% of the corporate boards of companies listed in the major markets of Western Europe, and 17% of the executive committees and 18.7% of the boards in the United States of America (Devillard, Kossoff, Sancier-Sultan & De Zelicourt, 2016). The Grant Thornton International Business Report of 2017 revealed that globally, in 34% of the 5500 businesses surveyed in 36 economies, there were no women at senior management level (Grant Thornton, 2017). In South Africa, the

Businesswomen's Association of South Africa's 2015 Women in Leadership census revealed that of the 293 Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) listed companies surveyed, 21.9% of the directors were female, 2.4% had a female chief executive officer (CEO), while 9.2% of the chairperson positions were held by women (Mall, 2015).

As part of their research on the representation of women in top management structures, Dezso and Ross (2012) developed a theoretical model to explain that female representation in top management leads to better organisational performance to the extent that the organisation in question focuses on innovation as part of its strategy. They further stated that female representation in top management structures brings informational and social diversity benefits to the top management team, enriches the behaviours exhibited by managers throughout the firm, and motivates the women in middle management structures (Dezso & Ross, 2012). Devillard et al. (2016) support the assertion that women in the boardroom bring about various advantages. These advantages include more diverse decision-making (Grala, 2013) and different leadership styles (Monks & Barker, 1995) which may lead to more informed and representative decisions which are to the benefit of the organisation and its stakeholders. In addition, Terjesen et al. (2014) found that women's presence on the corporate boards of directors (boards) is often associated with an organisation's higher returns on equity, operating profits and share prices, as well as increased governance, controls and accountability.

In reaction to these findings and in an attempt to improve gender diversity, a number of countries have established quotas with the aim of increasing the representation of women on the boards of publicly traded corporate and/or state-owned enterprises (Terjesen et al., 2014). These countries include Norway, Spain, Finland, Canada, Israel, France, Iceland, Kenya, Italy and Belgium (Terjesen et al., 2014; Swiegart, 2012). Norway took the lead when its government established a 40% female quota for board membership in 2003 (Teigen, 2012). The legislation enacted in various countries to increase female representation in management has taken a variety of forms but generally consists of a set female quota, usually between 33% and 50%, for board membership to be complied with within a period of between three and five years. The penalties for non-compliance range from declaring the board appointments made in violation of the set quota void (Spain) while, in Norway, companies are forced to delist from the country's stock exchange should they not comply (Terjesen et al., 2014;

Bohren & Staubo, 2013). A number of other countries have introduced non-binding gender quotas as part of their respective corporate governance codes with a requirement to report gender diversity recruitment and board gender/diversity composition (Terjesen et al., 2014).

The South African government has introduced several laws since 1994 to promote workplace equity. One of these laws is the Employment Equity Act no. 55 of 1998 (RSA, 1998), the objective of which is to achieve equality in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination and promoting equal opportunities through the implementation of positive and proactive measures (affirmative action) to advance persons in designated groups (blacks, coloureds, Asians, women and persons with disabilities) (Jain, Sloane & Horwitz, 2003:34).

In a bid to promote corporate governance in South Africa, four versions of a corporate governance code have been issued to date, with each new version improving on the corporate governance practices included in the preceding report. The latest version, King IV, recommends that the governing body of an organisation should comprise the appropriate balance of knowledge, skills, experience, diversity and independence to enable the organisation to discharge its governance role and responsibilities objectively and effectively (IODSA, 2016:50). In addition, the governing body should set targets for race and gender representation in its membership (IODSA, 2016:50). In respect of JSE-listed entities the JSE Listings Requirements require compliance with certain practices as mentioned in the King Code (JSE, 2017).

Despite these gender quotas and laws aimed at increasing the representation of women in management, a low representation of women in management positions remains apparent in a number of professions (McNamara, 2013; Laird, 2011; Roberts & Ayre, 2002). This study focused specifically on the audit profession. Audit firms have been the subject of much attention and criticism in the literature for the gender disparity displayed and for failing to promote women to the higher echelons. Research has shown for decades that despite the fact that more women graduates enter the audit profession each year than men (Gammie, Herbohn & Whiting, 2017; Broadbent & Kirkham, 2008; Gold, 2008a; Crosley, 2006), the percentage of women audit partners remains low (Gammie et al., 2017; FRC, 2016; Human Rights Commission, 2012; Khadem, 2012;

Kornberger, Justesen & Mouritsen, 2011; Wallace, 2009; Broadbent & Kirkham, 2008; Gold, 2008a, Gold, 2008b; Crosley, 2006; Monks & Barker, 1995).

Many researchers have conducted studies to explore the reasons why the audit profession remains male dominated and females are not being promoted at the same pace compared to their equally qualified male counterparts (Gammie et al., 2017; Ribeiro, Bosch & Becker, 2016; Zhao & Lord, 2016; Gammie & Whiting, 2013; Ribeiro, 2012; Phungwayo, 2011; Wallace, 2009; Komori, 2008; Whiting & Wright, 2001; Monks & Barker, 1995; Paisey & Paisey, 1995; Joy Maupin, 1993). These studies include both quantitative and qualitative studies while the methods of data collection included postal questionnaires, surveys, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews undertaken in Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, Scotland, South Africa and the United Kingdom.

In many cases the participants in these studies comprised both men and women (Gammie et al., 2017; Phungwayo, 2011; Whiting & Wright, 2001; Monks & Barker, 1995; Paisey & Paisey, 1995; Joy Maupin, 1993) and, in some cases, accountants as opposed to qualified chartered accountants (CAs) (Zhao & Lord, 2016; Komori, 2008). The studies conducted by Wallace (2009) and Komori (2008) were qualitative studies which reported on the stories told by 13 Canadian women CAs about why they had chosen to resign from public audit firms (Wallace, 2009) and explored the real-life experiences of 66 Japanese accountants in an ethnographical study (Komori, 2008) respectively. However, Komori (2008) explored the women's experiences in general and not specifically their experiences that had led to their resignations from the audit firms. There are limited studies that employed an exploratory qualitative approach to explore the lived experiences of women audit managers to understand why they had resigned from audit firms before being promoted to audit partner level, specifically in South Africa. However, this study explored and interpreted the lived experiences of South African women audit managers in depth in order to understand why they had resigned from the audit firms before being promoted to audit partner level.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The representation of women in senior management positions, in general, remains inadequate (Grant Thornton, 2017). A century ago, in 1918, Elizabeth Kruger became

the first woman CA in South Africa (Sadler, 1989). Since then there has been an exponential growth in the number of women qualifying as CAs each year, but studies continue to report an underrepresentation of women in management positions in the audit profession. The question thus remains as to why women audit managers resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner. Moreover, Kornberger, Carter and Ross-Smith (2010) highlight that there is a dearth of studies on women in accounting and call for interdisciplinary studies to aid our understanding of the gender inequality phenomenon. Not enough in-depth interpretative research is being undertaken to fully identify and understand the determinants of the voluntary turnover of women audit managers in audit firms.

1.3 PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of women audit managers in order to understand why they resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION

In order to realise the purpose of the study, the study focused on the following research question:

Why do women audit managers resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level?

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

As highlighted above, multiple studies indicate the low representation of women in senior management positions. This phenomenon is also evident in the audit profession with few women at audit partner level. Accordingly, this study aimed to understand why women audit managers resigned from the audit firms before being promoted to audit partner level. It was hoped that this understanding could enable audit firms to develop and implement effective retention strategies to retain women in senior management positions.

In addition, in order to facilitate the drive by governments to promote gender diversity in the management structures of organisations, this study aimed to contribute to this drive by identifying the potential barriers to the equal representation of men and women in senior management positions in audit firms. It was anticipated that the study could assist both the government and the private sector in their attempts to address these barriers and, in so doing, facilitate a rapid acceleration in the diversity transformation process.

1.6 DELINEATIONS

The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of women audit managers in order to understand the reasons why they resign from audit firms before being promoted to audit partner level. This study focused only on the experiences of women audit managers and excluded those of men. The study also limited the audit firms represented in this study to JSE accredited audit firms and the Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA).

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Audit firm: An audit firm means a partnership, company or sole proprietor registered as an auditor with the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA) (RSA, 2005:6).

Audit manager: An audit manager is primarily responsible for client relationships within their area of expertise as well as for directing the work of staff, seniors and supervisors assigned to their client engagements (Accounting jobs today, 2012:1).

Audit partner: An audit partner is a person in the firm who is responsible for the audit engagement and its performance, and for the auditor's report that is issued on behalf of the firm, and who, where required, has the appropriate authority to do this from a professional, legal or regulatory body (International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board, 2009:7).

Chartered Accountant (CA): A CA is a person who is registered with the South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA) and, therefore, eligible to use the Chartered Accountant (South Africa) (CA(SA)) designation (SAICA, 2018h:5).

Employee retention: Employee retention is a voluntary process implemented by an organisation to create an environment that encourages and motivates people to remain with the organisation for the maximum period of time (Aldamoe, Yazam & Ahmid, 2012:79; James & Mathew, 2012:80).

Employee turnover: The rotation of workers in the labour market, between firms, jobs and occupations, and between the states of employment and unemployment (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000:1).

Trainee accountant: A trainee accountant is a person who is employed by a training office and who is serving under a SAICA training contract (SAICA, 2018h:7).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In line with the researcher's view that reality may only be socially and personally constructed, this study was conducted using a constructivist paradigm to describe the narrative reality of women audit managers (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delport, 2011:310). The researcher adopted a relativist ontological and subjectivist epistemology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:13) which guided her inquiries and actions. In order to provide the participants with the opportunity to express their subjective and unique experiences freely and in detail (Mack, Woodsong, Macqueen, Guest & Namey, 2005:4), the study used an exploratory qualitative research approach and an interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research design. IPA acknowledges that different people view the world in different ways, depending on their personalities and prior life experiences (Breakwell, 2004:229).

Empirical data were obtained from the semi-structured individual interviews that were conducted and recorded on a digital voice recorder (De Vos et al., 2011) as well as from field notes that were taken. A set of predetermined questions guided the interviewer in the interviews. The research participants were selected using a purposive sampling strategy (Wolf, Joye, Smith & Fu, 2016:330). The researcher purposively selected the research participants based on their expertise in the phenomenon being explored (Reid, Flowers & Larkin, 2005). The researcher used her own judgement in deciding on the number of participants selected, as the main concern was to allow full appreciation of

each participant's experience (Smith, 2011). An IPA interview is not about collecting facts but exploring meanings (Larkin & Thompson, 2012:104). The data from the semi-structured interviews was transcribed verbatim (Smith, 2011) with first and second level coding then being performed on the transcribed interviews and field notes, using open coding techniques (Larkin & Thompson, 2012:106).

The four constructs of trustworthiness for naturalistic inquirers, as proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985:295) with their belief in multiple constructed realities, were applied in this study. These constructs include credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Open-ended and probing questions were used during the semi-structured individual interviews to give the participants the opportunity to provide in-depth details of their experiences. Data triangulation, the use of an independent co-coder and regular peer debriefings were additional safeguards employed to increase the credibility of the findings presented in the study. The transferability of the study was addressed by the provision of the selection criteria used to identify the research participants, background information on the research participants, the context of the study, the research process, and rich, thick, detailed descriptions as part of the findings presented. The transcriptions were checked to ensure that there were no errors or discrepancies and the data was constantly compared with the codes and field notes to ensure that the true meaning of the data was reflected by the codes assigned. In addition, a physical audit trail of all the research decisions and activities throughout the study was developed to enhance the conformability of the study.

1.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research involves collecting data from people, about people (Punch, 2005). Therefore, the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, values, desires and needs of the research participants. Trust in the research community is created if all researchers uphold ethical principles during their studies (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008:63). Since no harm should be inflicted on the participants (Babbie, 2010:65), informed consent was obtained from all the participants (Appendix B) before the commencement of the interviews. Each participant was provided with a participant information sheet (Appendix A) (De Vos et al., 2011:350) which informed the participants about the purpose of the study, the anticipated benefits of the study, the fact that participation in the study was voluntary and that they had the right to withdraw from the study at any point in time.

This sheet also confirmed the importance of the confidentiality of the information obtained during the interviews.

Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Accounting Science at the University of South Africa (Unisa) before the participants were approached for the interviews (Appendix H). The researcher attempted, to the best of her ability, to present the findings in an accurate and truthful manner that would not deceive the readers of this dissertation.

1.10 CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The layout of chapters in this dissertation is as follows:

Chapter 1 introduces the study. The problem statement is highlighted and the purpose of the study, together with the research question, are discussed. In addition, the significance and delineations of the study are elaborated upon, key terms and concepts used in the study are defined and the research methodology used in the study and the ethical considerations are described.

Chapter 2 is the first chapter of the literature review. This chapter focuses on employee retention and turnover. The importance of retention as well as the costs associated with turnover are described. Individual and work characteristics as well as psychometric factors such as organisational commitment and job satisfaction influencing and predicting voluntary turnover in terms of a conceptual voluntary turnover model are discussed.

Chapter 3 is the second chapter of the literature review. It provides context for the study by describing the need for a financial audit as well as an overview of the audit profession in South Africa. The qualification required to become a CA(SA) are discussed and the hierarchical structure of a typical audit firm described. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the factors contributing to the turnover of women audit managers at audit firms before their promotion to audit partner.

Chapter 4 describes the research approach and design used in the study. It sets out the method applied in the selection of the research participants, data production, data

analysis and data management. Measures to ensure the trustworthiness of the study, as well as the ethical considerations adhered to, are also highlighted.

Chapter 5 presents and discusses the research findings based on the analysis of the data obtained from the semi-structured individual interviews with the research participants and the field notes.

Chapter 6 concludes the study by aligning the empirical findings with the research question of the study and highlighting the contribution made by the study. This chapter also sets out the limitations of the study followed by the recommendations for further research that arose from the study. The chapter concludes with reflections on the study from the researcher's perspective.

1.11 CONCLUSION

Chapter 1 introduced the study. This subsequently led to the purpose statement of the study, namely, to explore the experiences of women audit managers in order to understand why they resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level. By understanding what factors lead to the high turnover rate of women audit managers in South African audit firms, it was anticipated that the study would contribute to the existing body of knowledge on the representation of women in senior management positions worldwide and, specifically, in the audit profession. It was hoped that the understanding of the reasons why the women audit managers resign from the audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level may assist audit firms to implement effective retention strategies to retain women audit managers up to the level of audit partner. The study used an explorative qualitative research approach while an IPA research design was deemed appropriate to address the research question. The study was limited to exploring the experiences of women audit managers only who had resigned from either one of the JSE accredited audit firms or the AGSA. The measures applied to ensure the trustworthiness of the research and the ethical considerations that were taken into account during the research process were also highlighted.

The next chapter presents a review of the literature on employee retention and turnover.

CHAPTER 2

EMPLOYEE RETENTION AND TURNOVER

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The famous words of the late William J. H. Boetcker set the scene for this chapter very effectively. “You can employ men and hire hands to work for you, but you will have to win their hearts to have them work with you”.

An organisation’s most valued assets are its employees and therefore to ensure that the organisation’s objectives are met and the employees’ hearts are won, it is important that these assets are well managed (Saarinen, 2018; Armstrong, 2006:3). Human resource management (HRM) refers to those activities which are associated with the management of the people who carry out the work of an organisation (Kramar, 2014; Armstrong, 2006:3), thus HRM involves human resource needs, assisting in the design of work systems for recruitment, selection, training and development, counselling, motivation and rewarding of employees, acting as liaison with unions and government organisations, retaining employees and handling other matters related to employee well-being (Armstrong, 2014:4).

As displayed in figure 2.1, there are many different aspects to HRM. However, the focus of this study is on the retention (and its antithesis – turnover) of employees, including the determinants which play a role in the retention of employees, or which cause separation from the organisation, thus resulting in the turnover of employees.

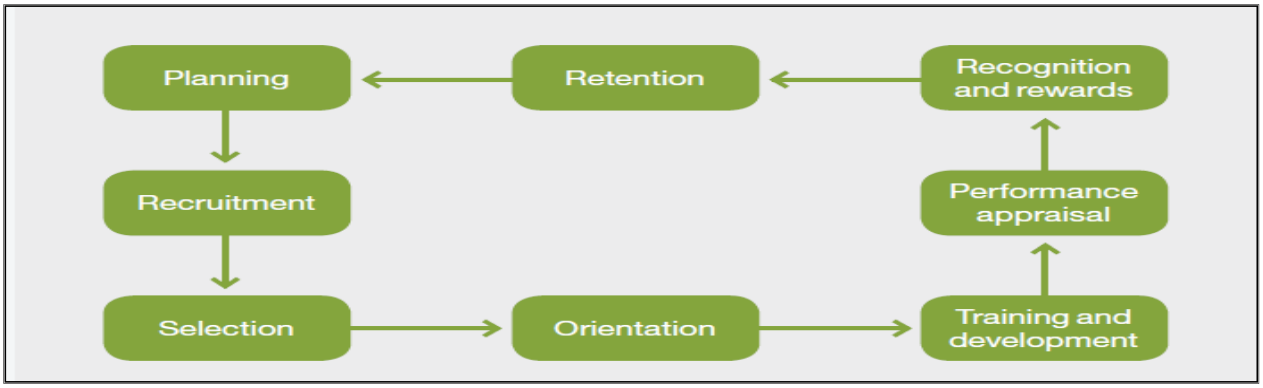

Figure 2.1: The traditional human resource management process

Source: Hoye, Smith, Nicholson, Stewart and Westerbeek (2009:113)

Human resource professionals have reported that the primary challenge in workforce management is to create and maintain the company's ability to compete for talent (Yirik & Ören, 2014). In other words, a core objective in HRM is to retain and develop valuable employees in order to ensure a competitive advantage for the company in question (John & Teru, 2017; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; DeYoung, 2000; Storey, 1992:26).

In an attempt to answer the research question, this chapter addresses concepts such as employee retention and turnover, including the importance of retention and the costs associated with turnover. Demographic and work characteristics, as well as psychometric factors influencing and predicting voluntary turnover are described in terms of a conceptual voluntary turnover model. These characteristics and factors are examined from a holistic view covering all professions and affecting both men and women. Chapter 3 then discusses the factors influencing and predicting voluntary turnover as relating specifically to women in the audit profession.

2.2 EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Employee retention is described by Cascio (2003:6) as the initiatives taken by management to stop employees from leaving the organisation, such as rewarding employees for performing their jobs effectively, ensuring harmonious working relations between employees and managers, and maintaining a safe, healthy work environment. Aldamoe et al. (2012), as well as James and Mathew (2012:80), defined the concept of retention as a voluntary process undertaken by any organisation to create an environment which encourages and motivates people to remain with the organisation for the maximum period of time.

Every organisation has its own culture, vision and mission and, based on these, an organisation will design and create the work environment and reward systems it deems favourable and acceptable to its employees (Anitha & Begum, 2016; Chatterjee, 2009). Depending on an organisation's country of incorporation, different factors are important during this process. In South Africa specifically, employers need to ensure that organisational cultures encourage the full participation of all the diverse employees who comprise the workforce in the country in order to retain their employees (Thomas & Doak, 2000). When employers realise that they are not retaining their employees in the manner they intended, they need to investigate the reasons for this and implement

interventions to ensure they increase their retention rates. The next section addresses the importance of employee retention as well as the popular employee retention motivation theories.

2.2.1 The importance of employee retention

It is important for organisations to retain their talent as a business's single most important asset is its employees (Ikenberry, 2015; Christie, 1997). In addition, for many organisations, their competitive advantage is usually dependent on the specialised knowledge and skills of their employees (Schreuder & Theron, 2001:47). Stovel and Bontis (2002) concur with this view, terming employees strategic assets or precious assets to be managed by organisations in order to sustain a competitive advantage. Amit and Schoemaker (1993) describe strategic assets as a set of capabilities and resources that are scarce, appropriate, specialised, and difficult to trade and imitate. Thus, for an organisation to lose its employees is equal to a loss of intellectual capital and intangible assets (Arkin, 2001). It is for this reason that organisations strive to attract, recruit, and retain qualified and productive employees, as human capital is essential for organisational effectiveness (Rehman, 2012).

Retaining talented staff is seen as a worldwide and industry-wide focus and challenge due to the shortage of skilled workers, rapidly changing technologies, increased career mobility opportunities for skilled workers and the need for survival in a highly competitive business environment (João & Coetzee, 2012; Mohlala, Goldman & Goosen 2012; Van Dyk & Coetzee, 2012; Yang, Wan & Fu 2012; Davidson & Wang, 2011; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Amundson, 2007; Dietrich, 2000). Skills shortages are also major obstacles to economic growth and job creation (Rasool & Botha, 2011; Kraak, 2008:1-2, Bhorat, Meyer & Mlatsheni, 2002). It has been suggested that, by 2020, there may be a 13% shortage of highly skilled and university-educated workers worldwide (Dewhurst, Hancock & Ellsworth, 2013). In addition, a report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) (2004) revealed that the CEOs of fast growing organisations overwhelmingly cite the retention of key professional workers as the most critical factor in planning for the future and the retention of talent as the most important factor that may influence the effectiveness of organisations in the future (Scott, 2018; Frank, Finnegan & Taylor, 2004). In 2014, Adcorp, a labour market specialist, reported an estimated 470 000 vacancies in the private sector of South Africa due to skills

shortages and projected that this number of vacancies would grow in the years to follow (Writer, 2014). More than half (52%) of these positions were in management while 37% were mainly professional positions in accounting, law, medicine, engineering and finance (Writer, 2014). Excessive turnover often has far-reaching consequences and, if extreme, may jeopardise the organisation's objectives due to a brain drain that negatively affects innovation and causes major delays in the delivery of services and the introduction of new programmes and products (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000).

The terms “knowledge workers” (Stewart, 1997) and “talent” (Paton, 2002) refer to employees who possess the sought-after skills and knowledge that place them in demand by organisations (Cappelli, 2000). There are multiple opportunities for these workers due to their skill sets and they are therefore able to choose where and for whom they want to work. In addition, they are in a favourable position to move from organisation to organisation in order to promote their careers and achieve their career goals. For this reason, research on the retention of employees stresses both the interdependency between employees and organisations (Fleisher, Khapova & Jansen, 2014; Tams & Arthur, 2010) and that organisational needs for success are achieved through addressing the employees’ career satisfaction as well as by balancing organisational needs with employees’ career goals (Fleisher et al., 2014; Lips-Wiersma & Hall, 2007). Employee motivation is one of the most important factors in improving employee and organisational performance and ensuring employee retention (Sandhya & Pradeep Kumar, 2011).

2.2.2 Employee retention motivation theories

Employees, as the heart of the organisation, require motivation to ensure that the desired results are achieved by the organisation and the employees are retained (John & Teru, 2017; Natarajan & Palanissamy, 2015). Several studies have found a positive correlation between motivated employees and employee retention (Biswakarma & Sharma, 2015; Sajjad, Ghazanfar & Ramzan, 2013; Samuel & Chipunza, 2009; Roos, 2005). According to Armstrong (2002:56), motivation refers to the factors that influence human behaviour and is usually comprised of three main elements, namely, direction, effort and persistence. Direction refers to the path a person takes in accomplishing the goals set for themselves as a result of a need or desire for something that is missing in their lives while effort refers to how hard a person tries (Armstrong, 2002:56). On the

other hand, persistence refers to refraining from deviating from goal-seeking behaviour and staying with a task until it is completed (Armstrong, 2002:56).

Pinder (1998:11) defines motivation in the workplace as “a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual’s being, to initiate work related behaviour, and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration”. In order to understand and predict motivation, one needs to know the specific goal a person is motivated towards achieving (Stein, 2007:19). There are several theories of motivation (Stein, 2007:18). These are divided into two main types: needs theories and process theories (Stein, 2007:18). Needs theories describe the type of needs that must be met in order to motivate an individual, while process theories help managers to understand the processes they might use to motivate employees (Stein, 2007:18). Popular theories implemented by organisations to motivate and retain employees include Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory (Maslow, 1943) and Herzberg’s two factor theory (Herzberg, 1987).

2.2.2.1 Maslow’s hierarchy of needs theory

Maslow provided an alternative way of looking at employees’ job behaviour in understanding how humans are motivated (Kaur, 2013). Maslow found that, if employees do not grow in an environment where their needs are met, they would be unlikely to function as well-adjusted individuals (Kaur, 2013; Maslow, 1943). The theory states that there are five types of needs that are activated in a hierarchical manner and which are aroused in a specific order (Kaur, 2013; Maslow, 1943). The lowest order need must be fulfilled before the next order need is triggered. Maslow’s theory explains that, from a motivational perspective, no need is ever fully met while a need that is almost fulfilled no longer motivates an individual (Kaur, 2013; Maslow, 1943). Therefore, in order to motivate a person, it is important to know where a person is on the hierarchical pyramid to focus on meeting that person’s need at that level (Kaur, 2013). The different levels of needs are illustrated in figure 2.2 and are divided between deficiency needs (physiological, safety, social needs) and growth needs (esteem, self-actualisation needs).

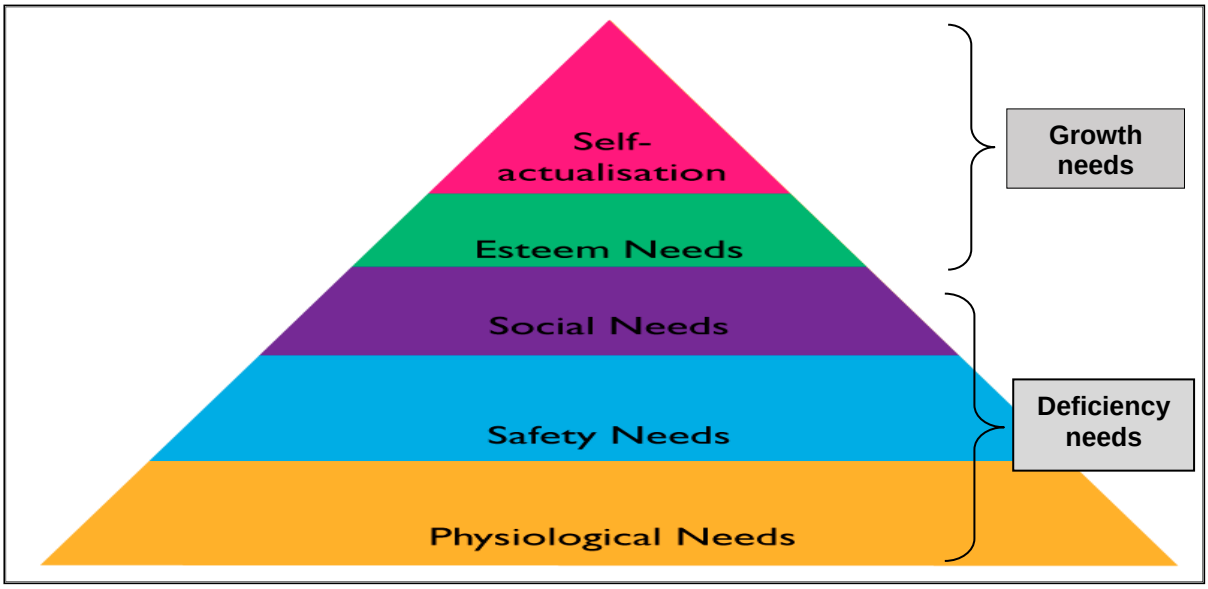

Figure 2.2: Levels of need according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory

Source: Kaur (2013:1062) adapted

Physiological needs are the most basic needs and are therefore located at the base of the pyramid. This level of needs includes the need to satisfy fundamental biological drives, for example food, water, air and shelter (Kaur, 2013; Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow, organisations should provide employees with salaries that enable them to afford adequate living conditions as a hungry employee would not be able to make a worthwhile contribution to any organisation (Obiekwe, 2016; Kaur, 2013). At the second level of needs, the *safety needs* are activated once physiological needs have been met. The safety needs include the need for a secure work environment free from any threats or harm (Obiekwe, 2016; Kaur, 2013). *Social needs* are activated after safety needs have been met and occupy the third level of needs. Social needs include the need to feel loved and accepted by others, for example, by an employee's co-workers (Obiekwe, 2016; Kaur, 2013). The fourth level of needs is represented by *esteem needs* that include the need for self-respect and approval by others, for example, by an employee's supervisor (Obiekwe, 2016; Kaur, 2013). The top level of needs represents *self-actualisation needs.* This level of needs refers to the need to be the best one can be and to develop one's fullest potential (Kaur, 2013). Maslow's theory suggests that self-actualised employees are likely to work at their maximum creative potential (Obiekwe, 2016; Kaur, 2013; Maslow, 1943).

2.2.2.2 Herzberg's two factor theory

Herzberg designed his two factor theory in 1959. Two sets of factors were identified in deciding employees' working attitudes and level of performance, namely, hygiene factors and motivation factors (Yusoff, Kian & Idris, 2013; Herzberg, 1987). Motivation factors are intrinsic factors that will increase employee job satisfaction, while hygiene factors are extrinsic factors to prevent employee dissatisfaction (Yusoff et al., 2013; Herzberg, 1987). Table 2.1 illustrates the different factors according to Herzberg's theory.

Table 2.1: Factors according to Herzberg's two factor theory

Hygiene Factors	**Motivation factors**
Working relationships	Responsibilities
Personal life	Achievements
Supervision	Growth
Job status	Promotion
Pay and benefit	Recognition
Work conditions	Work itself
Job security	
Company policies	
Extrinsic factors	**Intrinsic factors**

Source: Yusoff et al. (2013:21) adapted

Although there are similarities between Herzberg's two factor theory and Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, Herzberg's two factor theory suggests that meeting the lower level needs of employees will not motivate them but will only prevent them from becoming dissatisfied (Herzberg, 1987). In order to motivate employees, their high-level needs must be met (Herzberg, 1987). Herzberg (1987) proposed the intrinsic and extrinsic factors are not dependent on each other and, therefore, a sufficient supply of extrinsic factors will only eliminate the employees' work dissatisfaction but will not provide job satisfaction. Extrinsic factors contribute to the employees' willingness to work whereas intrinsic factors play a decisive role in the quality of their work (Yusoff et al., 2013). However, more recent research has found Herzberg's theory to be less relevant and that extrinsic factors do affect employees' job satisfactions (Fang, 2011; Lin & Lin, 2011; Ibrahim & Boerhaneoddin, 2010; Edward & Teoh, 2009). Because of these findings, Yusoff et al. (2013) recommend that the elements categorised under

extrinsic factors should be accepted to have a direct impact on employee job satisfactions and that Herzberg's two factor theory should be used as a single group of determinants for job satisfaction but taking into account the preferences of the employees as well.

Employee motivation is a critical aspect in any organisation that affects the performance of the organisation as a whole (Obiekwe, 2016; Robescu & Iancu, 2016; Crabtree, 2013). As illustrated by Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and Herzberg's two factor theory, every individual is motivated by different needs and factors and it is vitally important for the organisation's management to manage these needs and factors effectively in order to retain its employees and achieve the organisation's objectives. If an employee is no longer motivated, not satisfied with their working conditions or feels their needs are not met, the employee will not be retained.

2.3 EMPLOYEE TURNOVER

Employee turnover is described as the rotation of workers in the labour market, between firms, jobs and occupations, and between the states of employment and unemployment (Abbasi & Hollman, 2000). Individuals change jobs approximately 10 to 15 times during a lifetime (Doyle, 2013). The common occurrence of staff turnover belies its importance and the effects that high employee turnover has on organisations (Khoele & Daya, 2014). Despite employee turnover being a much-studied phenomenon (Shaw, Delery, Jenkins & Gupta, 1998), there are no universal reasons why individuals leave an organisation (Lee & Mitchell, 1994).

Two schools of thought dominate the research and practice on employee turnover, namely, the labour market or economic school of thought, and the psychological school of thought (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2008:229; Morrel & Arnold, 2007). The labour market or economic school of thought focuses on factors external to the organisation, such as the level of unemployment, wage differentials, and the availability of alternative jobs in the local, national or global economy. On the other hand, the psychological school of thought focuses on individuals (employees) and their decisions to resign from or stay with an organisation and relates to factors such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Marchington & Wilkinson, 2008:229). The psychological school of thought was deemed to be relevant to this study as the purpose of the study

was to explore the individual experiences of women audit managers which influenced and affected their job satisfaction and organisational commitment that led to their resignations from audit firms.

Turnover is classified as either involuntary or voluntary (Stovel & Bontis, 2002). Researchers have refined the concept of voluntary turnover further into avoidable and unavoidable voluntary turnover (Kane-Sellers, 2007). Figure 2.3 illustrates this classification.

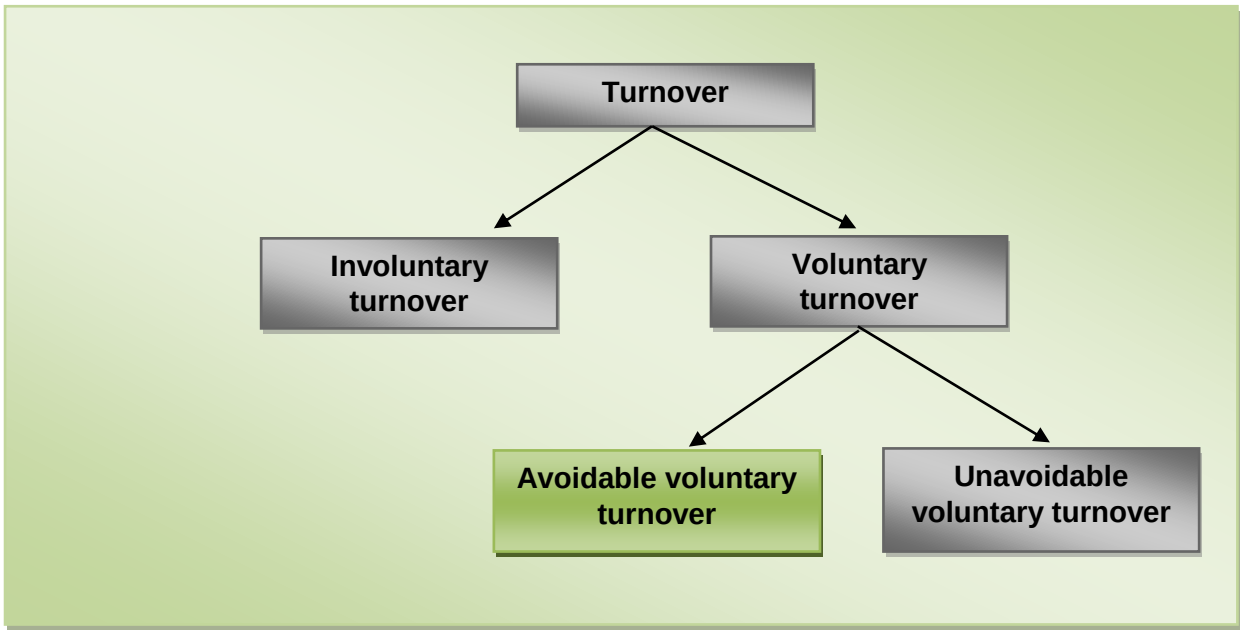

Figure 2.3: Turnover classification

Source: Own compilation

With involuntary turnover, the organisation makes the decision that the employee should leave (Allen & Bryant, 2012:4). This decision may be taken because of poor performance on the part of the employee, disciplinary transgressions by the employee or downscaling of the organisation with resultant retrenchments. With voluntary turnover on the other hand, the employee makes the decision to leave the organisation. Unavoidable voluntary turnover refers to employee initiated terminations due to spousal relocation, personal health issues, family matters, retirement, death, or the pursuit of further education (Kane-Sellers, 2007). However, avoidable voluntary turnover refers to employee-initiated terminations which are often related to job dissatisfaction and/or lack of organisational commitment (Van Dam, 2005; Egan, Yang & Bartlett, 2004). There is not much an employer is able to do to prevent or limit unavoidable voluntary turnover and, thus, employers should focus on measures to prevent or limit avoidable voluntary

turnover. In order to do this, employers must identify the factors leading to turnover so as to prevent or limit avoidable voluntary turnover by implementing suitable retention interventions.

Voluntary employee turnover has significant adverse impacts on organisations, especially relating to costs and the potential loss of valuable individual knowledge, skills, and organisational knowledge (Kessler, 2014). The direct costs generally associated with employee turnover include the following (Ahmed, 2015; Dess & Shaw, 2001):

- Exit costs – costs related to the required paper work and the time spent on exit interviews.
- Absence costs – costs related to loss of productivity until a new employee fills the vacant position.
- Recruitment costs – costs related to advertising the vacant position in the media, and interview costs.
- On boarding costs – costs including paperwork, business cards and training costs.

Research by Stovel and Bontis (2002) as well as Johnson, Griffeth and Griffen (2000) indicate that hiring and training a replacement worker for a lost employee may amount to 50% of the worker's annual salary. In addition, Allen, Bryant and Vardaman (2010) indicate that the costs associated with recruiting, selecting and training a new employee often exceed 100% of the yearly salary for the position being filled. Christie (1997) further estimated the average time required for a new employee to reach maximum efficiency to be twelve and a half months. However, these direct costs are not the only costs involved, as indirect costs are incurred every time an employee leaves the organisation, for example loss of morale, as well as pressure on remaining staff members and a possible decline in product and service quality. These indirect costs are often the more significant employee turnover-related costs (Dess & Shaw, 2001).

Furthermore, the loss of intellectual capital adds to employee turnover cost since not only do organisations lose the human capital and relational capital of the departing employee, but competitors are also potentially gaining these assets (Stovel & Bontis, 2002). Relational capital refers to the intangible rapport and synergies created

interpersonally both within the organisation and externally (Stovel & Bontis, 2002). If an organisation has an extensive knowledge and skills base relating to a specialised area of expertise that other organisations do not possess, clients will in all likelihood rather engage with that particular organisation than any of the others (Stovel & Bontis, 2002). Chitakasem (2011) states that it is more economical to focus on keeping top employees than letting them go and having to spend money on recruiting and training new employees who are going to take a while to reach maximum productivity. Other workers may also feel demoralised if they see esteemed colleagues being lost or let go too easily (Chitakasem, 2011).

It is clear that avoiding employee turnover is very important for any organisation based on the benefits of staff retention, as described above, as well as the costs involved in the case of turnover. The factors influencing employee turnover and its counterpart, retention, have been debated in the multidisciplinary fields of organisational behaviour, industrial psychology, and human resource management and development (Kane-Sellers, 2007). However, despite the number of studies conducted, the relationship between voluntary turnover and the determinants of voluntary turnover is still not fully understood (Barrick & Zimmerman, 2005). The next section discusses the determinants of voluntary turnover in terms of a conceptual voluntary turnover model.

2.4 DETERMINANTS OF VOLUNTARY TURNOVER

Most employers may believe that monetary compensation is the highest employee motivator. However, Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2000) confirm that, although money and incentives matter, employees are also interested in challenging and meaningful work, good management and opportunities for learning and development. João and Coetzee (2012) found that work-life balance, opportunities for career growth and development, using one's skills and knowledge in the company, compensation and challenging work are some of the most important retention factors for employees.

In addition to these retention factors, a specific set of retention factors that may influence staff retention were identified by Döckel (2003) and affirmed by Lesabe and Nkosi (2007). This set of retention factors includes factors such as compensation (monetary and non-monetary rewards); job characteristics (skills variety and job autonomy); training and development opportunities (formal development activities

provided by the organisation); supervisor support (recognition by and feedback from supervisors to employees); career opportunities (internal and external career options an employee may have); and work-life balance (employee's ability to meet both work and family commitments).

Kane-Sellers (2007) presented a conceptual voluntary turnover model (Figure 2.4) which was based on a synthesis of a number of voluntary turnover models developed in turnover research. This voluntary turnover model formed the basis of the determinants of voluntary turnover and the relationship between these determinants in this study.

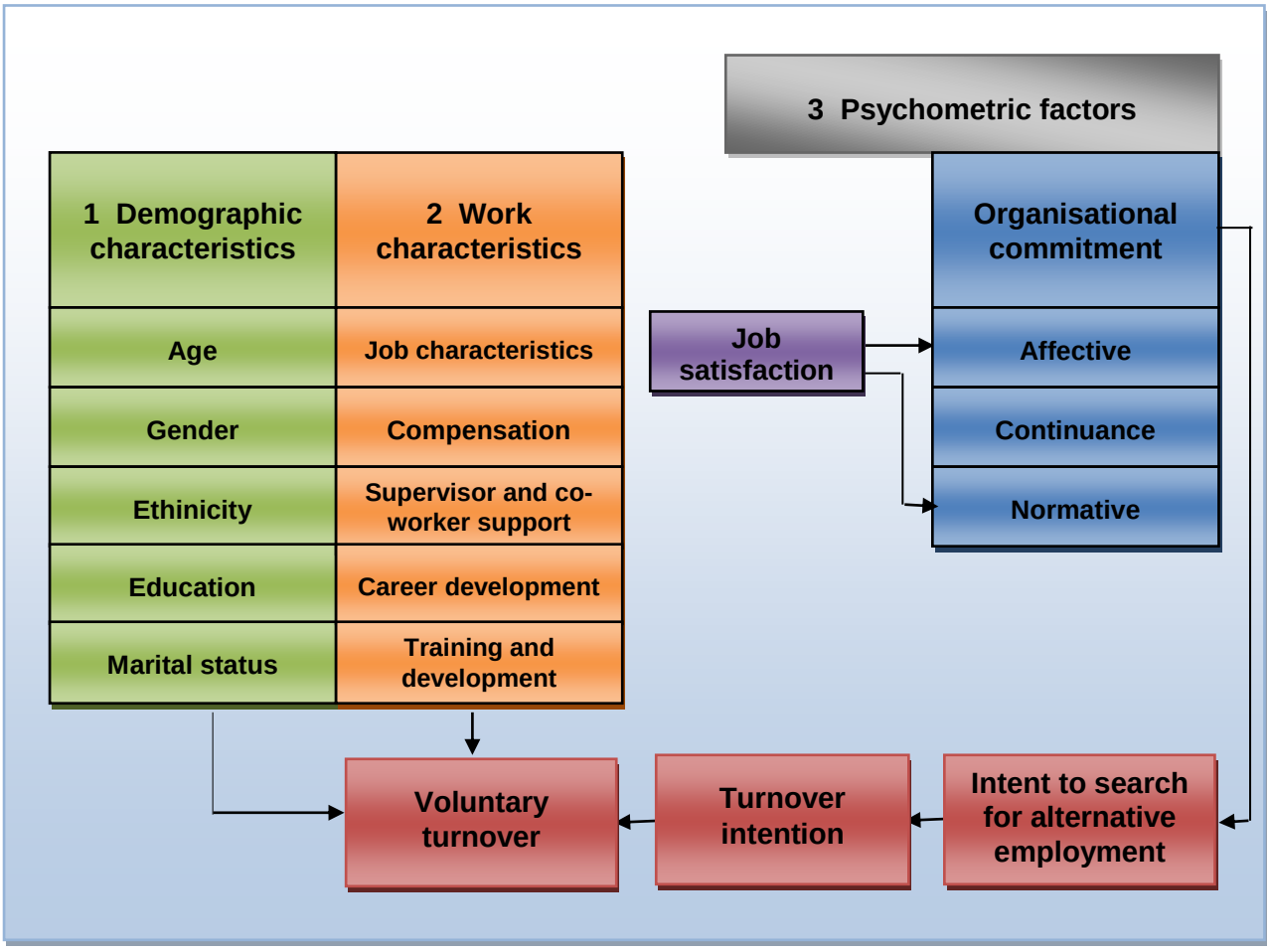

Figure 2.4: Conceptual voluntary turnover model

Source: Kane-Sellers (2007:69) adapted

In terms of this voluntary turnover model, the voluntary turnover determinants are divided into three categories. The first category, namely, demographic characteristics, focuses on the influence of age, gender, ethnicity, education and marital status on an employee's cognitive behaviour leading to turnover. The second category, namely, work

characteristics, focuses on job characteristics, compensation, supervisor and co-worker support, career development, and training and development while the third category, namely, psychometric factors, covers job satisfaction and the three components of organisational commitment (affective, continuance and normative).

The determinants included in the first and second categories of the voluntary turnover model have a direct relationship in terms of voluntary turnover. However, in terms of the third category of the voluntary turnover model, low levels of job satisfaction negatively influence organisational commitment, specifically affective and normative commitment. Low levels of organisational commitment prompt employees to search for alternative job opportunities. When alternative job opportunities are available, employees will develop a turnover intention that may lead to voluntary turnover as turnover intention is considered as one of the strongest predictors of actual turnover (Van den Berg & Nelson, 1999).

The demographic characteristics are discussed in detail in section 2.4.1 while the work characteristics are discussed in section 2.4.2. Psychometric factors are described in section 2.4.3 after which turnover intention, in most cases the predecessor of voluntary turnover, is discussed.

2.4.1 Demographic characteristics

Organisations seek diversity in their workforces for legal, competitive and social reasons. Certain countries, for example, South Africa, have legislative requirements (RSA, 2013; RSA, 2003; RSA, 1998) to ensure workplace equity relating to racial groups specifically. Other countries have enacted laws on gender representation, for example, the inclusion of women on company boards with the aim of increasing the representation of women in senior management positions (Swiegart, 2012). For competitive reasons, organisations must employ a diverse workforce in cases where the awarding of government tenders is based on certain requirements in relation to diversity in the organisation or teams (BEESA, 2007). Employing workers from different cultural backgrounds and with different language skills provides organisations with a greater reach while diversity experts believe that a heterogeneous group of workers is able to contribute more to creative ideas (Johnson, 2017).

Notwithstanding the above, research has found in meta-analysis that when an individual feels that he or she does not fit in well with his or her employing organisation, the individual's turnover intention is higher (Verquer, Beehr & Wagner, 2003). An individual may feel that they do not fit in due to them being from a different age group, gender group, cultural background or educational level compared to the majority of the workforce. Organisational leaders should therefore acknowledge that demographic characteristics do affect turnover intentions within the organisation (Agyeman & Ponniah, 2014; Walsh & Bartikowski, 2013) and design and implement their recruitment and retention strategies with this in mind. The demographic factors included in the voluntary turnover model (Figure 2.4) are age, gender, ethnicity, education and marital status.

Age

Schlechter, Syce and Bussin (2016) as well as Barrick and Zimmerman (2005) found that the age of an employee significantly influences voluntary turnover. In a study conducted among teachers in India, Nifadkar and Donre (2014) found a significant positive relationship between age and organisational commitment and intent to stay with the organisation. This is in line with the study by Karsh, Booske and Sainfort (2005), who found that older nursing home employees displayed a higher continuance commitment than the younger employees, while Salami (2008) found that older industrial workers in Nigeria were more committed to the organisation than the younger workers. This greater commitment on the part of older employees may be due to the experience gained from the organisation which resulted in loyalty to the organisation (Karsh et al., 2005). Alternatively, it could be that the older an individual becomes, the lesser is the urge to explore new opportunities and employees would rather work towards promotions with the current employer. Although some studies failed to show a significant relationship between age and intent to stay (Iqbal, 2010; Colbert & Kwon, 2000; Hawkins, 1998), the majority of studies tend to support a positive relationship between age and organisational commitment and intent to stay.

Gender

The research is inconclusive when it comes to the influence of gender on voluntary turnover. Hom and Griffeth (1991) observed that female employees did not voluntarily

leave organisations at a rate which differed from that of their male co-workers. In comparison, in a meta-analytic study Cotton and Tuttle (1986) did find a difference, with women voluntarily resigning more frequently than men. Subsequent studies by Emiroglu, Akova and Tanriverdi (2015); Lambert, (2006) and Carbery, Garavan, O'Brien and McDonnell (2003) also found that women displayed a higher turnover intention than men. Some of the factors highlighted by research as leading to voluntary turnover by women include a lack of opportunities for continuous development (Emiroglu et al., 2015; Stroh, Brett & Reilly, 1996), family responsibilities (Emiroglu et al., 2015), compensation and more competitive offers (Liu, Combs, Ketchen & Ireland, 2007; Moody, 2000; Stroh et al., 1996), lack of mentoring relationships and career planning interventions (Kwesiga & Bell, 2004) and long working hours (Monks & Barker, 1995; Westcott & Seiler, 1986). Chapter 3 discusses the factors leading to voluntary turnover as specifically identified by women in the audit profession.

Ethnicity

Voluntary turnover among employees belonging to the non-prominent ethnic group, that is the minority group, in an organisation is more common (Sorensen, 2004; Zatzick, Elvira & Cohen, 2003; Peppas, 2002). Valentine (2001) found that non-dominant ethnic group members also found it more difficult to progress to managerial roles within an organisation. People would like to feel that they fit in and belong to an organisation and, therefore, if the majority of the workforce is predominantly from one ethnic group, the minority may easily feel left out or that they are not part of the dominant group. Beliefs and values might be different as well as dress codes and language (Bhui, Stansfeld, Mckenzie, Karlsen, Nazroo & Weich, 2005). All of these factors may influence an employee to leave the organisation as they may not feel socially connected to the rest of the workforce (Friedman & Holtom, 2002).

Education

The findings of studies conducted on the relationship between the level of education and voluntary turnover are inconclusive. Some studies found a negative relationship between the level of education and intent to stay (Karatepe, Uludag, Menevis, Hadzimehmedagic & Baddar, 2006; Eskildsen, Kristensen & Westlund, 2004; Mathieu & Zajac, 1990), thus implying that better qualified employees often have more and better

opportunities elsewhere and are therefore less committed to their current employer. Studies conducted by Iqbal (2010) in Pakistan in the knitwear sector and by Emiroglu et al. (2015) in the hotel industry in Istanbul also found a negative relationship between education and turnover. Iqbal (2010) concluded that those employees with high education levels demonstrated higher expectations of their current employers, which meant that the fulfilment of their needs was more difficult. Emiroglu et al. (2015) supported the finding that more educated employees have higher expectations of their employers compared to those with lower education levels. Women audit managers are well qualified with an advanced level of education and sought after skills. Thus, based on the above findings, they may have high expectations of their employers, they may display low levels of commitment towards their current employers if their expectations are not met and they may take advantage of alternative opportunities in the economic market.

In contrast to the negative relationship between the level of education and intent to stay, a study conducted in Nigeria found that there was a positive relationship between the level of education and organisational commitment and intent to stay, thus implying that, the higher the level of education, the less likely it is that an employee will leave the organisation (Salami, 2008). The reason for this may be that the opportunities in some countries are not that extensive due to the political and economic conditions and a higher education qualification may only assist to strengthen an employee's current employment position.

Marital status

Research indicates that married people are more committed to the organisation for which they work than unmarried people (Emiroglu et al., 2015; Carbery et al., 2003; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986). The reason for this may be that unmarried people have more freedom and less financial responsibility (Emiroglu et al., 2015; Carbery et al., 2003), and are therefore able to take more risks regarding their employment. Marriage and family responsibilities make a steady job more valuable and important.

2.4.2 Work characteristics

Work characteristics refer to those issues relating to the job itself and an employee's work environment. Research has found that job characteristics, compensation, supervisor and co-worker support, career development and training and development all have an influence on an individual's decision either to stay with or resign from an organisation. The work characteristics included in the voluntary turnover model in figure 2.4 are further discussed below.

Job characteristics

Most employees would prefer to do interesting work that challenges them and requires their skills (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010:261). Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) suggest that, although employees regard routine as unchallenging and narrow tasks as hampering their psychological growth, they also tend to become frustrated and less engaged when tasks become overcomplicated. According to McEachern (2001), professionally qualified employees will leave the organisation if their skills are underutilised, while Zimmerman's (2008) meta-analysis revealed that employees with more complex jobs were less likely to resign. It thus appears that employees want to utilise the knowledge and skills they have acquired and they will remain longer with employers who recognise and promote this.

The Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R model) (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004) is a prominent model in research literature on job characteristics. The JD-R model distinguished between two sets of variables in any type of work, namely, job demands and job resources. Job demands such as high work pressure, emotional demands and role stress may lead to burnout and impaired health (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007) whereas job resources such as social support, performance feedback, autonomy and psychological empowerment may result in job satisfaction and organisational commitment (Demerouti & Bakker, 2011). This study aimed to identify the job demands faced by women audit managers employed by audit firms, as well as the job resources that were arguably not prominent at the audit firms, thus leading to their decisions to resign from the audit firms.

Compensation

Reward systems are frequently used by organisations to retain staff (Farris, 2000). Financial rewards are extrinsic monetary rewards which organisations pay to their staff for the services delivered by them. These financial rewards may include basic salary, cash recognition, incentives, share options and flexible pay (Döckel, 2003). According to Herzberg's two factor theory, these financial rewards represent hygiene factors that prevent employee dissatisfaction (Yusoff et al., 2013; Herzberg, 1987). According to Higginbotham (1997), high salaries are not essential although there is a strong correlation between good and fair salaries and intention to stay, thus indicating that as long as the compensation is competitive, financial rewards are not the primary factor in retention decisions. The findings of Kochanski and Ledford's (2001) study support this statement, indicating that the actual level of pay is less important than reactions to pay increases and the process used to administer such pay increases. Employees want to understand how the pay system works and they want to know how they can earn pay increases (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010:260). It is intriguing to note that the study by Lesabe and Nkosi (2007) found that especially black employees feel motivated to make an extra effort if they know they will be financially rewarded, as they perceive money as enabling them to afford the better things in life. According to Farris (2000), once-off recognition awards are not effective in preventing turnover; small non-cash rewards and good, old-fashioned permanent salary increases are the most effective rewards in reducing the likelihood of turnover. The CEO of Wal-Mart Stores Inc. agrees with this notion and in 2015, he spent $1 billion on higher pay for his workers, thereby acknowledging that they made the difference to his business and he wanted to retain them as employees of the company (Weber, 2015).

Supervisor and co-worker support

Supervisor support refers to supervisory behaviours such as rewards and recognition that sustain the employee's innovation (Döckel, Basson & Coetzee, 2006). According to Kochanski and Ledford (2001), employees value feedback from their supervisors and co-workers. Providing sufficient performance feedback to employees enhances a positive attitude toward the organisation and prevents intentions to leave the organisation whereas a lack of personal recognition translates to the employee as a lack of success. Regardless of the organisational level, employees want to feel good

about themselves and their work, have a sense of purpose, and be recognised when they do their jobs well (Döckel, 2003; Kochanski & Ledford 2001). Supervisor support provides individuals with the opportunity to make a difference in their work, try out new skills, exercise discretion, and receive feedback on their performance (Kochanski & Ledford, 2001). Gerstner and Day's (1997) meta-analysis as well as Nichols, Swanberg and Bright's (2016) study found that the quality of employee relationships with their supervisors influences turnover intentions, while Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison and Sowa (1986) argued that organisations wanting affectively committed employees must demonstrate their own commitment by providing a supportive work environment. High quality relationships between leaders and followers, where respect for the leaders is evident, the leaders are reliable and the followers are treated fairly, serve to increase retention.

People want more out of their work than merely a salary. In addition, people are also human beings who crave social interaction (Sreenivasan & Weinberger, 2016; Azim, Haque & Chowdhury, 2013). People like to work for an organisation where they feel they are part of the work family (Azim et al., 2013) and have social connections. This gives them the opportunity to share their personal highlights and problems as well as their work achievements and disappointments with their co-workers (Friedman & Holtom, 2002). Not surprisingly, Azim et al.'s (2013) study found that friendly and supportive co-workers lead to increased job satisfaction and a lower intent to leave.

Career development

People tend to be concerned about their futures. They want progress and growth and they tend to become frustrated when they believe their progression path is blocked, or that there are obstacles in their way (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007). Kochanski and Ledford (2001) found that career opportunities were more significant predictors of retention than any other type of reward. The members of the new generation, termed millennials (generation born after 1980 (Waters, 2018; Pew Research Center, 2017)), are committed to their personal learning and development and view this as their first choice benefit from employers (Rigoni & Adkins, 2016). Career progression is, therefore, a top priority for millennials with the majority of them seeing this as the main attraction offered by an employer (Rigoni & Adkins, 2016).

In order to improve the retention of employees, organisations should attempt to match career opportunities with career anchors (Döckel, 2003). A career anchor may be defined as "a cluster of self-perceived talents, motives and values that forms the nucleus of a person's occupational self-concept" (Greenhaus, Callanan & Godshalk 2010:68). Schein (2006:65) describes a career anchor as "the pattern of self-perceived areas of competence, motives and values that guide and constrain career choices". Thus, career anchors provide focus or direction to channel an employee's efforts and determine what may be done to achieve career goals and aspirations (Döckel, 2003).

The career anchors of employees may have significant implications for their job satisfaction, commitment and turnover intentions (Döckel, 2003). Career anchors are developed through occupational experience during which employees learn what their talents, motives and abilities really are (Igbaria, Kassicieh & Silver, 1999). Schein (1975) identified eight career anchors that guide employees' career decisions. These career anchors were subsequently divided into three distinct groupings, namely, talent based anchors, need based anchors and value based anchors by Feldman and Bolino (1996). These anchors, with their respective characteristics as described by Schreuder and Coetzee (2006:221), are illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Characteristics of career anchors

CAREER ANCHOR	CHARACTERISTICS
Talent based anchors	
Technical/functional competence	• Identity is built around content of work, the technical/functional skills in which the individual excels • Enjoy challenging work that allows the application of expertise
Managerial competence	• Enjoy high levels of responsibility • Prefer challenging, varied and integrative work • Strive towards leadership opportunities that enable a contribution to be made to the organisation
Entrepreneurial creativity	• Enjoy creating new products or services • Obsessed with the need to create, requiring constant new challenges
Need based anchors	
Autonomy/independence	• Prefer clearly delineated, time bound types of work within area of expertise • Like defined goals which allow the individual means of accomplishment. • Do not desire close supervision

CAREER ANCHOR	CHARACTERISTICS
Security/stability	• Enjoy stable, predictable work • Prefer to be paid in steady, predictable increments based on length of service • Concerned about the context of the work and the nature of the work itself
Lifestyle	• Desire to integrate the needs of the individual, family and career • Enjoy flexibility • Display an organisational attitude that respects personal and family concerns
Value based anchors	
Service/dedication to a cause	• Work toward some important values in relation to improving the world in some manner • Prefer helping professions (for example, nursing, teaching)
Pure challenge	• Pursue challenge for its own sake • Highly motivated

Source: Schreuder & Coetzee (2006:221)

Measuring career anchors enables an organisation to find a match between organisational and individual needs and to restructure jobs accordingly. Igbaria and Greenhaus (1991) found that employees whose career anchors were compatible with their job settings reported high job satisfaction, high career satisfaction and strong commitment to their organisation with low intentions to leave the organisation.

Training and development

Employees need to sustain their employability and marketability and thus training and development opportunities have become essential for any employee (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010:261). Human capital is unique in that it is the only organisational asset that may be developed (Stovel & Bontis, 2002). Employee training may be conducted through either on-the-job or off-the-job training. On-the-job training allows employees to work within the organisation while learning about their jobs and the organisation. On the other hand, off-the-job training may include technology-driven e-learning programmes, formal classroom training, and external training conducted by suppliers or formal educational institutions (Stovel & Bontis, 2002). Employees tend to remain at organisations that promote career opportunities through learning, and which provide them with opportunities to apply their newly learned skills (Huang & Su, 2016; Jiang &

Klein, 2000). Employees who are aware of the expense of training, or appreciate the skills they have acquired, may develop a sense of obligation (normative commitment) (Döckel, 2003; Meyer & Allen, 1991) and therefore they remain at the organisation out of loyalty to it.

2.4.3 Psychometric factors

The psychometric factors in the voluntary turnover model in figure 2.4 are represented by job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Research suggests that job satisfaction is an antecedent of organisational commitment in the turnover intention path of voluntary turnover (Meyer, Stanley, Herscovitch & Topolnytsky, 2002). There is a large body of analytical evidence indicating that job satisfaction and organisational commitment may explain 16 to 20% of voluntary turnover intention (Cotton & Tuttle, 1986) as declining job satisfaction and organisational commitment is frequently the precursor of alternative job-search activities that could lead to voluntarily turnover. The relationship between job satisfaction and organisational commitment, as well as the relationship between these psychometric factors and voluntary turnover, as illustrated in figure 2.4, are described below.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a somewhat broad concept but it is nevertheless significant for individual employees, organisations, and society at large (Scheers & Botha, 2014). One of the most widely used definitions of job satisfaction in organisational research is that of Locke (1976:1300), who defines job satisfaction as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences”. A number of research studies have focused on investigating the relationship between job satisfaction and other variables related to employee retention and turnover (Beijing, Wang & Yang, 2015; Li, 2015; Talachi et al., 2014; Bockerman & Ilmakunnas, 2012; Rehman, 2012;).

Job satisfaction is a complex and multifaceted concept that can mean different things to different people (Chomal & Baruah, 2014). An individual will be satisfied with a job to the extent to which the job provides the things or results that the individual considers important (Janićijević, Kovačević & Petrović, 2015). Job satisfaction is not related to a

single factor but is an intermediate relation combining job duties, responsibilities, actions and reactions, motivations, encouragements and hopes (Talachi, Gorji & Boerhannoeddin, 2014). Bockerman and Ilmakunnas (2012) found that job satisfaction is positively associated with organisational productivity, commitment and fewer accidents in the workplace but negatively associated with employee turnover intentions and absenteeism. The common point of convergence of the studies on job satisfaction is that the success of a business is enabled by maintaining high levels of job satisfaction among the workers at all times (Trivellas, Akrivouli, Tsifora & Tsoutsa, 2015; Yirik & Ören, 2014).

Rehman (2012) conducted a study on 15 public sector organisations in Pakistan and found that job satisfaction is not only a principal psychological factor in deciding whether the public sector is the employer of choice, but that it also influences the recruitment and retention policies within the sector. This study revealed that employees either express a desire to leave the organisation or are reluctant to accept a job within the organisation if they view such an organisation as offering fewer opportunities for the achievement of job satisfaction through the available human resources practices, such as career development and good governance systems.

In their survey of civil servants in Beijing, Wang and Yang (2015) found that employees who have more control of their work by participating in decision making, experience higher job satisfaction. On the other hand, Talachi et al.'s (2014) study among employees in industry, mine and trade organisations in the Golestan Province in Iran found that people with higher job satisfaction are more loyal to their employers, like their jobs more, are able to satisfy their needs, and have positive feelings towards their jobs compared to those with lower job satisfaction. According to the value-percept theory (Colquitt, Lepine & Wesson, 2009:98), people evaluate job satisfaction according to specific facets of the job. The most common facets that employees consider in judging their job satisfaction include reward and remuneration, promotion opportunities, supervision, co-workers and the work itself (Colquitt et al., 2009:98–100; Aamodt, 2007:343–348).

Blegen (1993) found that the job satisfaction of nurses could be associated with two main factors. The first such factor is related to an individual's characteristics, namely, nature, feelings, thoughts, desires and needs of the individual as well as degrees of

these characteristics. The second factor associated with job satisfaction is related to the conditions of the job and include the psychological conditions surrounding the workplace as well as the degree of their correspondence to the expectations of the individual. These factors are similar to the demographic and work characteristics as per the voluntary turnover model (Figure 2.4).

Organisational job satisfaction factors refer to the organisational elements that shape the work environment and that either facilitate or prevent employees getting what is important to them from their jobs (Janićijević et al., 2015). These organisational job satisfaction factors are important for the management of any organisation for two reasons (Janićijević et al., 2015). Firstly, if aware of the factors that determine employee job satisfaction in an organisational context, management is able to raise job satisfaction levels by adapting these factors. Secondly, it is easier for management to control organisational factors than individual factors, thus influencing these factors is a more productive way of improving job satisfaction than attempting to influence individual factors.

Li (2015) found that job satisfaction is one of the strongest predictors of intent to stay and retention among social organisations' employees in China. Kanwar, Singh and Kodwani (2012) conducted their study in the information technology sector and found that job satisfaction increased organisational commitment, and that both job satisfaction and organisational commitment decreased turnover intent and increased employee retention. It was therefore important to review organisational commitment, the second psychometric factor in the voluntary turnover model in figure 2.4, when examining turnover determinants.

Organisational commitment

As an organisational and occupational attitude organisational commitment has been widely researched in the field of organisational behaviour and psychology, especially social psychology, since the 1970s (Farzanjoo, 2015; Rafiee, Bahrami & Entezarian, 2015). However, it was only in the 1990s that consensus was reached regarding a definition of organisational commitment, namely, employees' attachment to their organisation (Laflamme, Beaudry & Aguir, 2014). Thus, organisational commitment refers to an attitude in terms of a stable mind-set towards the organisation (Meyer &

Allen, 1997:3,9) and the degree to which a worker identifies with an organisation and is committed to its goals (Little & Little, 2006).

As mentioned before, organisational commitment is closely related to job satisfaction, while turnover intent is an outcome of both job satisfaction and organisational commitment. The predominant view is that job satisfaction is an antecedent of organisational commitment (Mathieu, Fabi, Lacoursiere & Raymond, 2016; Mueller, Boyer, Price & Iverson, 1994), although there is also support for the opposite view that organisational commitment is the antecedent of job satisfaction (Van den Berg & Lance, 1992). Whatever the case may be, organisational commitment is a definite determinant of turnover and is an important factor that merits consideration.

Meyer and Allen (1991) designed a three-component model of organisational commitment consisting of affective, continuance and normative commitment. Table 2.3 presents the different forms of commitment according to the three-component model.

Table 2.3: Three-component model of organisational commitment

Overall organisational commitment		
What makes someone want to stay with their current organisation?		
Affective commitment	**Continuance commitment**	**Normative commitment**
Staying because you **want** to	Staying because you **need** to	Staying because you **ought** to
Some of my best friends work in my office, and I will miss them if I left.	I am due for a promotion soon. Will I advance as quickly at the new company?	My supervisor has invested so much time in mentoring me, training me, and showing me the ropes.
My current job duties are very rewarding. I enjoy coming to work each morning.	My salary and bonus provide us a nice house in our town, and my spouse has a good job here.	My organisation gave me a start. They hired me when others thought I was not qualified.
Emotion-based reasons	**Cost/benefit-based reasons**	**Obligation-based reasons**

Source: Colquitt et al. (2009:68) adapted

Affective commitment arises from a sense of emotional attachment, continuance commitment is rooted in a sense of economic necessity and normative commitment stems from a sense of moral obligation to remain (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs,

2012:86). Employees may stay with an organisation because they want to (affective commitment), because they need to (continuance commitment) or because they feel they have an obligation to do so (normative commitment) (Meyer & Allen, 1991). People tend to prioritise the three types of commitment in different ways. One person may be focusing primarily on continuance commitment when evaluating their overall desire to stay with the organisation, while another person may have more emotion-based reasons for staying rather than making a calculated assessment of the costs and benefits (Coetzee & Schreuder, 2010:253). According to Döckel et al. (2006), the relationship between work-life policies and affective commitment is significant. Work-life policies refer to specific organisational policies that are guided by a philosophy of active support for the efforts of employees to achieve success both within and outside of the workplace. An employee committed to a spiral or transitory career pattern will spend roughly five years in an organisation (Muchinsky, Kriek & Schreuder, 2002:289), suggesting that these employees focus on continuance commitment rather than affective commitment. The findings of a study by Birt, Wallis and Winternitz (2004) on a talented and qualified group of employees working in the financial services sector in South Africa support the assertion that continuance, rather than affective commitment, is often influential in employee decisions to remain with an organisation.

In the twenty-first century, organisations throughout the globe are facing the daunting task of ensuring that they have a satisfied, committed and cooperative workforce (Pradhan & Pradhan, 2015). Organisational commitment as well as job satisfaction are negatively related to turnover intention (Reukauf, 2018; Nichols, Swanberg & Bright, 2016; Faloye, 2014; Gelaidan & Ahmad, 2013; Hom & Griffith, 1995:95–96). Therefore, organisations should take steps to ensure enhanced job satisfaction and organisational commitment in order to retain their employees. Organisations that meet their employees' needs by focusing on retention factors also encourage organisational commitment (Pauw, 2011; Döckel, 2003), while commitment and connection to the organisation in turn have a direct influence on employee retention (Pauw, 2011).

2.4.4 Turnover intention

Turnover intention is defined as the manifestation of "the (subjective) probability that an individual will change his or her job within a certain time period" (Sousa-Poza & Henneberger, 2002:1). Turnover intention may be regarded as a predictor of actual

turnover (Bothma & Roodt, 2013; Cotton & Tuttle, 1986) because it has been consistently linked to actual turnover (Griffeth, Hom & Gaertner, 2000). In 2002, the Hay Group conducted a survey among its employees who were working in 330 companies in 50 countries. One third of the employees reported that they intended to resign from their jobs within the next two years (Hay, 2002) and had therefore reached the level of turnover intention as indicated in the conceptual voluntary turnover model (Figure 2.4). Many of the world's most admired companies acknowledge that they stand to lose half their senior executives within the next five years (Olckers & Du Plessis, 2012). Once an employee has developed the intent to leave, voluntary turnover is highly likely. It is therefore vital that employers ensure that their employees do not progress to this point by addressing the determinants leading to voluntary turnover, as discussed before.

2.5 CONCLUSION

In view of the knowledge and skills which the employees of organisations possess which could be detrimental if lost, retention is clearly vital for the survival of organisations in today's global economy. The costs and consequences of high employee turnover at any organisation can be devastating to the organisation. It is therefore important that organisations understand the determinants of voluntary turnover to enable them to address these as part of their retention strategies. Research has shown that if they are to remain with an organisation, employees need to be motivated, they need to feel that their needs are being met and that they fit into the organisation. Demographic and work characteristics, as well as job satisfaction and organisational commitment, all play a role in an employee's decision either to stay with or to resign from their job. In the global war for talent it becomes easy for employees with sought-after knowledge and skills to move from one employer to the next until they find a work environment that meets their needs. It is possibly more beneficial for organisations to spend money and resources to retain their talented employees rather than recruiting new employees, as the costs involved in recruiting and training new employees have proven to be greater than those involved in retaining existing employees. Chapter 3 includes an overview of the audit profession and its members together with the factors contributing to the turnover of women audit managers in audit firms.

CHAPTER 3

WOMEN AUDIT MANAGERS IN THE AUDIT PROFESSION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter focused on employee retention and turnover. Demographic and work characteristics, as well as the psychometric factors such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment, which influence and predict voluntary turnover in terms of a conceptual voluntary turnover model were discussed. This study focused on the audit profession, the milieu in which women audit managers function. This chapter discusses the need for a financial audit with reference to modern organisations and the relationships between the owners, stakeholders and managers of these organisations as well as the audit profession in South Africa. Thereafter the qualification path of a CA is described with reference to the academic and practical training components. An overview of the general hierarchical structure of an audit firm is then provided in order to contextualise the level women audit managers reach before they tend to resign from the audit firms. The chapter concludes with a section on the factors reported in research as contributing to the turnover of women audit managers in audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level.

3.2 THE NEED FOR A FINANCIAL AUDIT

The audit profession and audit firms originated because of the need for a financial audit. The relationships between the owners, stakeholders and management of organisations are described to explain the rationality behind the need for a financial audit.

3.2.1 Separation of ownership and management

Until the early 19th century organisations remained relatively small and were both owned and managed by the owners (Messier, Glover & Prawitt, 2010:5). However, after the Industrial Revolution in the 19th century, organisations became larger and were forced to raise capital to finance their expansion. Capital markets then originated which allowed public organisations to sell shares in the organisation in return for money or

loans in order to raise the required capital from a wide variety of investors (Messier et al., 2010:5; Spicer & Pegler 1921:3). This resulted in the public having an interest and/or ownership in these public organisations (Messier et al., 2010:5). Over time, the trend of public ownership of organisations has continued due to the large size of modern organisations. The owners of these large organisations then began to employ professional managers to manage the organisations on their behalf (Whittington & Pany, 2010:8) and, as a result, a separation between the owners of the organisations and the professional managers hired by the owners developed.

The owners were no longer directly involved in the running of the business and thus the management of the capital raised on the capital markets, as well as the day-to-day running of the organisations, became the responsibility of the hired managers (Messier et al., 2010:5). The right to exercise control which, in law, is vested in the hands of dispersed absentee owners, has effectively been taken over by management (Fama & Jensen, 1983; Larner, 1970:63; Berle & Means, 1932:69). The possibility then arose that this concentration of power and control in the hands of management could create incentives to allocate the organisation's resources in ways that were not necessarily in line with the interests of the non-managerial owners (Moizer, 2005:293). It was therefore necessary to ensure that management be held accountable in some way in order to monitor the quality of their reporting on accountability (Moizer, 2005: 293). This led to the need for financial audits, which play a critical role in ensuring that management is held accountable.

3.2.2 The agency theory

The proliferation of sizeable management-controlled organisations resulted in the development of the agency theory by Jensen and Meckling (1976). This theory has been widely used in the accounting and auditing field to explain the interrelationship between the owners and the managers of an organisation and to justify the need for financial audits (Messier et al., 2010:5–6; Droege & Spiller, 2009; Gray & Manson, 2008:9). The agency relationship was defined by Jensen and Meckling (1976:308) as "a contract under which one party (the principal) engages another party (the agent) to perform some service on their behalf that involves some decision-making authority to the agent". Applying this definition to the relationship between the owners and hired

managers of an organisation, the owners (the principals) hire managers (the agents) to manage and control the economic resources of the organisation on their behalf.

Traditionally, the owner managed his business in his own interests to maximise profits as the profits accrued directly to him (Berle & Means, 1932:113). The managers hired by the owners of modern organisations are responsible for the decisions that make a significant contribution to the organisations' profits (Larner, 1970:5). However, it is possible that the managers may choose not to manage the organisation in the interest of the owners as they have no legal claim to the organisation's profits. Managers are remunerated in terms of a fixed salary whereas the profits of the organisation accrue to the owners as dividends and capital gains. Accordingly, in some instances, the interests of the principals and agents may diverge (Hill & Jones, 1992). The agency theory assumes that both principals and agents act rationally and that both parties use the relationship to maximise their own self-interest and personal benefit (Adams 1994; Eisenhardt, 1989; Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Consequently, there is a natural conflict of interest between the managers and the absentee owners that arises when the decisions made by managers to maximise their own interests do not maximise ownership wealth (Messier et al., 2010:5; Schroeder & Clark, 1995:65; Adams, 1994; Eisenhardt, 1989; Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Larner, 1970:2; Berle & Means, 1932:115).

Where managers are entrusted with the custody of and the power to decide about the use of resources on behalf of the owners, the managers have an obligation to account to the owners who entrust these resources to them (Spicer & Pegler, 1921:1). This obligation is generally fulfilled by providing financial reports on the custody and use of the owners' resources and submitting these reports to a financial audit, on behalf of the owners (Spicer & Pegler, 1921:1). It is worth noting that the agency theory covers the relationship between managers and owners but fails to explain the relationships that exist between the organisation and the wider stakeholder environment (Hill & Jones, 1992).

3.2.3 The stakeholder theory

Freeman, Wicks and Parmar (2004) state that the stakeholder theory assumes that organisations have the ability to influence not only society in general but its various stakeholders in particular. The theory is based on the assumption that value is explicitly

an integral aspect of doing business and that, whatever the ultimate objective of the organisation, it is incumbent on managers to take into account the legitimate interests of those groups and individuals who may affect or be affected by the managers' activities (Freeman et al., 2004). Accordingly, Freeman (1984:46) defined a stakeholder as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of the organisation's objectives".

Managers who are hired also act as agents for other stakeholders, including employees, customers, suppliers, creditors, communities and society in general (Collier, 2008). Managers therefore have a responsibility to consider the impact of their decisions on the wellbeing of all these groups and stakeholders (Porter, 2009). Each of these groups supplies the organisation with critical resources and, in exchange, each group expects its interest to be satisfied. The survival and growth of an organisation depend not only on the financial resources of the shareholders, but also on the joint contribution of all the stakeholders. Resources and contributions include finance from creditors, time and skills from employees, revenues from customers, fair prices from suppliers, locations and local infrastructure from the community and national infrastructure from the general public and government (Hill & Jones, 1992). In view of the far-reaching effects of organisations on society and the economies of nations, there is a demand for wider responsibility and accountability from both the management and the organisation for their actions (Christopher, 2010). Management's accountability goes beyond accountability to the owners (shareholders) and includes accountability to all those whose well-being is affected by management's decisions and actions, that is, to society in general (Porter, 2009).

3.2.4 Accountability and independence

It is evident from the agency and stakeholder theories that there is a natural conflict of interest between the management of an organisation and the owners and stakeholders (Messier et al., 2010:5; Schroeder & Clark, 1995:65; Adams, 1994; Hill & Jones, 1992; Eisenhardt, 1989; Jensen & Meckling, 1976; Larner, 1970:2; Berle & Means, 1932:115). All parties seek to maximise their self-interest and management may not always act in the best interests of the owners and stakeholders (Adams, 1994; Eisenhardt, 1989; Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Owners and stakeholders are usually not directly involved in the day-to-day operational aspects of the organisation and management may be enticed

to manipulate information and report information that will make management look good. Thus, merely producing reports will not ensure accountability if such reports are not independently monitored (Porter, 2009). Accordingly, the need arose for an independent evaluation of the reports produced by management and an opinion on their fair presentation (Porter, 2009). Fair presentation means financial reports portray the organisation and its operations in a true and fair view (International Accounting Standards Board, 2014:15). The need to ensure the credibility and reliability of the information provided and to increase the confidence of the users of such information in it resulted in the need for an audit (Porter, 2009; Bird, 1973:2). In addition, there are also statutory stipulations prescribing the audit requirements for both private and public interest companies as well as government entities in South Africa (Kolakowski, 2016; RSA, 2008:90).

The users of the financial reports and the audit opinion thereon (owners and stakeholders) want assurance from a source independent of the organisation, otherwise they will be of little value. Independence is recognised as a fundamental principle of ethics in the International Federation of Accountants' (IFAC) code of ethics (IFAC, 2018; IFAC, 2016). This code of ethics requires the auditor to maintain independence of mind and in appearance in order to express an opinion, and to be seen to express an opinion, that is free from bias, conflict of interest or undue influence of others. It may thus be concluded that providing an independent audit opinion on financial information enhances the credibility of the information to the benefit of the users of the financial information and ultimately to the benefit and protection of the general public.

3.3 THE AUDIT PROFESSION IN SOUTH AFRICA

There is considerable agreement about defining the characteristic features of a profession. Such characteristic features include a professional association, cognitive base, institutionalised training, work autonomy and a code of ethics (Larson, 1979:208). Larson (1979:221) adds that professions are identified by high standards of professional and intellectual excellence; they comprise an exclusive elite group (Larson, 1979:20) and they involve occupations with special power and prestige (Larson, 1979:x). The audit and accounting profession demonstrates these characteristics of a profession and encompasses all the actions and parties involved in respect of a financial audit.

For the majority of consumers, professional services refer to credence goods about which they are not well informed in relation to the nature and quality of the services in question (Darby, 1973). They, therefore, often rely on the expertise of the professional service provider in order to assess the quality of the service. A degree of protection for the consumers of professional services is necessary to guarantee the quality of the services rendered (Garoupa, 2006). In the case of a financial audit, it is vital that the users (consumers) of the financial statements and the audit opinion thereon (professional service) are protected. This protection of the users frequently takes the form of the regulation of the profession providing the professional services (Garoupa, 2006), in this case, the audit and accounting profession.

Up to 2005 professional associations regulated the audit and accounting profession (SAICA, 2013; Verhoef, 2011; Odendaal & De Jager, 2008). The Transvaal Society of Accountants was the first such association formed in 1904, followed by similar associations in the Orange River Colony in 1907, in the Cape Colony in 1908 and in the Natal in 1909 (Verhoef, 2011). The South African Institute for Chartered Accountants (SAICA), formed when the four provincial associations merged in 1980 (SAICA, 2013), is the self-regulating professional association which is responsible for governing accountants in South Africa. The first legislation regulating the audit and accounting profession was the Public Accountants and Auditors Act no. 51 of 1951 (PAA) which became effective on 1 November 1951 (Verhoef, 2011). The PAA provided for the establishment of a register of public accountants and auditors who were entitled to engage in public audit practice and describe themselves as registered accountants and auditors. It further provided for the establishment of the Public Accountants and Auditors Board (PAAB), the registration and control of trainee accountants and the holding of examinations. The PAA also established the right of all who passed the qualifying examination to be admitted to one of the provincial societies and, thereby, acquire the right to use the designation CA(SA) (Puttick & Van Esch, 2004:6).

The PAAB was governed and funded primarily by members of the audit and accounting profession and, as a result, the independence of the PAAB was questioned (Odendaal & De Jager, 2008). The quality of audits was also placed under scrutiny after a series of financial scandals involving public companies such as Sunbeam, Waste Management, Adelphia, Enron, Leisurenet and WorldCom in the early 2000s (Christopher, 2010; Parmar, Freeman, Harrisons, Wicks, Purnell & De Colle, 2010; Boynton, Johnson &

Kell, 2006:3). The outcry by the public and investors that auditors were not viewed as independent and were acting in their own interest resulted in the enactment of the Auditing Profession Act no. 26 of 2005 (APA) in 2006. This resulted in an independent regulator, the IRBA, taking over the regulation of the audit aspect of the audit and accounting profession. The composition of the IRBA governing structure is limited to 40% of members from the audit profession and it is partially funded by government (SAICA, 2018e; Odendaal & De Jager, 2008). The accounting part of the audit and accounting profession is still regulated by professional associations such as the SAICA (Odendaal & De Jager, 2008). The IRBA regulates the audit profession in terms of the APA through a registration, accreditation and disciplinary process (RSA, 2005). Its strategic focus is to protect the financial interests of the public and investors by ensuring that only suitably qualified individuals are admitted to the profession and also that registered auditors, who are bound by the IRBA Code of Professional Conduct for Registered Auditors (IRBA, 2014), deliver services of the highest quality and adhere to the highest ethical standards (IRBA, 2017).

3.4 QUALIFICATION AS A CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT IN SOUTH AFRICA

Members of the audit profession are required to meet specific academic and practical training requirements in order to become registered members of the profession. The knowledge required to function effectively as a professional auditor is constantly expanding and changing at a rapid rate and, therefore, once qualified, a CA(SA) continues to have a responsibility to maintain and develop their professional competence to ensure the best possible service is delivered at all times (SAICA, 2018f).

The IRBA delegated the responsibility of the training of CAs(SA) to SAICA. Accordingly, SAICA developed a competency framework stipulating the competencies a qualified CA(SA) should demonstrate (SAICA, 2016a). The qualification path of a CA(SA) involves an academic education, as well as practical training that includes the passing of professional examinations during the practical training (SAICA, 2015). The competency framework is also divided into both an academic component as well as a practical training component (SAICA, 2018a). The competencies included in SAICA competency framework are, therefore, mastered at different stages of the qualification path towards becoming a CA(SA). The qualification path is illustrated in figure 3.1.

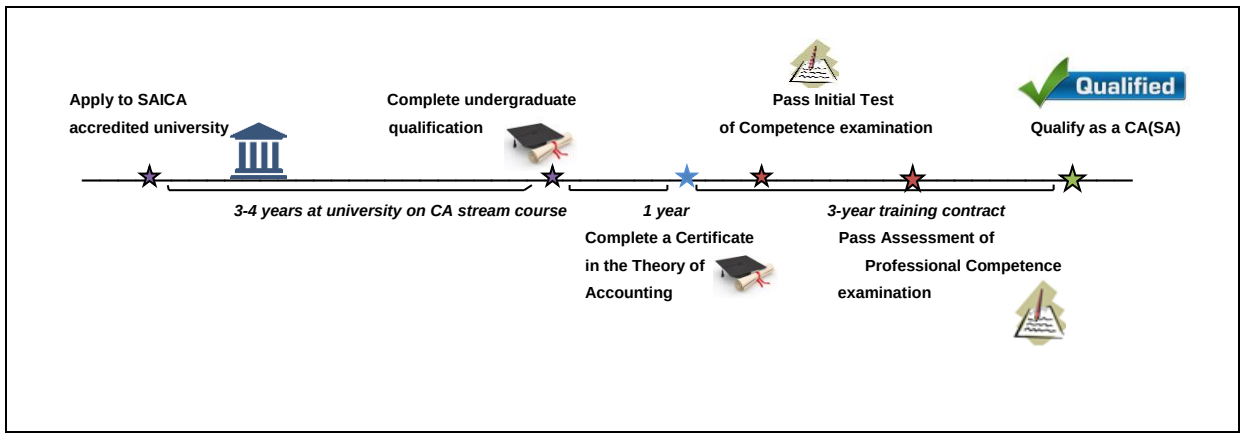

Figure 3.1: Journey to becoming a Chartered Accountant (South Africa)

Source: Deloitte (2017b)

The academic education component involves an undergraduate SAICA accredited qualification as well as a Certificate in the Theory of Accounting (CTA), both of which are offered at SAICA accredited universities or institutions (SAICA, 2015). The accreditation of a qualification by SAICA means that the provider (university or similar institution) of this qualification has put in place the appropriate resources that, if utilised effectively, should enable the provider to deliver the qualification at the required standards and levels of quality and the qualification meets SAICA's requirements in terms of the standards of learning and teaching (SAICA, 2015). The undergraduate qualification usually takes the form of a Bachelor of Accounting degree and is a three or four-year degree, depending on the university and course the student chooses (SAICA, 2015). After the completion of the undergraduate qualification, a CTA or equivalent qualification must be completed. This is a postgraduate course and focuses on accounting, auditing, taxation and financial management. This course takes a minimum of one year (SAICA, 2015).

Upon completion of the postgraduate qualification, an aspirant CA(SA) enters into a training contract with a SAICA accredited training office (SAICA, 2015). A training contract is a written contract, registered by SAICA, whereby a trainee accountant is duly bound to serve the training office for a specified period and is entitled to receive experience in the prescribed competencies (SAICA, 2018h). This component of the qualification path is relevant to this study as audit firms invest significant resources in order to support their trainee accountants to obtain the necessary skills and complete the professional examinations as part of their training contracts. A training office is an organisation, accredited by the SAICA in terms of the criteria set out in the SAICA

Training Regulations, whether within or outside of the borders of South Africa, which is approved by and registered with the SAICA as an organisation where prospective CAs(SA) may be trained (SAICA, 2018h). These training offices provide trainees with the opportunity to apply their formal learning in real work situations under the supervision of experienced CAs(SA) (SAICA, 2016b), guided by the competency framework developed by the SAICA. The basic term of a training contract is 36 months (SAICA, 2018h).

Individuals may choose to train outside of public audit practice or inside public audit practice (SAICA, 2018f). Training contracts may be offered by either audit firms or other leading organisations, for example, Engen Petroleum Limited, Eskom Holdings SOC Limited, FirstRand Bank, Investec Bank Limited, MTN (Proprietary) Limited, Nedbank Limited, Old Mutual, South African Revenue Services and Shoprite Checkers (Proprietary) Limited (SAICA, 2018f). Training outside of public audit practice refers to the financial management training route that offers prospective CAs(SA) an alternative to the conventional auditing route to qualifying as a CA(SA). The former route offers exposure to a specific industry, for example the banking, retail, consulting or telecommunication industries, where candidates will perform work relevant to their training office such as budgeting, strategy work and assisting chief financial officers (CFOs) in compiling financial reports to be submitted for audit (Swart, 2015). Training at an audit firm, referred to as training inside public audit practice, includes verifying the accuracy of the financial statements of the audit firm's clients which may represent several different industries (Swart, 2015). This route provides exposure to the management and operations of multiple industries and clients during the training contract. Training inside public audit practice was relevant to this study with its focus on the experiences of women audit managers who chose to stay within public audit practice after qualifying as a CA(SA).

The SAICA competency framework consists of seven areas of competence in which CAs should receive practical experience during their training contracts. This is to ensure that CAs are well-rounded with at least basic experience in the fundamentals of business (SAICA, 2018a). The areas of competence include accounting and external reporting; auditing and assurance; financial management; management decision-making and control; pervasive qualities and skills; strategy, risk management and governance and taxation (SAICA, 2018a). The competency framework was designed to

ensure that all trainee accountants attain advanced experience in certain skills during their training contracts. Accounting and external reporting as well as pervasive professional skills are considered to be fundamental to a CA and have been classified as compulsory skills for trainee accountants (SAICA, 2018a; SAICA, 2016b). Accordingly, all trainee accountants should attain these skills at an advanced level, which implies a significant amount of time spent in developing skills as well as the application of concepts in complex situations and environments (SAICA, 2018a; SAICA, 2016b). Training offices are required to also provide advanced experience in at least one of the five remaining skill areas. The selected area of advanced experience is referred to as the elective module (SAICA, 2018a; SAICA, 2016b). In the case of audit firms, the elective skill area is auditing and assurance. The remaining four skill areas that are not compulsory or selected as an elective module, default to the residual learning area. The practical skill requirements for these areas are far less onerous and can be attained in uncomplicated environments (SAICA, 2018a; SAICA, 2016b).

A further requirement in relation to the qualification of a CA(SA), irrespective of whether the individual choose a training contract inside or outside public audit practice, involves passing two qualifying examinations which are set and administered by the SAICA, namely, the Initial Test of Competence (ITC) and the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) (SAICA, 2015). To qualify for entry to the ITC, a candidate must have passed the CTA examination. This usually means that candidates enter for the ITC during the first year of their training contracts if they studied full time. Audit firms in general support their trainee accountants to pass this examination by supplying them with study leave before they write the examination, examination leave as well as funding the registration fee for the ITC examination – R5 325 (2018) per trainee accountant (SAICA, 2018b). Audit firms in most cases also expose their trainee accountants to additional study courses to prepare them for the examination, which is generally funded by the audit firm as well and may cost up to R3 500 (2018) per trainee accountant (UCT, 2018a).

To qualify for entry to the APC, a candidate must have passed the ITC; and completed a minimum of 20 months of a registered training contract with an accredited training office by the beginning of the month in which the assessment is written; and successfully completed a professional programme for APC with a registered provider (SAICA, 2018c). The professional programme for APC serves to prepare candidates for

the APC examination. Audit firms enrol their trainee accountants for the professional programmes for APC, which costs between R11 800 (2018) and R12 420 (2018) (APT, 2018; UCT, 2018b) per trainee accountant as well as giving them leave to attend the lectures and study leave before the professional programmes for the APC assessments. The APC assesses a candidate's ability to use and apply their technical knowledge in a real world context by setting tasks that entry level CAs(SA) are expected to be able to complete in the working world (SAICA, 2017). The APC, which takes the form of a written examination, places the emphasis on pervasive skills (ethics, personal attributes and professional skills) and assesses whether candidates are able to demonstrate their professional competence through the application of their acquired skills and technical knowledge in a multi-disciplinary case study (SAICA, 2017). The fees for registering to write the APC examination is R5 185 (2018) per trainee accountant, depending on when the candidate registers and whether the examination will be written manually or online (SAICA, 2018c). These fees are usually also paid for by the training office.

After completing the training contract at the training office and passing the qualifying examinations, an individual may register as a member with the SAICA and is allowed to use the CA(SA) designation in recognition of having fulfilled all the conditions to be acknowledged as a chartered accountant (SAICA, 2015). At this point, a trainee accountant needs to make a decision regarding the next step in their career path. The options available are to either stay within public audit practice or else enter the commercial world. If the trainee accountant decides to remain within the public audit practice, they may apply to either remain at the training office where they completed their training contract in an audit manager position or apply at another audit firm for a similar position.

3.5 AUDIT FIRMS

As previously stated public companies, public-interest companies, as well as all government entities are required by law to prepare financial statements and to have these financial statements audited by an independent audit firm (Kolakowski, 2016). The main service which audit firms render to their clients is the audit of their financial statements and records (Ogunjimi, 2018). Other services rendered include assisting with the completion of tax returns, reviewing and reporting on the effectiveness of the internal controls implemented by the organisation, reviewing the effectiveness of the

internal audit function of the organisation, providing consulting services that vary from outsourcing of the payroll or creditor function within the accounting department to implementing a new information technology system (Ogunjimi, 2018). Audit firms vary in size from individual proprietorships to the Big Four, which are the undisputed leaders in the field, with offices around the world (Kolakowski, 2016). The Big Four audit firms include Deloitte Touché Tohmatsu Limited (Deloitte), PwC, Ernst & Young (E&Y) and Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler (KPMG). Even the largest firms in this sector are typically organised as partnerships or personal liability companies (Kolakowski, 2016). These firms are the major employers of professionals in the field of auditing, as well as highly regarded training grounds for financial professionals who later find career opportunities elsewhere (Kolakowski, 2016), depending on the individual's decision to remain in public audit practice after qualification as a CA(SA) or not.

The majority of audit firms have adopted a pyramid staffing structure (illustrated in figure 3.2). Each year a large number of graduates are recruited as trainee accountants but a small proportion only will, in time, achieve audit partnership status within the firm (Brierley & Gwilliam, 2003).

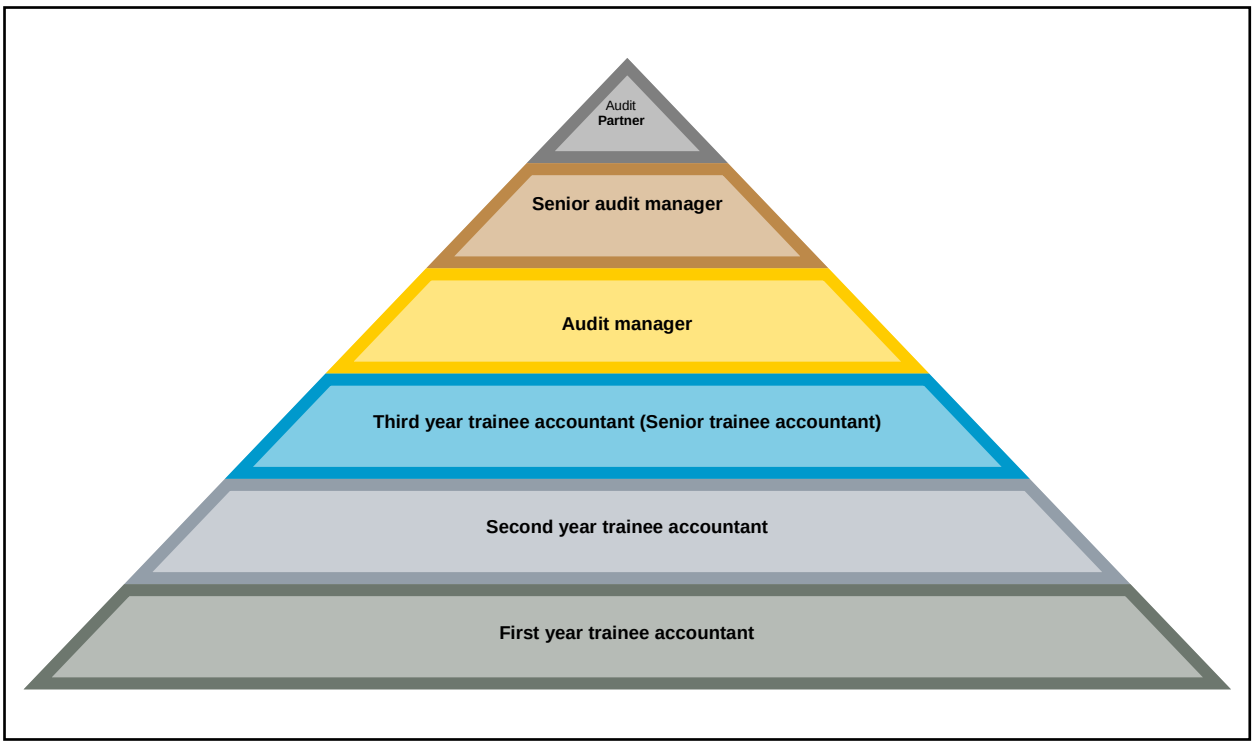

Figure 3.2: Hierarchical structure in an audit firm

Source: Own compilation

Traditionally, the career path to audit partnership is clearly defined in terms of a series of promotions at relatively predetermined intervals (Brierley & Gwilliam, 2003). The period as a trainee accountant is relatively standard as this period is linked to the training contract between the trainee accountant and the audit firm. With the training contract generally being 36 months (SAICA, 2018h), a trainee accountant will be promoted from the position of a first-year trainee accountant to a second-year trainee accountant after 12 months of the training contract and to a third-year trainee accountant position 12 months subsequent to that. Where a trainee accountant has made the decision to remain within the public audit practice they will apply for a position as audit manager at the end of their training contract. The period for promotion from an audit manager to a senior audit manager as well as from a senior audit manager to an audit partner differs from one audit firm to another, depending on the performance of the individual as well as the availability of senior audit manager and audit partner positions within the audit firm (Townsend, 2017). The different levels of the hierarchical structure in an audit firm are discussed in more detail below.

Trainee accountants

An individual starts their career at an audit firm as a first-year trainee accountant as part of their training contract in line with the practical training requirements as stipulated in the SAICA competency framework (refer to section 3.4). At the Big Four audit firms, an undergraduate SAICA accredited qualification as well as the CTA qualification are prerequisites to commencing with a training contract (KPMG, 2017). Trainee accountants are grouped in teams, which provide services to the clients of the audit firm (PwC, 2017). The size of the teams differs depending on the size and complexity of the client but a team will usually comprise a first-year trainee accountant, a second-year trainee accountant, a third-year trainee accountant, as well as an audit manager or senior audit manager and an audit partner.

During the first two years of a training contract, trainee accountants develop an understanding of the audit methodology and tools of the audit firm in question. They are exposed to accounting and auditing issues that have to be resolved by conducting research and consulting with senior members of the audit team (Deloitte, 2017a). During the first year of the training contract, trainee accountants sit for the first qualifying examination, the ITC, and, towards the end of the second year of the training contract,

trainee accountants generally sit for the second qualifying examination, the APC (refer to section 3.4).

A third-year trainee accountant supervises the other trainee accountants in the team, assists in designing the approach to audit engagements, performs audit procedures in respect of complex areas of clients' financial statements, and interacts with client personnel and management to discuss audit issues (Deloitte, 2017a). Subsequent to the 36-month training contract and passing both qualifying examinations, an individual is qualified as a CA(SA) and may apply for membership of the SAICA (SAICA, 2015).

Audit managers

In the event that a newly qualified CA(SA) chooses to remain at the audit firm after completing their training contract, they will most likely be promoted to audit manager if their application is successful. Audit firms do not have the capacity to appoint all their senior trainee accountants who complete their training contracts to audit managers, nor do they have an obligation to retain the services of their fully trained trainee accountants (Gammie & Gammie, 1995).

Audit managers and senior audit managers head the day-to-day operations of multiple audit engagements and are involved with regulatory and accounting issues that arise during the audit engagement. Audit managers are also responsible for supervising the audit staff and managing the services provided to clients (Knechel & Salterio, 2017:22). Accordingly, audit managers are required to possess both technical experience and in-depth knowledge of a given industry (Deloitte, 2017a). In the case of audit managers, the audit firm pays the annual SAICA membership fees which amounts to R6 300 (2018) (SAICA, 2018d) as well as for the relevant continuous learning and development. The period and requirements of promotion from an audit manager to a senior audit manager differ from one audit firm to another, as mentioned before, but generally an audit manager will be promoted to senior audit manager after a period of between four to six years.

Audit partners

As illustrated in figure 3.2 an audit partner is the highest position in the organisational hierarchy of an audit firm. Progression from a senior audit manager to audit partnership level usually requires that the individual demonstrates the ability to build relationships with staff and clients, generate new business, cross sell consultancy services and add value to clients (Kumra & Vinnicombe, 2008; Burrowes, 2006; Wyatt, 2004). According to Gammie, Gammie, Matson and Duncan (2007), the average age at which an individual usually reaches the level of audit partner is early to mid-thirties, although Carter, Spence and Dambrin (2014) found that it takes most audit partners 15 to 17 years to become an audit partner after joining the audit firm, while a mere 2 to 3% of the members of an audit firm progress to audit partner level in the end.

Audit partners must have a keen understanding of the client's industry and business and develop meaningful relationships with the C-Suite and board of the client. Audit partners lead, coach and develop professionals within the practice and oversee the quality of the services rendered and the engagement economics (Deloitte, 2017a). An audit partner is a member of the decision-making team of the organisation, similar to the board in a public or private company. Audit partners are the owners of the audit firm in the same way in which the shareholders of a company own the share capital of the company and share in the partnership's profit (Knechel & Salterio, 2017:22). Likewise, audit partners face similar liability claims when audits are not performed at the required standard (Knechel & Salterio, 2017:22), as do the directors of a company in the case of neglect of their fiduciary duties.

Despite providing a training ground for trainee accountants and investing significant resources to support them to comply with the requirements of their training contracts, audit firms retain a limited number of selected trainee accountants only as audit managers after their qualification as CAs(SA). It, therefore, stands to reason that audit firms would endeavour to retain their audit managers up to audit partner level. It is evident from the discussion above that the route to becoming an audit partner is challenging for a number of reasons. These include the pyramidal structure of an audit firm (Figure 3.2), the availability of audit partner positions being dependent on the status of the economy and the financial health of the audit firm and, lastly, the skills and personal relationships and connections required at audit partner level are fairly taxing.

These factors apply to both men and women. However, research reports that the majority of audit partner positions in audit firms globally are filled by men (Ribeiro et al., 2016; Whiting, Gammie & Herbohn, 2015; Kornberger et al., 2011; Gold, 2008a, Gold, 2008b; Crosley, 2006). It may, therefore, be argued that other factors impel women audit managers to resign from audit firms before being promoted to audit partner. The next section discusses these factors.

3.6 TURNOVER OF WOMEN AUDIT MANAGERS IN AUDIT FIRMS

Research has shown that, each year, more women accounting graduates enter the audit profession than men (Gold, 2008a; Crosley, 2006) but that only a few progress to the level of audit partner in audit firms (Brody, Cox & Kern, 2015; Davidson & Burke, 2010:1; Crosley, 2006). According to the demographic study of professional audit staff conducted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants in 2012, women comprised 21% of the workforce of audit firms with 10 to 49 employees, 40% of the workforce of audit firms with 50 to 200 employees, and 44% of the workforce of audit firms with over 200 employees. However, the study found that when analysing audit partnership positions, these percentages declined even further, with audit firms with 10 to 49 employees reporting that 33% of their audit partners were women while, in the case of audit firms with more than 200 employees, the representation dropped to 17% (Brody et al., 2015).

The low representation of women at higher levels in audit firms has been the focus of research for many years. This phenomenon has been studied in countries including Scotland, Ireland, New Zealand, Japan and Canada (Gammie & Whiting, 2013; Wallace, 2009; Broadbent, Kirkham & Komori, 2008; Whiting & Wright, 2001; Monks & Barker, 1995; Paisey & Paisey, 1995). The aim of these studies was to identify the reasons why the face of the profession remains primarily male dominated when it comes to management positions and why women auditors are not promoted at the same pace as their equally qualified male counterparts (Zhao & Lord, 2016; Whiting et al., 2015; Ruiz Castro, 2012; Brown, 2010; Abidin, Rashid & Jusoff, 2009; Broadbent et al., 2008; Whiting, 2008; Gammie et al., 2007; Windsor & Auyeung, 2006; Whiting & Wright, 2001; Barker & Monks, 1998; Gammie & Gammie, 1995; Paisey & Paisey, 1995; Joy Maupin, 1993; Lehman, 1990).

The factors highlighted by research as responsible for women audit managers resigning from the audit firms before promotion to audit partner included family responsibilities (Whiting, 2008; Whiting & Wright, 2001; Monks & Barker, 1995), lower career aspirations than men (Brown, 2010; Abidin et al., 2009; Windsor & Auyeung, 2006, Whiting & Wright, 2001), discrimination and harassment (Zhao & Lord, 2016; Barker & Monks, 1998; Gammie & Gammie, 1995; Monks & Barker, 1995; Lehman, 1990) and long working hours (Ruiz Castro, 2012; Gammie et al., 2007; Monks & Barker, 1995; Paisey & Paisey, 1995). These factors are described in more detail below.

Family responsibilities

Success in public audit practice demands an uninterrupted, client-focused, long hours, deadline-driven approach to work (Gammie et al., 2007). The ideal employee is, therefore, considered to be an individual who is always available while society's responsibility regarding children and other care roles are deemed to be activities that occur outside of the boundaries of organisations (Lewis & Humbert, 2010). This view clearly places parents who are devoted to their families, typically mothers, at a disadvantage, with the woman's family responsibilities seeming to interfere with her professional commitment. Whiting (2008) found that in New Zealand, families have evolved and the old male breadwinner/female full-time carer family structure is rare, with the common structure being the male breadwinner/female part-time carer (Whiting, 2008). All the participants in Whiting's (2008) study stated that prior to having children, they had worked hard and devoted the necessary time to progress in their careers. This implied long hours and always being on call and available to travel (Whiting, 2008). However, when they had had children, they had had to make choices between work and family and the level of family responsibilities had affected their career progression (Whiting, 2008). These choices refer to work-family conflict, which is a form of inter-role conflict where the demands in the work and family domains are, in some respects, incompatible (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The world in which we live has conditioned us to assume that the women are the primary caregivers (Whiting & Wright, 2001) and that they should deal with the majority of the responsibilities at home relating to children (Brown, 2010). In many cases this is true and it presents career-orientated mothers with a challenge as they want to provide the best possible care to their children and spend enough time with them, but they also

want to build their careers. Windsor and Auyeung's (2006) study of auditors working at large audit firms in Australia and Singapore found that men are promoted more quickly than females while mothers were the most disadvantaged when it came to promotion. Not one of the participants in their study who were mothers had attained audit partner level at their audit firms. In most cases promotion in large audit firms is closely linked to the client fees brought into the firm and this in turn usually goes together with networking and club memberships. The majority of mothers experience inter-role conflict (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985) as this type of networking and club membership usually take place after working hours, thus conflicting with their family responsibilities. It is for this reason that caregivers and especially women are often not taken into contention when it comes to promotion (Windsor & Auyeung, 2006), with work-family conflict being of the main causes associated with the low retention of women in public audit practice (Dambrin & Lambert, 2008).

Perception of lower career aspirations of women

Guillaume and Pochic (2009) found that time availability is directly linked to career promotion. As a result, women are often perceived as being less dedicated than their male counterparts as they are often not to be seen at the office after hours despite the fact they may spend the same amount of time on work responsibilities completing their work from home (Paisey & Paisey, 1995).

It is often easier for men than women to stay at work after hours if a deadline is looming or when a crisis happens as men usually have fewer responsibilities at home. The women would probably have to go home, attend to the family responsibilities, and then attend to the crisis or work in order to meet the deadline after taking care of their family responsibilities. For this reason, women often have to decline invitations to client or office functions if these are out of town or after hours because of their family responsibilities at home. However, as indicated in a survey of chartered accountants in Scotland (Paisey & Paisey, 1995), this may give the impression that women are not as dedicated as men to their careers and that they have lower career aspirations. Studies by Brown (2010), Abidin et al. (2009) as well as Windsor and Auyeung (2006) also concluded that women were perceived to be less committed to their work due to their role as primary caregiver in the family, with this being seen as competing with their work

role. This perception inevitably places women at a disadvantage in terms of promotion (Dambrin & Lambert, 2008).

Discrimination and harassment

Gardner (1993) believes that women do not fail to reach the top of the profession because of discrimination but choose to leave the audit profession. However, contrary to her belief, in the case of Price Waterhouse versus Hopkins in 1988, the Supreme Court found in favour of a female auditor who sued her employer, accusing the organisation of denying her audit partnership status on the grounds of gender discrimination (Hopkins, 2005). At the time of the study, KPMG was also facing a class-action lawsuit by thousands of female audit managers for loss of salaries and benefits due to their having being passed over when it came to promotion, as well as for not addressing discrimination and harassment claims made by female employees. The plaintiff, who brought the class-action lawsuit, is a former senior manager at KPMG, New York, who resigned because of harassment and gender discrimination (Simpson, 2016).

The study by Gammie and Gammie (1995) in Scotland found that two-thirds of the women auditors who participated in the study mentioned some form of discrimination with specific concerns being raised about traditional views and the “old boys” network contributing to the discrimination. Such discrimination may vary from the acceptance that women have to be better than any of their male counterparts if they are seeking promotion (Elacqua, Beehr, Webster & Hansen, 2009; Maddock, 2002) to women being asked to sign contracts undertaking not to take maternity leave within a specific period (Barker & Monks, 1998). Barker and Monks (1998) found that more than 50% of the women interviewed in their study reported sexual harassment in the workplace. In addition, Zhao and Lord (2016) also reported that Chinese women auditors who were mothers were discriminated against by not being given fair opportunities in respect of promotion and not being valued after they had taken maternity leave.

Long working hours

High work volumes and long hours spent working and travelling to out of town assignments form part of an auditor’s job (Sadler, 1989). In the study conducted in

Scotland by Paisey and Paisey (1995), several women CAs mentioned that long working hours were not possible once they had started a family and they were worried they would be seen as less committed because of this. A 1998 study in Ireland revealed that the majority of the CAs who participated in the study were working 50 to 60 hours per week with 70% of the male and 82% of the female respondents reporting that they believed that, in order to reach the highest level in an audit career, it is essential to put in very long hours (Barker & Monks, 1998).

In view of the fact that women are usually responsible for the bulk of the childcare and household tasks, in addition to their work demands, job overload and long hours often impact negatively on the retention of women CAs. Ribeiro et al. (2016) found that the impact of job overload and long hours is so pervasive and onerous on women audit managers in South Africa, that no single job resource was able to buffer this impact. These resources included growth opportunities (variety, opportunities to learn, and job independence), social support (relationships with supervisors and colleagues), advancement (remuneration, career possibilities, and training opportunities), perceived organisational external prestige (image and reputation of a firm), and team climate (collaboration and trust in a team).

As mentioned previously, women are generally the primary caregivers and because of this they seek increased flexibility when it comes to working arrangements and also potential part time opportunities (Paisey & Paisey, 1995). Unfortunately, in many instances, flexible working arrangements have been reported to be unsuccessful. The main reasons for this include, firstly, the perception of fellow employees that employees with flexible working arrangements are less committed or they are lazy and "not pulling their weight" (Cohen & Single, 2001:325) and, secondly, that employees working the normal working hours due to inflexible deadlines do so for a reduced salary. Despite the fact that flexible working arrangements are available to both men and women, the majority of employees who take advantage of these arrangements are women (Cohen, 1998).

3.7 CONCLUSION

Modern organisations are characterised by a separation between owners and stakeholders, on the one hand, and managers who are hired to manage the resources

of the organisations on the other hand. This results in managers being accountable for the resources entrusted to them. The accountability of these hired managers for the decisions they take and their management of the owner-resources is of the utmost importance and is discharged by their preparing financial statements and submitting these statements to an independent financial audit. An independent audit opinion enhances the degree of confidence of the resource owners that the accountability reports produced by the managers provide a fair reflection and reliable account of the organisation's activities and its financial performance. In addition to discussing the need for a financial audit this chapter also provided an overview of the audit profession in South Africa.

Audit firms perform audits of the financial statements of organisations. In South Africa, the employees of the audit firms performing such audits are qualified CAs and trainee accountants who are in the process of qualifying as CAs. The qualification route to become a CA and a member of the audit profession comprises an academic component as well as a practical training component that is stipulated in the SAICA competency framework. The qualification route to becoming a CA as well as the hierarchical structure of an audit firm were described in order to illustrate the path from a trainee accountant to the level of audit partnership. Although several women audit managers pursue this path, many resign from the audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner. The chapter concluded with a discussion of the factors reported in research as contributing to the voluntary turnover of women audit managers from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner.

The next chapter describes the research approach as well as the method used to explore the experiences of women audit managers that lead to their resignations from audit firms in South Africa before they are promoted to audit partner level.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter highlighted the need for a financial audit in organisations and provided an overview of the audit profession in South Africa in order to provide context to the study. In addition, the qualification and career path that women audit managers usually follow in order to advance to audit partner level in audit firms was explained. The purpose of this chapter is to describe the decisions the researcher made in planning the study (De Vos et al., 2011:307). This chapter describes the researcher's constructivist interpretive paradigm which shapes the way in which she perceives the world and acts in it (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:13). Thereafter, the research approach and research design used are explored, followed by a description of the research method, including a discussion of the criteria applied for ensuring the quality of the research conducted. The chapter ends with a description of the ethical principles adhered to.

4.2 PARADIGM

Although philosophical ideas remain largely hidden (Slife & Williams, 1995:3), all scientific research is conducted within a specific paradigm, or way of viewing one's research material (De Vos et al., 2011:40). A paradigm is the fundamental model or frame of reference which is used to organise observations and reasoning (Babbie, 2010:31). All researchers approach their studies with a certain paradigm or world view, including a basic set of beliefs or assumptions that guides their inquiries and actions and influences the research design selected to answer the research question (Creswell, 2013:35; De Vos et al., 2011:298, 310; Creswell, 2007:37; Guba, 1990:17).

Guba (1990:17) describes a paradigm as a net that contains the researcher's ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs. Ontology refers to beliefs and perceptions about the nature of reality (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:12; De Vos et al., 2011:310), whereas epistemology refers to how the researcher believes knowledge could best be acquired (Creswell, 2013:20). Methodology, on the other hand, describes

how the researcher acquires knowledge about the world for a specific study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:12).

When conducting research, a researcher should express their own paradigm (Creswell, 2007:15, 30). The researcher's position in respect of this study was to use a constructivist paradigm (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:92) when exploring the experiences of women audit managers that led to their resignations from audit firms before they were promoted to audit partner level. The researcher's view that reality may only be socially and personally constructed influenced the way in which she interpreted the information provided by the participants. It was also clear that the reality that the participants constructed may differ from another reality, and is one that might change continuously (De Vos et al., 2011:310). As a constructivist, the researcher seeks to understand the world in which she lives. Accordingly, the goal of the research was to rely as much as possible on the participants' views and to look for the complexity of these views rather than narrowing meanings into just a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2013:37).

The researcher's ontology, as well as their epistemology, plays an important role in deciding how the social phenomenon selected as the research topic will be studied (De Vos et al., 2011:310). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2011:13), a constructivist paradigm assumes a relativist ontology, a subjectivist epistemology and a naturalistic set of methodological procedures with the researcher embracing the notion of multiple realities which are constructed through human interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:13; Creswell, 2007:16). Thus, the researcher in this study believed that the experiences of women audit managers that lead to their resignations from audit firms may have been different for each woman and could be understood only from their own perspectives and in their particular context. The researcher was also of the view that we are shaped by our lived experiences, and that these will always manifest in the knowledge we generate as researchers and in the data generated by our research participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:104). The naturalistic set of procedures the researcher followed in conducting the research is described in section 4.5 of this chapter.

4.3 RESEARCH APPROACH

A research approach describes what is studied and the way in which it is studied (Babbie, 2010:91). Social research may be described as either deductive or inductive in

nature (Babbie, 2010:22). Deductive research moves from the general to the specific, moving from a pattern that may be logically or theoretically expected to observations that test whether the expected pattern actually occurs (Babbie, 2010:23). Inductive research, on the other hand, moves from the particular to the general – from a set of specific observations to the discovery of a pattern that represents some degree of order among all given events (Babbie, 2010:22). In contrast to the pre-established truth or assumption associated with deductive reasoning inductive reasoning begins with an observation (De Vos et al., 2011:63). Accordingly, the two recognised approaches on the opposite ends of the spectrum of the continuum are the quantitative and qualitative approaches (De Vos et al., 2011:63). These approaches each has its own purposes, methods of conducting an inquiry, strategies for producing and analysing data and criteria for judging quality (Creswell, 2013:31; De Vos et al., 2011:63). Quantitative researchers use a deductive form of reasoning, whereas qualitative researchers generally use inductive reasoning (De Vos et al., 2011:48).

Qualitative research involves words and uses open-ended questions as a means of producing the requisite data (Creswell, 2013:32). Open-ended questions provide the research participants with an opportunity to express their subjective and unique views freely and in detail (Mack et al., 2005:4). Qualitative research studies imply that there is no single truth as the research participants all have subjective views (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:13; Creswell, 2007:17). The experiences of women audit managers that may or may not lead to turnover are unique and subjective and the open-ended questions allowed the participants to share information with the researcher freely. For this reason, the researcher was of the opinion that a qualitative research approach was the most appropriate approach to address the purpose of the study. In addition, a qualitative approach is appropriate where issues (in this study the experiences of women audit managers that lead to their resignations before they are promoted to audit partner level) need to be explored. In order to do this, what is required is a complex, detailed understanding of the issues which may be established only by talking directly to people, allowing them to tell their stories unencumbered by what the researcher may expect to find or what is in the relevant literature (Creswell, 2007:39). In this study the researcher wanted to empower the participants to share their stories and to hear their voices in order to understand social life and the meaning that they attached to everyday life (De Vos et al., 2011:65).

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

A variety of research designs are available to the qualitative researcher, for example, narrative biography, case study, ethnography, grounded theory and phenomenology (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011:12; De Vos et al., 2011:312–313; Saldaña, 2011:4–9). The goal of phenomenology is to explore lived experiences and make sense of these experiences (Charlick, Pincombe, McKellar & Fielder, 2016; Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Larkin & Thompson, 2012:102; Saldaña, 2011:8; Creswell, 2007:57) by focusing on how people perceive and talk about these experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of women audit managers to understand why they resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level and, therefore, phenomenology was deemed the appropriate research design for the purposes of the study.

There are many variants of the phenomenological designs used by qualitative researchers (Finlay, 2009). Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), pioneered by Jonathan Smith (1996), is a contemporary, yet established, qualitative design (Charlick et al., 2016; Larkin & Thompson, 2012:101; Smith, 2007), which the researcher concluded would be the most appropriate alternative to employ in order to answer the research question. IPA acknowledges that different people view the world in different ways, depending on their personalities and prior life experiences (Breakwell, 2004:229).

The key conceptual touchstones of IPA are hermeneutic phenomenology and idiography (Charlick et al., 2016; Larkin & Thompson, 2012:102). Hermeneutic phenomenology, which holds that our observations are always acquired from somewhere, is rationalised by hermeneutic philosophers, including Heidegger, Gadamar and Ricoeur (Charlick et al., 2016; Larkin & Thompson, 2012:102). We are inextricably involved in the world and these facts shape our perceptions of the world and the way we interpret them (Larkin & Thompson, 2012:102; Kafle, 2011; Heidegger, 1962:37). Idiography, on the other hand, is concerned with a thorough and systematic depth of analysis of the way in which a particular experiential phenomenon is understood from the perspectives of particular people in a particular context (Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009:29). As idiography focuses on the specific, the researcher wanted to explore the meaning of the experiences of each woman individually and focus on the significance of each woman's experience for her (Larkin & Thompson,

2012:102), before identifying common themes, in this study (Larkin & Thompson, 2012:104).

4.5 RESEARCH METHOD

The research method involves the forms of data production, data analysis and the interpretation of the data for a study (Creswell, 2013:45). Qualitative research data production methods are holistic, emergent, flexible, reflective, continuous in nature, and often develop or change along the way (Creswell, 2013:235; De Vos et al., 2011:312). Interviewing is the primary mode of data production in qualitative research (De Vos et al., 2011:342). In this study the researcher utilised semi-structured, individual interviews to produce the primary data. This form of interviewing allows the researcher and the participant to engage in a dialogue and is the preferred method of data production for the majority of IPA studies (Kafle, 2011; Smith et al., 2009:4; Smith, 2008:57). In line with Creswell's recommendation that the researcher should position him/herself close to the research participants in their natural setting (Creswell, 2013:234) in order to interact with them during the data production phase the researcher herself was the predominant research instrument in conducting the interviews. The process of selecting the participants for this IPA study is discussed in detail in section 4.5.1 after which the process followed during the semi-structured individual interviews is described (section 4.5.2). The data analysis and data management processes followed are discussed in section 4.5.3 and section 4.5.4 respectively. The measures taken to ensure the authenticity of the findings reported are also discussed (sections 4.5.5).

4.5.1 Participant selection

There are two types of sampling methods in research namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2014:113; De Vos et al., 2011:391; Babbie, 2010:192). Although probability sampling is the most rigorous approach to sampling in quantitative research it is inappropriate for qualitative research (Ritchie et al., 2014:112). With non-probability sampling the odds of selecting a particular individual are not known as the researcher does not know the population size or the individual members of the population (Wolf et al., 2016:329; Etikan, Alkassim & Abubakar, 2015; Gravetter & Forzano, 2006:120). Each unit in the population does not have an equal chance of being selected (Wolf et al., 2016:329; Unrau, Gabor & Grinnell,

2007:80). In non-probability sampling, units are specifically selected to deepen the researcher's understanding about the phenomenon being studied and to provide relevant and rich data (Creswell, 2007:118, 125; Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993:33). In this study the researcher wanted to capture and explore the meanings the women audit managers attached to their experiences (Reid et al., 2005) as audit managers which had led to their resignations before being promoted to audit partner level.

Numerous non-probability sampling techniques exist (De Vos et al., 2011:392–394). Typically, IPA researchers aim for a homogeneous sample as the aim of an IPA study is to find a defined group for whom the research question has relevance and personal significance (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Larkin & Thompson, 2012:102; Smith, 2008:56). In this study, the research participants were selected on the basis of a purposive sampling strategy (Wolf et al., 2016:330) which is also the most used strategy in IPA studies (Kafle, 2011; Smith, 2008:56; Breakwell, 2004:231).

Audit firms in South Africa are categorised into sole proprietors and small, medium and large firms according to different factors. The Auditor-General South Africa (AGSA) is established in terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 and produces annual audit reports for all government departments, public entities, municipalities and public institutions (RSA, 2006:188). All companies listed on the JSE have to be audited by an accredited auditor, accredited by the exchange itself, in terms of the JSE listing requirements (JSE, 2017:274). The work environment, job characteristics and responsibilities of audit managers may be different depending on the size of the audit firm at which they are employed. In this study, in order to utilise a relatively homogeneous sample, only women audit managers from the JSE accredited audit firms and the AGSA were included as part of the inclusion criteria for the research participants. The auditors of the listed JSE companies, as per the JSE main board on 5 December 2017 were identified (FTSE Group, 2017). The audit firms accredited by the JSE at the time of the study are listed in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: JSE accredited audit firms

Deloitte Touché Tohmatsu Limited
PricewaterhouseCoopers
Ernst & Young
Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler
Siswe Ntsaluba Gobodo
Grant Thornton South Africa

Source: FTSE Group (2017)

As highlighted in chapter 3 (Section 3.5), promotion from audit manager to senior audit manager is usually achieved after a period of between four to six years and promotion to audit partner after a further six to ten years. As the purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of women audit managers to understand why they resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level, the researcher was of the opinion that the research participants had to have been on the path to an audit partner as well as having had personal aspirations to become an audit partner. Accordingly, a minimum of four years as an audit manager was used as part of the inclusion criteria for the research participants as a measure to include women who had chosen to stay within public audit practice as audit managers and in all likelihood aspired to become audit partners.

Based on the purpose of the study the inclusion criteria of the research participants for this study were that the participants had to be women and they had to have a CA(SA) qualification. Furthermore, they had to have been employed as an audit manager by either the AGSA or a JSE accredited audit firm after qualifying as a CA(SA). In addition, they had to have been an audit manager for at least four years before resigning from the audit firm. The inclusion criteria that were formulated for the selection of the research participants were applied when specific women were approached and invited to participate in the study.

The number of participants in a research study depends on what the researcher wants to know, the purpose of the study, what is regarded as useful and credible information, and the available time and resources (De Vos et al., 2011:391). Creswell (2013:239) has taken the position that sample size depends on the specific qualitative design being used and recommends that, for a phenomenological study, the number of participants

should be between three and ten. The main concern in IPA research is to ensure full appreciation of each participant's experience (Smith, 2011). An IPA interview is not about collecting facts, it is about exploring meanings (Larkin & Thompson, 2012:104). For this reason, samples in IPA studies are usually small which, in turn, enables a detailed and time consuming, case by case analysis (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014; Larkin & Thompson, 2012:104, Smith et al., 2009:49; Breakwell, 2004:230). A distinctive feature of IPA studies is the commitment to a detailed interpretative account of the experiences being explored, and many researchers are recognising that this may realistically be done only if a small sample is used (Smith, 2008:55). However, despite IPA researchers' agreement that IPA study sample sizes should be small, guidelines on exactly how many participants should be included in the sample vary. Smith et al. (2009:51) suggest samples of between three and six as reasonable for a student project, whereas Breakwell (2004:230) argues that IPA studies are usually conducted with the research participants numbering between six and fifteen. IPA studies have been published with samples of one, four, nine, fifteen and more (Smith, 2008:55). Based on these examples of other researchers, the researcher resolved that a sample of twelve research participants would be used in this study.

The researcher selected the research participants purposively because of their expertise in the phenomenon being explored (Reid et al., 2005). Ten former woman audit managers who were easily identifiable and approachable were selected from an existing "friendship network" (Babbie, 2010:193). Four participants were former colleagues of the researcher at a JSE accredited audit firm. Thus, the researcher knew them personally and was aware that they had all experienced the phenomenon under study and would, therefore, be able to contribute to the study by sharing their experiences. One participant was a current colleague of the researcher while a further five participants were all referred to the researcher by colleagues and friends who knew of her study and the inclusion criteria for the research participants. The last two participants were each referred by another participant. This is referred to as snowball sampling (Babbie, 2010:188; Goodman, 1961). All twelve potential participants were invited to participate in the study after the researcher had informed them of the purpose of the study and that they were under no obligation to participate in the study. However, they all agreed to participate. At the time of the interviews, the participants had been outside of public audit practice for not longer than four years and, in some cases, for

less than one year. Figure 4.2 depicts the participant selection process followed in the study.

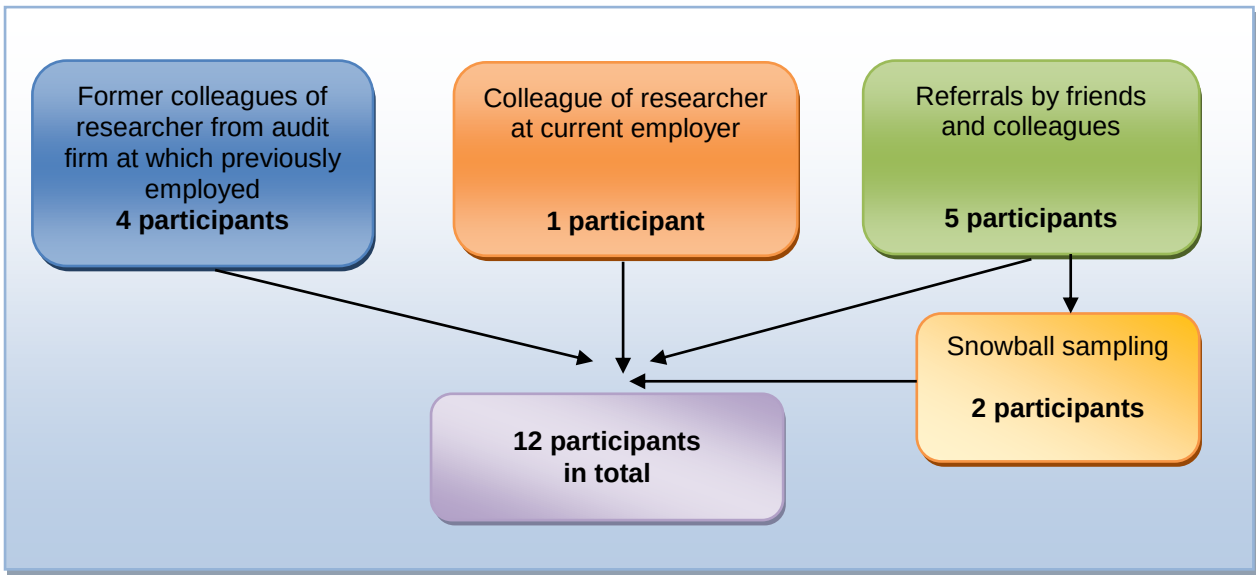

Figure 4.1: Participant selection

Source: Own compilation

The participants were assigned pseudonyms in order to protect their anonymity when the findings are reported in chapter 5. The pseudonyms allocated to each participant are presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Participants' pseudonyms

Participant number	Pseudonym
Participant 1	Anne
Participant 2	Beth
Participant 3	Corlia
Participant 4	Diane
Participant 5	Elsa
Participant 6	Hannah
Participant 7	Jenna
Participant 8	Liana
Participant 9	Nina
Participant 10	Patricia
Participant 11	Sarah
Participant 12	Wendy

Source: Own compilation

4.5.2 Data production

In an IPA study a data production technique that provides the research participants with the flexibility to tell their stories in their own words is required (Breakwell, 2004:232). In this study the data was produced primarily by the researcher conducting twelve semi-structured, individual interviews and making field notes. An interview provides the opportunity for information to be freely shared between the researcher and the participant (De Vos et al., 2011:342), thus enabling a description of the experience, as well as a reflection on the description. The researcher attempted to understand the world from the participants' point of view and allowed the meaning of the participants' experiences to unfold (Sewell, 2001:1). Semi-structured interviews are particularly well suited for a researcher who wants to gain a detailed picture of a participant's beliefs about a particular topic (De Vos et al., 2011:351; Smith, Harré & Van Langenhoven, 1995:10), such as the experiences of the women audit managers that lead to turnover in audit firms. In addition, individual, semi-structured interviews provide the researcher and participants with the flexibility to focus on or follow up on interesting avenues that open up during the interview in order to provide a fuller picture (De Vos et al., 2011:351; Breakwell, 2004:233; Smith et al., 1995:10).

Each research participant was invited to participate in an interview and, taking into account the time required, a convenient time and place were agreed upon (De Vos et al., 2011:350; Saldaña, 2011:34). Semi-structured interviews generally take between 60 and 90 minutes (Walker, 2011; Smith et al., 2009:62). The participant information sheet, describing the purpose and potential benefits of the study, as well as the interview questions to be posed during the interview (Appendix A), was then e-mailed to the participants.

At the commencement of the interviews, the purpose of the study, the role of the participants, the confidential treatment of information revealed during the interviews and the fact that the participants would remain anonymous (De Vos et al., 2011:350) were emphasised. In addition, the digital voice recordings (De Vos et al., 2011:359) and the participants' right to withdraw at any point during the interviews were explained (De Vos et al., 2011:350). After the participants had agreed to the interview being recorded (De Vos et al., 2011:350; Saldaña, 2011:40) and had signed the informed consent form (Appendix B) (De Vos et al., 2011:350; Saldaña, 2011:40), the interviews commenced.

The researcher compiled an interview schedule comprising a set of predetermined questions to guide the interviews (Appendix C). Compiling this interview schedule forced the researcher to think explicitly about what she thought and hoped the interviews may reveal. In addition, the researcher tried to anticipate any difficulties that might be encountered in terms of the question wording or interpretation (Breakwell, 2004:233). The aim of the predetermined guiding questions was to "engage the participant and designate the narrative area" (Monette, Sullivan & De Jong, 2005:178). The participants were regarded as the experts on the research topic and were given the maximum opportunity to tell their stories (Smith et al., 2009:58; Smith et al., 1995:11-12). The research question, namely, "Why do women audit managers resign from audit firms before being promoted to audit partner level?", was also taken into consideration with the arrangement of the interview questions. These were arranged from simple to complex and from broad to more specific so as to allow the participants to gradually adjust to the structure of the interview schedule (Bailey, 1982:196). The interview questions are listed in the participation information sheet (Appendix A).

There is always a risk that the interview questions may not probe the participants sufficiently to provide detailed responses (De Vos et al., 2011:360). This risk was managed by pilot testing (Creswell, 2007:133) the interview questions in the interview schedule with one of the researcher's colleagues, a woman CA(SA) who had resigned from the AGSA after having been an audit manager for three years. The colleague's role during the pilot testing was to ensure that the questions were neutral, clear, focused, open-ended and arranged in the correct sequence (De Vos et al., 2011:352). After the pilot interview, the questions in the interview schedule were refined and the researcher felt confident about proceeding with the data production phase.

Active interviewing is not confined to asking questions and recording answers (De Vos et al., 2011:345). The quality of an interview and the data produced depend primarily on the skills of the interviewer (De Vos et al., 2011:343). A challenge that the interviewer often faces is establishing rapport with the participants in order to acquire information from them (Morse, 1991:18). Building rapport with the participants in this study was facilitated by the fact that the researcher in the study was also a woman CA(SA) who had resigned from a JSE accredited audit firm after being employed as an audit manager for seven years. This placed many of the participants at their ease during the interviews because of their common background. During the interviews the researcher

also applied good communication techniques such as providing minimal verbal responses (e.g. “yes”), thus showing the participant that she was listening, paraphrasing in order to enhance the meaning of what the participant was saying, clarifying the information produced by the participant, encouraging the participant to expand on her ideas (De Vos et al., 2011:345) and probing the participant in order to increase the richness of the information obtained (De Vos et al., 2011:345; Saldaña, 2011:43).

All the participants were asked the same questions but not necessarily in the same order as the researcher allowed the research participants to move away from the questions contained in the interview schedule in order to delve as deeply as possible into the psychological and social world of the participants (Breakwell, 2004:233). The interviews concluded with the researcher asking the participants whether they had any questions or additional information which they wished to share. They were then thanked for their willingness to participate (De Vos et al., 2011:351).

The interviews with the research participants were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim (Smith, 2011). In addition to the digital voice recording of the interviews, the researcher kept a field log for field and observational notes, recording her own experiences and views, specifically what she had heard, saw, understood, considered and felt during the progression of the interviews (De Vos et al., 2011:359). These notes were made immediately after each interview and were kept throughout the data production phase. This assisted the researcher in recalling the observations made during each interview. In the field log the researcher also made reference to what had actually happened and also what the researcher thought had happened (De Vos et al., 2011:359), as well as the participant’s body language and tone of voice (Saldaña, 2011:40). By combining the documented observations in the researcher’s field notes and the individual experiences conveyed by the participants during the interviews, triangulation of the data was established (Denzin, 2010).

4.5.3 Data analysis

Data analysis brings order, structure and meaning to the mass of data which has been produced (De Vos et al., 2011:397; Babbie, 2010:400). When qualitative data is interpreted, the aim is to develop an organised, detailed, plausible and transparent account of the meaning of the data (Larkin & Thompson, 2012:104). Analysing

qualitative data remains as much an art as a science (Babbie, 2010:291, 400) and there are numerous techniques available for analysing qualitative data (De Vos et al., 2011:400; Saldaña, 2011:89,93). In IPA studies, researchers reduce the complexity of the data through rigorous and systematic analysis developed around substantial verbatim excerpts (Reid et al., 2005). Data analysis relies on the process of people making sense of the world and their experiences (Reid et al., 2005). The outcome of the analysis in an IPA study is a set of themes that is often organised into some form of structure or table that represents commonalities across the participants as well as variations within the data (Reid et al., 2005). The data analysis process followed in this study was performed in multiple phases and is illustrated in figure 4.2.

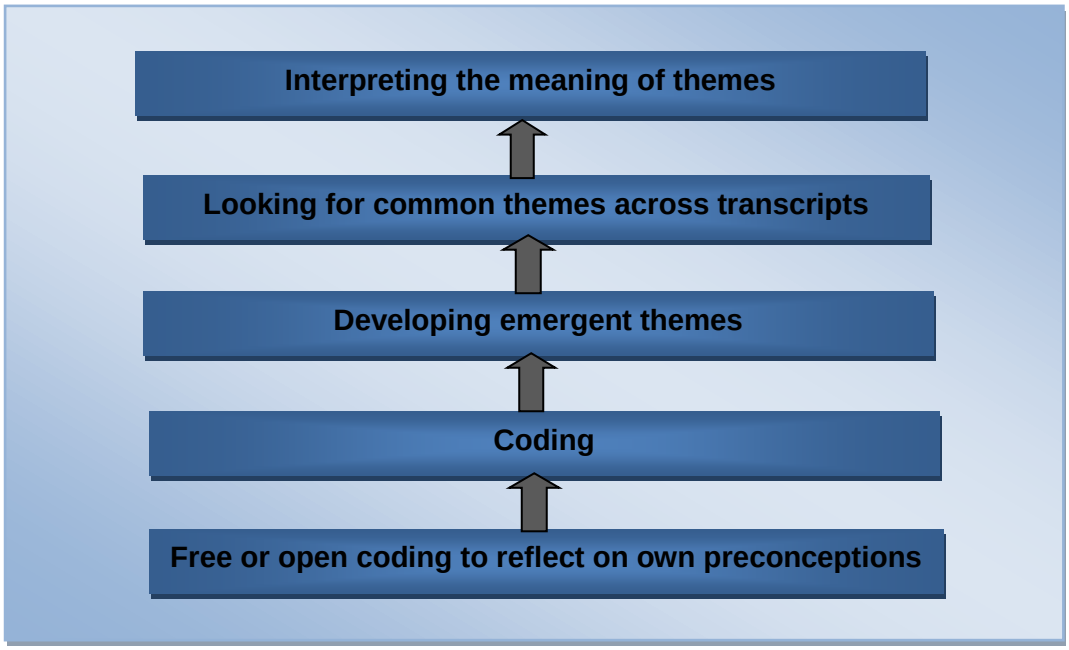

Figure 4.2: Data analysis process

Source: Own compilation

The content of the transcribed interviews was anonymised by replacing any audit firm names with pseudonyms such as “Firm A" and the names of participants with the pseudonyms allocated to each participant (refer table 4.2) by using the search and replace function of Microsoft Word. The researcher first read the verbatim transcript of each interview and the corresponding field notes in their entirety several times in order to immerse herself in the details and to try to obtain a sense of the interview as a whole (Charlick et al., 2016; Smith et al., 2008:67). The researcher aimed to be open minded and minimise the impact of her own biases during the data analysis process. In order to reflect on her own preconceptions and to consider the influence of these, the researcher

used free or open coding (Larkin & Thompson, 2012:106) and made notes on each transcript on her own emotional reactions to the research participant and her story, initial ideas regarding potential themes as well as how the researcher recalled the interview. This was done in addition to the notes included in the field log.

Remaining with the first transcript, the researcher then used the left hand margin for a detailed, line by line annotation to identify the experiential claims, ideas and understandings conveyed by the research participant by means of coding (Larkin & Thompson, 2012:104). Coding is described as the process of transforming raw data into a standardised form in terms of which the data is classified according to certain codes (Babbie, 2010:400). A code is defined as a descriptor assigned to a piece of data with such a descriptor capturing the core meaning of a piece of data (Larkin & Thompson, 2012:104; Saldaña, 2011:9). The researcher then returned to the beginning of the first transcript and used the right hand margin to reduce and combine the codes systematically into emerging themes. This transformation of the initial codes into themes continued through the whole transcript. The researcher continued with her analysis of the rest of the transcripts of the interviews in a similar manner as she had done with the first transcript, taking note of any convergence and/or divergence which emerged during the analysis process. Once all the transcripts had been analysed using the interpretative process a table of the superordinate and subordinate themes that had emerged was constructed to be interpreted and translated into a narrative account (Smith, 2008:72; Breakwell, 2004:234).

Using Atlas.ti, which is an example of computer assisted data analysis software, the researcher performed a second cycle of coding (Tummons, 2014:156). The researcher compared the results of the second cycle of coding with the table of superordinate and subordinate themes which had been constructed after the first cycle of coding and updated the table accordingly. A co-coder was assigned to co-code the transcribed interviews concurrently with the researcher's second cycle of coding. In an effort to enhance the credibility of the coding, the co-coder was an independent, objective person who had no knowledge of the field of CAs or the audit profession. The researcher then compared the co-coder's themes with those contained in the updated table of superordinate and subordinate themes which she had produced. A meeting was then held between the researcher and the co-coder where differences were clarified.

The findings are presented in chapter 5 under the applicable themes that had emerged. Verbatim quotes from participants were also used to support the findings.

The interviews were conducted in the language in which the participants felt the most comfortable to share their experiences. The majority of the interviews (seven interviews) were conducted in English, four interviews were conducted in Afrikaans and one interview in English intermixed with Afrikaans. The transcripts of the audio recordings of these interviews were also in the language in which the interview had taken place. In order to make the research findings internationally accessible, English was chosen as the reporting language as English has been adopted as the global research lingua franca (Santos, Black & Sandelowski, 2015). The researcher, the co-coder as well as the researcher's supervisors are all fluent in both English and Afrikaans and, thus, reading or coding in either language was possible. In view of this, the researcher opted not to translate the Afrikaans interviews immediately after the data production but, in line with Chen and Boore's (2010) suggestion, performed the data analysis in the language in which the interviews had been held and translated only the emergent concepts, categories and verbatim quotes. Where the participant had used Afrikaans, the quotes were translated into English by the researcher. Although only the English versions were included in the findings, both versions were included in Appendix F to enable a reader fluent in both languages to assess the adequacy of the translation of the quotes (Yin, 2011). In presenting the findings, the translated quotes were identified by a *translated* suffix.

4.5.4 Data management

The interview transcripts, field log and consent forms signed by the participants were filed in a marked file in a logical order. This file was stored in a safe location under lock and key. Soft copies of the data were stored in a marked folder on a password-protected computer. A backup of this folder was stored on a separate storage device at a different, secure location.

4.5.5 Quality of research

Although researchers agree that the quality of research is extremely important, they do tend to have different opinions regarding the criteria used for evaluating quality (De Vos et al., 2011:419; Babbie, 2010:327; Creswell, 2007:202). In order to establish the trustworthiness of a qualitative study, Lincoln and Guba (1999:398), with their belief in multiple constructed realities, proposed the following four constructs for naturalistic inquiries (Lincoln & Guba, 1985:295), namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability of which credibility is considered as the most important. Van Manen (1997:27) highlights that, in a phenomenological study, one should question whether the conclusions of the research study demonstrate an ability to inspire confidence because the supporting arguments have "been persuasive" (Van Manen, 1997:57). In addition, the researcher should write in such a way that the reader perceives, through and within the textual description, a plausible experience while the phenomenological description should resonate with the reader (Wehler, 2014). The four constructs of trustworthiness as applied in this study are discussed below.

Credibility

The strength of a qualitative study that aims to explore a problem or describe a setting is its credibility (De Vos et al., 2011:420). Credibility refers to whether there is a match between the participants' views and the researcher's reconstruction and representation of these views (De Vos et al., 2011:420). In line with Lincoln and Guba's (1999:399; 1985:314) strategies to increase credibility, the researcher employed a number of safeguards. The researcher asked probing questions in order to explore and understand the experiences of the women audit managers but did not lead the participants in any way and allowed them to provide in-depth details of their experiences through the use of open-ended questions. Although the participants were only interviewed once, their experiences over the course of their employment as audit managers at the audit firms were covered, thus ensuring that prolonged empirical data was gathered. The data triangulation that was established by combining the documented observations in the researcher's field log and the individual experiences conveyed by the participants during the interviews (Denzin, 2010) enhanced the credibility of the researcher's reconstruction of the findings. Regular peer debriefings were conducted with the researcher's supervisors in order to discuss the progress, findings and difficulties encountered during

the research process. The use of an independent co-coder, who provided the researcher with a coding report, also contributed to the credibility of the study findings. A meeting between the researcher and the co-coder at which differences were clarified was held. In addition, verbatim quotes from the participants were also used to support the findings.

Transferability

Transferability refers to whether it is possible to transfer the findings of a study from a specific situation to another situation (De Vos et al., 2011:420). The aim of qualitative research and, specifically, IPA studies, is not to generalise the studies' findings to individuals, sites or places outside of those under study as the value of qualitative research lies in the particular themes developed in the context of a specific site or individual (Creswell, 2013:253). In this study the participants were limited to women who had resigned from JSE accredited audit firms and the AGSA after a minimum number of four years in the position of audit manager. The use of the selection criteria to identify the research participants, background information on the research participants, the context of the study, the research process, and rich, thick, detailed descriptions as part of the findings of this study was a strategy adopted to address the transferability of the study. Providing such information should enable readers to decide for themselves whether the findings of this study may be applicable to other situations (Lincoln & Guba, 1999:420).

Dependability

Dependability in the research context refers to whether the research process was logical, well documented and audited (De Vos et al., 2011:420) and whether the same results would be obtained if the data were analysed again independently (Babbie, 2010:327). This assumption of an unchanging social world is in direct contrast to the qualitative assumption that the social world is always in the process of being constructed. Based on the qualitative dependability procedures suggested by Gibbs (2007), the researcher verified all the transcriptions herself to ensure they did not include any errors or discrepancies and constantly compared the data with the codes as well as her field log to ensure the true meaning of the data was reflected by the codes assigned.

Conformability

Conformability refers to the notion that the data is linked to the findings and may be effortlessly understood by others (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008:294). The researcher constructed a physical audit trail of all the research decisions and activities throughout the study by maintaining a log of all the research activities and documenting all data collection and analysis procedures throughout the study (Carcary, 2009; Creswell & Millar, 2000). The aim of this was to ensure that another reader/scholar would be able to confirm the findings of this study (Akkerman, Admiral, Brekelmans & Oost, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1999:422–423) should the evaluation of the data be removed from the researcher and "placed squarely on the data themselves" (De Vos et al., 2011:421).

4.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ethical considerations in research that should be upheld are extensive, and they should be reflected on throughout the research process (Creswell, 2013:132). Research involves collecting data from people, about people (Punch, 2005). The researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, values, desires and needs of the research participants. According to Babbie (2010:64–70), some of the most important ethical principles that prevail in social research include the following, namely, no harm must come to the participants and voluntary participation by the participants while anonymity and confidentiality should be ensured at all times and the participants should not be deceived in any way. The application of these principles in this study is discussed in more detail below.

No harm to participants

No harm should be inflicted upon the participants (Babbie, 2010:65). The researcher in the study accepted her ethical obligation to protect the participants within all reasonable limits from any physical or emotional harm (Creswell, 2013:64). During the interview process the researcher remained sensitive to any signs of discomfort on the part of the participants in answering any of the interview questions and assured them that they did not have to answer any question with which they felt uncomfortable. A participant information sheet (Appendix A) outlining the purpose and benefits of the study and the interview questions which would be asked as well as confirming that all information

shared during the interview would be kept confidential was sent to participants prior to the interviews. The contents of this participant information sheet were reiterated personally by the researcher before the commencement of the interviews. In order to further minimise possible harm to participants, high quality research was ensured by the application of a recognised research approach and design and by presenting findings in a manner that was both accurate and objective and did not deceive the readers (De Vos et al., 2011:126; Maritz & Visagie, 2011:14). Qualified and experienced supervisors also guided the researcher throughout the research process and ethical clearance was obtained from the Research Ethics Review Committee in Unisa's College of Accounting Science (Appendix H).

Voluntary participation

Social research often represents an intrusion into people's lives (Babbie, 2010:64). In order to limit any form of intrusion in this study, the researcher ensured that the semi-structured, individual interviews were conducted within the agreed time frame negotiated with each participant. Participation in research should be voluntary at all times and no one should be forced to participate in a study (Rubin & Babbie, 2005:71). The participants were informed that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any stage without being prejudiced. This was communicated to the participants by means of the participant information sheet (Appendix A) sent to the participants prior to the interviews and was reiterated personally by the researcher at the commencement of the interviews. The participants were also required to sign a letter of informed consent (Appendix B) prior to the interviews (De Vos et al., 2011:350; Saldaña, 2011:40).

Anonymity and confidentiality

Anonymity is achieved in research where neither the researcher nor the readers of the findings are able to link a given response to a given respondent (Babbie, 2010:67). In this study, the researcher assured the participants of confidentiality as she would be able to identify the participants' responses but agreed not to make this public (Babbie, 2010:67). Confidentiality was also ensured as both the transcriber and the co-coder were required to sign a confidentially agreement (Appendix D & E) before the researcher provided them with the digital recordings containing the interview data and

the interview transcriptions respectively. Data management techniques that safeguard security and confidentiality were also applied (refer section 4.5.4). The personal information of participants will be destroyed within five years after the research had been conducted in line with the research ethics practices and requirements of Unisa.

Deception

Deception refers to misleading participants, deliberately misrepresenting facts or withholding information from participants (Struwig & Stead, 2001:69). The participants in this study were informed of the purpose and anticipated benefits of the study and the main interview questions which would be posed to ensure no participant was deceived in any way. Before the commencement of the interviews, the researcher also informed the participants of her credentials, the sincerity of her intention to produce data objectively, the purpose of the study and the manner in which the research would be undertaken (De Vos et al., 2011:325). Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Research Ethics Review Committee in Unisa's College of Accounting Science (Appendix H) before any participant was approached to take part in an interview.

4.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter explained the researcher's constructivist paradigm, including her relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology, which guided her inquiries and actions and influenced the research approach and design chosen to answer the research question. The chapter further described that the study used a qualitative research approach and an IPA research design to explore the experiences of women audit managers that led to turnover before they were promoted to audit partner level. The research participants were purposively selected based on predetermined criteria. The requisite data was obtained from semi-structured, individual interviews and the field log. The data was then analysed using open coding and stored in such a way as to ensure the confidentiality of the information. The strategies implemented to ensure the quality of the data throughout the research process were also discussed. The chapter concluded with a description of the ethical considerations that were taken into account throughout the study.

Chapter 5 contains an analysis and discussion of the empirical findings of the study. These empirical findings were based on the analysis of the data obtained from the semi-structured, individual interviews held with the research participants, as well as the researcher's field log.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 explained that an explorative qualitative research approach, using an IPA research design, was applied to explore the experiences of women audit managers that had led to their resignations from audit firms. This study's constructivist paradigm and the researcher's relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology were described. The research method used, including the participant selection, data production techniques, data analysis, data management as well as the criteria applied to ensure the quality of the research were also described. Chapter 4 concluded with a discussion of the research ethics which were taken into account throughout the study.

The purpose of this chapter is to present an analysis and discussion of the research findings. As already stated, the purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of women audit managers to understand why they resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level. Semi-structured, individual interviews were conducted to explore the phenomenon and answer the research question:

Why do women audit managers resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level?

The data interpretation and reporting style used are discussed in the next section, after which the context of the interviews is described. Thereafter, the empirical findings are presented and discussed. This is followed by the conclusion to the chapter.

5.2 DATA INTERPRETATION AND REPORTING STYLE

As the researcher, I was the predominant research instrument who obtained the requisite data and documented what I had understood and felt during the research process (Saldaña, 2011:32). Accordingly, I used the first-person writing style in this chapter to present the findings (Creswell, 2007:17) and the context of the interviews.

The research question together with the literature review guided me in the construction of the interview schedule (Appendix C) which I used during the semi-structured interviews to explore the experiences of the participants. I analysed the data by creating codes which then led to the discovery of superordinate and subordinate themes throughout the data. I first read each transcript in its entirety several times, together with my field notes on the interview in question in order to identify preliminary codes. I repeated this process for each of the twelve transcripts. During the first coding phase, I used a descriptive open coding technique to analyse the twelve transcribed conversations which consisted of a total of 553 pages with 110 655 words (520 voice-recorded minutes).

During the second coding phase, I used Atlas.ti, Computer Assisted Qualitative Analysis software to assign codes to each transcribed interview which had been imported into the software. I imported each of the twelve transcribed interviews into Atlas.ti as a primary document and named the interviews in the same order in which the interviews had been conducted and transcribed. The names given to the primary documents corresponded with the pseudonyms given to each participant, as indicated in chapter 4 (section 4.5.1). I initially identified themes within the individual transcripts and then linked these themes across cases.

A table of superordinate and subordinate themes was drawn up with each theme illustrated by a few verbatim extracts from the interviews (see table 5.2). The referencing system that was used to report the verbatim extracts from the interviews supporting the findings was created consistently by Atlas.ti. The following example illustrates the referencing system: Anne:4 –

- Anne represents the transcribed interview which was conducted with the participant who was given the pseudonym Anne, and
- number 4 represents the quotation number in the transcribed interview.

The verbatim quotes used during the presentation of the findings were indented and in inverted commas. The shorter verbatim quotes that I used as part of my paraphrasing were displayed in inverted commas. In presenting the verbatim extracts, some minor changes were made to improve the readability of the quotes. Minor hesitations, word repetitions and utterances such as *"erm"* were removed. In instances in which material

was added (e.g. to explain to what a participant was referring) this material is presented in square brackets. Dotted lines at the beginning or end of an extract indicate that the person was talking prior to or after the extract. All identifying information was removed or changed, and the pseudonyms allocated to each participant were maintained to protect the anonymity of participants as well as that of the audit firms.

5.3 CONTEXT OF INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews were used for the sharing of information between the participants and myself freely (De Vos et al., 2011:342). These interviews involved a description of the participants' experiences as well as a reflection on the description. Accordingly, I provide the context of the interviews in table 5.1 by using my field log. The presentation of the participants is in the same sequence in which the interviews were conducted, transcribed and imported into Atlas.ti.

Table 5.1 Context of the interviews

Participant	Interview context
Anne	Anne was the first to respond to my request for potential participants. I met with her at her workplace in Johannesburg for our interview. I was rather anxious as this was my first interview of the study. On the other hand, Anne was extremely relaxed and this helped me to relax as well. Anne had booked a boardroom for us to use and there were no interruptions during our interview. Anne is a friendly, bubbly person. She gave me the impression that she is very dedicated and true to her own values and passions in life. At the time of the study Anne had recently married and did not, as yet, have children. The interview with Anne flowed effortlessly as Anne shared her experience as an audit manager. I asked a couple of questions only during the interview to explore additional avenues that had come up during the interview. Anne is passionate about strategy and she is committed to working in the public sector. She expressed herself as follows: "So that's where my passion for the public sector was born. I said 'Let me use my qualification to make a difference in South Africa'. As you know, in the public sector there's a shortage of skills (Anne:5). I'm passionate, I have found people who are passionate about the public sector and I … ever since then, I've

Participant	Interview context
	been serving nothing but the public sector" (Anne:32). Anne also referred me to another potential participant at the end of our interview whom I contacted to arrange an interview (snowball sampling).
Beth	Beth was excited to take part in the study and quick to respond to my request to arrange the interview at a time and place suitable to her. We conducted the interview at her workplace in her office. The only interruption during our interview was Beth's office telephone which rang once. She asked whether she could answer the call and deal with it. At the time of the study Beth was married and had two small children. Beth's intention had always been to remain with the audit firm where she was employed and she mentioned that her employer had never believed that she would actually resign. My perception was that she is a hard worker and proud of the work she does, as well as being prepared to go the extra mile for her employer. However, she would have appreciated some recognition for this or even a "simple thank you" (Beth:15). At some point during the interview, I experienced a hint of aggression and agitation on Beth's part towards her former employer. She indicated that she felt she had deserved more recognition than she had received.
Corlia	Corlia and I used to work together and, because of our relationship, the interview was very comfortable and relaxed. The interview was conducted in an informal setting at a coffee shop in Johannesburg. Corlia started her career in the corporate environment after qualifying as a CA(SA). However, she stated that she had not seen the growth opportunities for herself that she had expected and had, therefore, returned to public audit practice. From my personal experience of working with Corlia, I knew that Corlia was an optimistic person with a positive attitude towards life. Corlia had clear career goals for herself. These goals included becoming an audit partner. She conveyed her thoughts as follows: "So, I wasn't getting the growth that I expected. So, I mean, when you go into corporate, you're at the bottom of the food chain and you're starting from scratch. I think my mindset was just different in terms of how I thought my career progression would be and my boss was not interested in my growth and my development. I think that was the main thing. They were just all about 'Just do the work, you get paid and, then, you know, you leave'. … the culture was a bit different." (Corlia:11). "It was just too broad. Nobody would actually see my talents, if I may put it that way" (Corlia:13). "So, with Firm A, I knew that there was a path for me to be a partner. That's what I appreciated, that I knew, when

Participant	Interview context
	I was there, this is what I'm working towards but, also, people took an interest in your development" (Corlia:12). "So my thinking was, yes, to be a partner was first prize" (Corlia:2).
Diane	At the time of the study I knew Diane very well. We had met when we had started our training contracts together at an audit firm and had become very close friends over the years. We had resigned from the audit firm in the same year after being employed by the firm for 10 years. For four of the ten years, we had been employed as senior audit managers. The interview was conducted at Diane's home over coffee. Diane had not worked for almost three years after her resignation from the audit firm and had spent her time with her children until just before the study, when she had started a new job where her working hours were limited to six hours a day. Diane is a very intelligent woman and committed to finishing what she starts. She is a family-orientated person and her husband and two children are very important to her. She revealed that what motivates her in life is to add value. I got the impression during the interview that Diane was very grateful for the time she had spent at the audit firm but that she did not miss it. Her personality is not the type, as she put it, to want "to climb the corporate ladder" (Diane:12).
Elsa	I met Elsa in her office at her workplace. Elsa did not strike me as the type of person who enjoyed the corporate or audit environment. This was mainly due to her gentle nature as well as the fact that she mentioned the following: "I have always been interested in academia. So, I always knew I wanted to come back and, actually, in 2010 or 2011, I think … so it was in the first few months of my being a manager, I had an interview at the tax department for a position as a lecturer. During the interview, I realised how much experience I actually still needed. I realised I was very young, I just felt completely inadequate and … unprepared for an academic environment. I realised I wouldn't bring value to the students because the students need something more than just a tick box, they need somebody from the real world. I was, like, you know what? Let me just park academics, I didn't really ever want to go into corporate and it was not something that I really wanted. I wasn't really … I'm not interested in business" (Elsa:2).
Hannah	The interview with Hannah was held in her office at her workplace. The interview was relaxed and comfortable as I knew Hannah on a personal level from our working together previously. I knew from personal experience that Hannah is a very loyal person and hardworking. She works very long hours if this is required to finish the work and rarely complains or says 'no' (Hannah:13). She is a "people's person" (Hannah:14), she

Participant	Interview context
	values family life and she loves spending time with her two boys. Hannah shared that she thrives on working independently and a trust relationship between herself and her supervisor is important to her. When I asked Hannah whether she had considered becoming an audit partner during her time at the audit firm, her answer was: "… it definitely was. Like, definitely, definitely" (Hannah:11).
Jenna	I met Jenna for the first time for our interview. She had booked a boardroom for us at her workplace and we had no interruptions during the interview. Jenna is an extrovert and she shared her experience openly. She mentioned that she hoped that her contribution and this study would bring about a change in the audit firms in respect of women in leadership positions. The interview with Jenna was the longest interview, 63 minutes, compared to the average duration of 43 minutes per interview. Jenna described herself as an innovative person who did not like to get involved in too much detail instead wanting to improve processes and add value. She is an ambitious woman but stressed that life is not all about work. She believes in balance as was evident from the fact that she started competing in triathlons but was struggling to find time for training while being employed at the audit firm. Jenna was married but had not started a family at the time of the study, although she did want to have children some time in the future. Jenna had known from the time she had starting doing vacation work at an audit firm during her first year at university that she wanted to become an audit partner, stating that: "I guess the main reason was that I wanted … my original … since I did vacation work at Firm B, since … I was a first-year student. So, I have always wanted to be a partner" (Jenna:2). translated
Liana	I also know Liana from when we had worked together as senior audit managers at an audit firm. We had worked together at the audit firm for more than eight years. Liana is the perfect example of a corporate woman, always well dressed, demanding respect from her fellow colleagues and looking for opportunities to grow. This was supported by the fact that Liana was continuing to work long hours at her current employer without much flexibility in her working hours. The interview was held at Liana's workplace. Before the interview commenced, Liana had been attending to a work-related matter on her phone and I could not help but feel that maybe she had been a little distracted by this and did not share everything relating to her experience as an audit manager during our interview.

Participant	Interview context
	Liana did not stress her aspiration to become an audit partner as strongly as some of the other women but acknowledged that, while employed by the audit firm, she still thought that she wanted to become an audit partner and was working towards it. She communicated her thoughts as follows: "… why I worked so hard and tried, yes, to deliver the best service to my clients, was not just to get industry experience, it was because I wanted to grow in the company … and maybe become a partner" (Liana:7). translated
Nina	When I first contacted Nina, she was very busy at work and she requested that we schedule the interview for a date in two weeks' time. I met Nina at her office in Johannesburg where the interview was held in an informal setting in a lunch venue in the building. Nina came across as a very professional woman. She dressed smartly and spoke clearly and to the point. My perception of Nina was that she valued her family and has considerable respect for herself. Nina shared her experience as an audit manager in a typical CA(SA) manner – to the point with no unnecessary detail. It was clear throughout the interview that Nina had had clear aspirations to become an audit partner. She shared that she had stayed in public audit practice after qualifying as a CA(SA) because she loved auditing, it was in her blood. Even after resigning from the audit firm she still missed external auditing. Nina expressed herself as follows: "I knew where I wanted to go, I wanted to become an audit partner. So, for me, that was cut and dried" (Nina:1). "… it's in my blood. I love auditing, I love the interaction with clients, over and above that, I actually had the opportunity to develop people. I think that's where my passion lies, doing what I love doing plus developing people and then, it's so great to see trainees coming in and, under your wing, you're mentoring them … and then they qualify and then they get into manager positions, etcetera, so … and I think that's why I had actually stayed on" (Nina:14).
Patricia	Patricia was approached by another participant to participate in the study (snowball sampling). She stated that when she had heard about the study she was excited to share her experience and contribute to the findings of the study. I struggled a little to schedule the interview with Patricia after she had initially agreed to participate. We eventually scheduled the interview over the telephone. At the time of the interview Patricia was the mother of two. The interview with her was held at her home as she was working from home on the day of the interview. It was clear from Patricia's behaviour that she is a relaxed person. I remember thinking at the start of the interview that Patricia was very approachable and open.

Participant	Interview context
	Patricia's little boy aged 4 was at home with her and he played around us with his tractors and cars while the interview was conducted. A couple of times during the interview I lost my train of thought due to the noises made by the little boy or by his coming to show me his tractor and cars. However, none of this appeared to bother Patricia and it seemed that she was used to working and talking to others while her children were playing around her. Patricia showed an interest in both me and my children as well. I was able to infer that her family is important to her and she enjoyed spending time with them.
Sarah	I struggled to arrange the interview with Sarah as she was slow to respond to my interview invitation due to her busy schedule. After my third attempt to schedule the interview, Sarah accepted the invitation and we met in a boardroom at her office in Waterfall, Midrand. From the moment we met, I felt that Sarah was a no-nonsense woman. She came across as a woman who knows what she wants and is not afraid to go for it. Sarah has a strong personality and portrays herself as a dedicated individual with set goals in life. At the start of the interview I felt a little bit intimidated by Sarah due to her commanding presence but, as soon as we started talking, I realised she was very approachable and our interview was one of the interviews I enjoyed most. Sarah had known from a very early stage in her auditing career that she wanted to become an audit partner. She revealed her ambition to me as follows: "I think I was, maybe, about second year articles when I decided 'No, I like this, I am definitely going to become a partner'. … it was never an issue at all that I would not become a partner. … when I qualified, I told everyone I was going to stay on at Firm C and I told everyone I was going to become a partner. … it was kind of my goal and I ensured that I worked on the right clients, that I worked with the right people, … but I gave myself ten years from the day I was promoted to an AM [audit manager] to the day that I would become a partner. And … when that ten-year mark came and I realised it was not going to happen in the next year or so, then I decided I needed to make a plan" (Sarah:1). translated Sarah also believed that is not possible for women to have both a family and a successful career in the audit environment and she and her husband had made the decision not to have children to enable her to reach her career goals and realise her ambitions. Sarah said: "… I do not believe a woman can have it all. I feel, kind of, you cannot have

Participant	Interview context
	your cake and eat it. I have never seen someone that could make it work" (Sarah:9). translated
Wendy	Wendy agreed to a telephone interview for logistical reasons. Wendy had moved to Cape Town after resigning from the audit firm to live with her parents. At the time of the study Wendy was unmarried. Based on our interview I concluded that Wendy was a very religious person. She had, in fact, mentioned that her decision to resign from the audit firm had, in the end, been religiously motivated. During the interview, I felt as if I could relate to Wendy's experience in many ways and, at the end of the interview, I felt as if I had known Wendy for a long time. I got the impression that she really wanted to contribute to the study as she shared her experience openly and generously.

Source: Own compilation

When reflecting on my notes in my field log, I realised that every participant had had a unique experience at the audit firms where they had been employed. Every woman had told her story in her own way. I also noted in my field log that conducting the interviews as part of this study was an enriching personal experience, as I became aware of the different nuances in the individual experiences.

5.4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

An IPA study focuses on a detailed exploration of personal lived experiences, the meaning of such experiences for the participants and the way in which the participants make sense of those experiences (Charlick, 2016; Smith et al., 2009:1,11). It is also committed to closely examining the unique, particular experience of each individual participant and it is from this examination that the themes that respond to the research question emerge (Eatough & Smith, 2008). IPA studies are also more in line with the interpretative, rather than the descriptive, tradition in phenomenology (Smith et al., 2009:79). In keeping with this tradition, the data collected, which was in the form of transcribed interviews and field notes was analysed and interpreted. This process was in line with Van Manen's (1997) description of the "inventive thoughtful" attitude, in which the data analysis involves a back and forth movement – from reflecting on the data to writing and then returning to reflecting and rewriting (Van Manen, 1997:34). Typical of an IPA study, this study's findings were presented in the form of a narrative

account. This included a discussion of the narrative which related the themes identified to the existing literature.

A table of superordinate and subordinate themes was drawn up in which each theme was illustrated by a few verbatim extracts from the interviews (see table 5.2). For a complete list of the verbatim extracts supporting the superordinate and subordinate themes, refer to Appendix G. In the sections that follow, each superordinate and subordinate theme is interpreted in turn, using examples of the individual participant's experiences as described in the interview transcripts.

Table 5.2: Superordinate and subordinate themes

Themes	**Verbatim extracts from interviews**
Unclear progression path in the audit firm	
No formal or transparent career progression discussions or agendas	"I really wanted to know, I mean, tell me how long I should be here. After five years? What do I need to do? And no one could really give me that answer" (Sarah:10). *translated* "I'm really working…excuse the language, working my arse off – but not getting clear direction, you are putting this effort in, what am I doing to … develop you to make you partner …" (Nina:4). "… there wasn't proper career pathing … and the thing is, if you said you wanted to be a partner, there wasn't that conversation to say where you would actually be placed [as a partner in which business unit]" (Patricia:13).

Themes	Verbatim extracts from interviews
Perception of unfair and inconsistent promotion processes	"… we would make you a partner, but you do not have the right skin colour [being white]" (Sarah:7). *translated* "… the system … is not fair, and they will, definitely, not for me…only for me make a decision not to follow the … the country's BEE [Black Economic Empowerment] regulations. I mean, that is ridiculous to expect something like that" (Liana:12). *translated* "… they were more cognisant or more inclined to promote African females as compared to Indian females. I noticed a lot of inconsistencies [in the promotion process]" (Nina:2). "There … was another girl, a black woman…she and I were both senior managers at that stage, and I knew that they would promote her to AD [associate director] because of the BEE factor" (Wendy:1). *translated*
Firm leadership and organisational culture	
Values and quality of firm leadership	"When I got there, it was tearing up my portfolio of evidence, basically trying to find loopholes and I got feedback as if I were being dishonest" (Corlia:10). "… it changed my perception of the firm" (Corlia:14). "… if this is what 'Firm A' is and a partnership is, I don't want to be associated with it" (Corlia:15). "… the one thing I said is that I enjoy auditing, if another firm comes to me and wants me to come and join, I will definitely join them" (Corlia:17). "… the values of the leadership in my business unit and how they did business – did not align with how I am" (Jenna:1). *translated* "One day, my son was very sick and I requested my senior manager 'May I please leave? I'll work from home'. He blatantly refused. I was not able to leave, so I had to put in leave for the day but I had work that … I had to do so I completed my work and sent it to him" (Beth:14).

Themes	Verbatim extracts from interviews
Audit firms run by the "old boys club"	"… at the end of the day, it became almost like this is the boys' club, they run the big clients, and we [women] get what's left type of things" (Patricia:17). "It is … and at the audit firm is was like that as well. There is a boys' club and they go and play golf and they go hunting, and they do things over weekends. And the women are not part of it. It still happens these days, in any company. It is more difficult to become part of that club" (Liana:10). *translated*
Discrimination experienced in the workplace	"… it was just that I felt like the treatment and the expectation of me [relating to billing revenue for audit clients served] was exactly the same as for somebody who had had no maternity leave during the year" (Patricia:14). "I didn't want to carry on working in a place that doesn't actually value the fact that you are a mother and you have a family and that leaving at five o'clock is actually not unrealistic …" (Patricia:15).
Lack of female role models	"There were females in the firm but there was no-one that I thought I wanted to be like one day or I thought they were doing it well or I would want to do it the way they did it. So there wasn't someone to whom I looked up to" (Diane:7). "… there weren't a lot of women when we were there. It was really only Mariana who didn't have children, and worked like a maniac and whom I really didn't want to be like and then there was Bethany, and she wasn't the type of mom that I wanted to ever be" (Hannah:4). "… the female partners who were there … none of them had the right balance. The one was leaning too far to the one side, and the next one … was leaning too much to the other side …" (Liana:6). *translated* "I never felt as if there was anybody who stopped that balance to me. … and most of the women were actually unmarried and single and the ones who were mothers, they still worked ridiculous hours. I don't want a nanny raising my kids" (Patricia:22).

Themes	Verbatim extracts from interviews
Overloaded and undercompensated	
No work-life balance	"… that's just expected. … if I give her something at five o'clock, she'll get it to me by the next morning because she's that type of person. So, it's creating that expectation and people not respecting that, she has a life other than just auditing" (Nina:15). "… it was just too much work on one client to get to everything" (Wendy:13). "And then I also started to feel extremely overwhelmed and I just did not want to anymore… I was just perplexed, seriously. I did not know how to continue going forward" (Wendy:10). *translated* "… somewhere along the line, you're going to drop the ball because it's physically impossible to get to everything" (Corlia:3). "I was miserable. I would cry often and you're working on Saturdays and your friends are out and … I was miserable … with the work and the pressure and everything …" (Elsa:11).
Not paid enough for what we put in	"I think all my friends outside public [audit] practice were getting [being paid] way more than I was" (Corlia:5). "… we're not properly compensated for the work that we do" (Corlia:6). "… you don't mind putting in the time and the effort if you're going to be compensated for it at some point in time, I stuck it out for ten years to see … when is this going to happen? And it just never happened" (Diane:6). "… my friends who had left the firm were earning more and having a life and I was working much harder and earning less in the firm" (Hannah:9). "… remuneration does not justify the amount of time that I sacrificed" (Jenna:5). *translated*
Ambition to become an audit partner not distinct	
More important things in life	I realised that there's stuff that's more important to me than just work" (Diane:15).

Themes	Verbatim extracts from interviews
Different passions	"What made me really leave was the options that are out there and to go up the ladder [become an audit partner] was not in line with the things I really want to do. I'm not making a difference anymore" (Anne:29). "… I'm willing to work and put in hours if I know it's going to get me to where I want to be but I think I always knew I never wanted to be an audit partner. Like, the thought makes me shiver and it still makes me shiver and, at that point, it made me shiver" (Elsa:6).

Source: Own compilation

It was very interesting to uncover the fact that in most of the women's stories shared, there was not one single reason or factor that had motivated the participants to resign from the audit firms; instead, it had been the total experience to which they had been exposed. In reality, the role of audit manager involves a combination of incidents and events. In the following sections of this chapter, these experiences are described and interpreted in order to reveal the participants' thoughts, feelings, and perceptions that were shared during the semi-structured interviews.

5.4.1 Unclear progression path in the audit firm

For the majority of the participants becoming an audit partner had always been part of their career plans. Some had made this decision very early in their careers, even before they had been promoted to audit managers, while others had made the decision during their tenure as audit manager. As indicated in chapter 3 (Section 3.5), there is a hierarchical structure in an audit firm which results in an expectation on the part of a senior audit manager that they will be promoted to an audit partner according to a derivative timeline, should the performance of the individual be of the required standard. There was a strong feeling among the women that the unclear progression paths in the audit firms, which they had experienced as audit managers, had played a significant role in their decisions to resign from the audit firms. The uncertainty about their progression path had arisen from a lack of formal and transparent career progression discussions or agendas as well as perceived unfair and inconsistent promotion processes which were mainly due to the BEE pressures experienced by the audit firms which prolonged the partnership pipelines.

5.4.1.1 No formal or transparent career progression discussions or agendas

Sarah expressed the view that her bi-annual counselling sessions with her mentors, during which they had discussed her performance, as well as future career plan at the audit firm, had been a positive experience. Although she had had good relationships with her mentors the partners had never been able to tell her exactly what she needed to accomplish in order to be promoted to an audit partner or when this would potentially have happened. Hannah had received constructive feedback on both her performance as an audit manager from the partners with whom she worked as well as from an internal firm leadership assessment programme where her leadership skills had been assessed. The aim of this internal firm programme was to assess an individual's leadership qualities and skills in anticipation of future promotions to, for example, audit partner. Based on the feedback she had received, promotion to partnership level had been a real probability. However, the timing, or the lack of direction when it came to the timing, had been the problem. Nina agreed that the lack of a clear timeline in respect of promotion to partnership had contributed significantly to her decision to resign from the audit firm. Career development (Sears, 1982:139) which represents one of the work characteristics in the conceptual voluntary turnover model, discussed in chapter 2 (Figure 2.4) was important to each of these three women but the uncertainty around the timing of potential promotion (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007) had frustrated them. They relayed their experiences as follows:

> "I really wanted to know, tell me how long I should be here. After five years? What do I need to do? And no one could really give me that answer" (Sarah:10). translated

> "… the problem is that they [the partners] didn't … they were too scared to make promises [about when promotion to audit partner could be expected]" (Hannah:12).

> "I'm really working … excuse the language, working my arse off – but not getting clear direction, you are putting this effort in, what am I doing … to develop you to make you partner …" (Nina:4).

> "… it needs to be driven from the organisational level … this is what we want to achieve … you need to have that transparency. … if they had told me 'I don't see you as a partner' that was a different story but don't make empty promises … don't leave

me hanging and say, do this, do that, … you need a timeline or else it's never going to happen" (Nina:16).

In her exit interview with the audit firm, Patricia had provided the feedback that there had been no proper career pathing for her during her time at the audit firm. She had, thus, clearly experienced inadequate career development (as presented in figure 2.4). Even when she had communicated her aim to become an audit partner, there had still been no proper guidance from or discussions initiated by the partnership to discuss her personal goals, development areas and strengths and potential timelines. The feedback from the partners had been very generic and vague. She shared her experience as follows:

"… there wasn't proper career pathing … and the thing is, if you said you wanted to be a partner, there wasn't that conversation to say where you would actually be well-placed [as a partner in which business unit]" (Patricia:13).

Jenna, as an extrovert, had made her intentions of becoming an audit partner clear during discussions initiated by her with her mentors and the rest of the partners. She too had experienced that the partners had never discussed her career plan with her nor had there ever been any form of commitment made regarding the probability of her being promoted to audit partner. She highlighted that she would rather they had told her if they did not think she had the right qualities and skills to become an audit partner than making empty promises to her. Jenna expressed this as follows:

"I initiated the discussions but it did not result in anything actionable" (Jenna:9). "Or, that is the other thing, if you think you are never going to get there [become an audit partner] say it. Burst the bubble. There is nothing worse than stringing someone along saying 'Oh, you will be a director one day, and twenty years later you are still a senior manager" (Jenna:10). translated

It was, therefore, clear that career development (Sears, 1982:139) had been a principal factor in all these women's decisions to resign. They had been committed and had had a clear mental picture of the career path they intended to follow but the lack of guidance and no clear timelines communicated to them by the partners about potential promotion to audit partner had contributed to many of the participants' uncertainty regarding their

futures at the audit firms. The view of Johnson and Ng (2015:125) and Rigoni and Adkins (2016) that career progression is the top priority for the millennials (all the participants in this study was born after 1980) as they are committed to their personal learning and development supports this finding. In some instances, it appeared that the partners had promised potential promotions in the future but had then never delivered on these promises. Subsequent to the interviews I included my thoughts on the reason for this behaviour by the partners in my field log. I could not help thinking that the reason may have been to ensure ongoing commitment and dedication of these women to the audit firms, even if the prospects of promotion to audit partner was not a real probability.

It is important for employees to understand their career path within an organisation to motivate them to remain in the organisation in order to realise their personal career goals (Swarnalatha & Vasantham, 2014). In terms of Schein's (1975) eight career anchors, these women seem to demonstrate the talent based anchors, specifically technical competence and managerial competence as they enjoyed challenging work and aspired to leadership opportunities that would have allowed them to contribute to the organisation (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006:221). Because career anchors have significant implications for an individual's job satisfaction, organisational commitment and turnover intentions (Döckel, 2003), there is little doubt that the failure to align these women's career anchors and individual needs with those of the audit firms contributed to their turnover intentions.

5.4.1.2 Perceptions of unfair and inconsistent promotion processes

The inconsistent promotion processes that some of the participants had experienced or perceived that they had experienced had contributed to their uncertainty about their progression paths in the audit firms. Despite the fact that they were convinced that they wanted to become audit partners, the promotion processes implemented in the audit firms had caused them to doubt whether they would be promoted based on merit and performance. The participants expressed the view that the pressure on the audit firms to transform in terms of black ownership and management was resulting in individuals being fast tracked and promoted ahead of some of the participants or else the participants were not being considered for the promotions advertised.

Hannah had really enjoyed her time at the audit firm as an audit manager. She had aspired to become an audit partner and had believed she had the skills required to become a partner. At the same time, she had reflected on other job opportunities outside of the audit practice she could potentially pursue. More or less a year before Hannah had made her decision to resign from the audit firm, the firm had announced an ownership transformation target to be pursued. This had meant that the partnership of the audit firm had to be transformed to at least 20% black partners, which was a significant increase based on the audit firm's representation at that stage. Hannah stated that had this not been the case she may have remained at the audit firm as she knew she would have been promoted to an audit partner at some point in the future. However, with this target in place, it would have taken much longer for her as a white woman. Consequently, she had felt demotivated as she "realised that the pipeline was getting a bit longer and longer and longer" (Hannah:10). She conveyed her thoughts as follows:

> "… hoping to become a partner, I would have become a partner. I had enough skills to do it but the problem is I would have been in a pipeline and am I going to wait for five years in a pipe doing this job, nothing more, which I've already been doing for almost three years as a senior manager" (Hannah:10).

At this point an excellent opportunity had arisen when a former partner with whom Hannah had worked offered her employment at the company where he was employed in a senior accounting position. However, Hannah perceives herself as a very loyal person and the audit firm had persuaded her to stay on and not pursue this opportunity. Nevertheless, the need to explore other avenues had persisted and had been intensified by the ongoing feelings of uncertainty about when promotion to partner may actually happen. After another six months, Hannah eventually decided she had reached the end of the road with this audit firm and she had resigned to accept the position offered to her.

The sole reason for Sarah's resignation was that the audit firm had refused to promote her to an audit partner on the grounds that she was a white female. The division in which she had worked had comprised predominantly white male audit partners. As a result, according to Sarah:

"… if someone was to be promoted to partner, it had to be a black woman" (Sarah:12). translated

Sarah's mentor had confirmed her perception when he had stated during one of their discussions:

"… we would make you a partner, but you do not have the right skin colour [being white]" (Sarah:7). translated

Sarah's aspirations to become a partner has always been clear to her as well as to the partners of the audit firm. Since the second year of her training contract at the audit firm, she had realised that this was what she wanted to do and she had set herself a goal of becoming a partner within ten years of qualifying as a CA(SA). She had ensured that she worked on the right clients and held the necessary discussions with the leadership of the firm – all in line with her personal goal. Her decision not to have children had enabled her to really commit an enormous amount of her daily life to her job and she had worked very long hours to ensure the work she produced was of a high standard. Sarah stated:

"… so, I wanted to move on, I would have sat there until ten o'clock if I had to or … twelve o'clock or one o'clock to get the work done" (Sarah:18). translated

Sarah had been promoted quickly from audit manager to senior audit manager and then to associate director (level just below audit partner). Sarah had enjoyed working in teams, being responsible for the whole audit team and process and resolving issues and solving challenges during the audit process. After four years as an associate director, Sarah had realised and accepted that promotion to audit partner level was not going to happen soon and that she needed to move on. This had been an extremely emotional decision for Sarah as becoming an audit partner has always been what she wanted and what she worked towards for more than ten years. Resigning from the audit firm at this stage had made her feel that she had failed to reach the goal she had set for herself but she had not foreseen a potential promotion in the near future. Sarah shared her feelings:

> "So, it was a bit of an emotional rollercoaster because … I felt that I had invested so much time and nothing had come of it" (Sarah:17). translated

After completing one of her big audit clients' audit, Sarah was offered a position by this audit client. She accepted the offer and resigned the next day from the audit firm as she was convinced there was no future as an audit partner for her at the audit firm. Confirming Sarah's suspicions, the firm where she had worked did, indeed, promote the first black woman partner from Sarah's former division subsequent to her resignation. This woman was more junior in terms of years of service to Sarah. Sarah stated that she would have been unable to cope with her perception of being treated unfairly. Sarah believes that people should be promoted based on their performance. She shared this belief with me:

> "… the best person for the job should be chosen, should he be pink, purple, orange, green … whatever, it should be the best one for the job because, when you make that decision, then it is the best for the company" (Sarah:14). translated

Liana had come to the point where the possibility of partnership was a reality and probably only a couple of years away. At that stage another audit manager had been taking care of one of Liana's major audit clients as Liana had been on maternity leave. The audit process had not gone well and the client was not satisfied with the service and attention provided by the audit firm. On Liana's return, she had had to take back this audit client and reconcile the relationship. However, not long after this, the manager who had stood in for Liana was rated higher than Liana in terms of performance. In addition, this person was also selected to attend the partner assessment programme where a candidate is assessed on their readiness for promotion to partner level.

Liana experienced this as a very unfair process and policy. However, when she had raised this, she was informed that they [the partnership] needed to transform and look at equity targets. For Liana, promotions and performance ratings "need to be fair and based on your performance" (Liana:11*).* translated

After this incident, Liana had been despondent about the way in which the partnership operated and had felt that she "cannot go along with something that is not fair" (Liana:13). translate She was subsequently offered a senior position by one of her major

audit clients. She had accepted the position and resigned from the audit firm. When asked whether a firm intervention could have changed her decision to resign, Liana's answer was explicit:

> "… the system … is not fair, and they will definitely not for me … only for me, make a decision not to follow the … the country's BEE regulations. I mean, that is ridiculous to expect something like that (Liana:12). translated

Nina had stayed on in the public audit practice after she had qualified as a CA(SA) because she "loves auditing and it's in her blood" (Nina:14). She also stated that her passion lay with developing people. She had enjoyed mentoring the trainee accountants throughout their training contracts, developing relationships with clients and becoming a business advisor to her clients. As indicated before, Nina had had no doubt in her mind that she wanted to become an audit partner and she had worked extremely hard to progress to that level. However, she had not received any clear direction from the partners about what she should do in terms of self-development to be promoted to an audit partner while, at the same time, African black women in less senior positions than Nina were being sent on partner assessment and development courses. Nina felt that she was clearly being overlooked by the partners and that she did not feature in their plans for the audit firm.

As an Indian woman, Nina realised that the audit firm where she was employed was more inclined to promote African black women than women from any other racial group. She felt the promotion process was very inconsistent. Nina had belonged to a non-prominent ethnic group in the audit firm (Sorensen, 2004; Zatzick et al., 2003; Peppas, 2002) and, in line with Valentine's (2001) findings that non-prominent ethnic group members find it more difficult to progress to managerial roles within an organisation, Nina experienced uncertainty regarding her career progression path in the firm and she had started to question whether the firm really valued her worth. Nina shared her thoughts with me:

> "… they [the partnership] were more cognisant or more inclined to promote African females as compared to Indian females. So I noticed a lot of inconsistencies [in the promotion processes]" (Nina:2).

> "… my intentions were very clear and up front, this is what I want to do, and, whenever you asked the questions, no, you know you need to do this, and then you see African ladies going on leadership forums … and they're working at levels beneath you. It actually makes you very despondent … do they [the partnership] actually see your worth?" (Nina:5).

Wendy had also experienced that her path to promotion to audit partner could be prolonged due to plans to diversify her business unit in the audit firm which, at the time, had consisted mainly of white males. A black woman, younger than Wendy and a senior manager for a shorter period than Wendy, had been promoted from senior manager to associate director before her. She mentioned that although this woman had good relationships with people and her clients, she did not possess the same technical ability as Wendy. Wendy had perceived that she had been promoted before Wendy due to BEE pressures. Wendy expressed her thoughts as follows:

> "There … was another girl, a black woman … she and I were both senior managers at that stage, and I knew that they would promote her to AD [associate director] because of the BEE factor" (Wendy:1). translated

Both Diane and Beth conveyed similar experiences of unfair promotion processes. Diane explained that some managers were promoted to the level of senior manager after having been managers for a very short time. They were also earmarked for audit partner assessments despite their inexperience at the time. Beth had been rated highly in terms of performance. However, despite Beth's ratings and multiple applications when senior manager positions were advertised, she was never promoted. Diane and Beth ascribed these practises to the BEE targets that the firms had to reach. They shared their frustration with me as follows:

> "… the politics in the office and the BEE stuff that they [the partnership] brought in, it just felt, at some point that it was a bit unfair. People that, maybe, became managers after me were promoted to senior manager in a much shorter period of time and they were on the cards for going to partner assessments …" (Diane:14).

> "I did apply [for promotion to senior manager] quite a few times in the firm but, due to targets, equity targets, I was not promoted" (Beth:9).

Legislation in the form of the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE) Act no. 53 of 2003 (RSA, 2003), amended by the B-BBEE Amendment Act no. 46 of 2013 (RSA, 2013), was introduced by the South African government with the aim of increasing the broad based and effective participation of black people in the country's economy and achieving a substantial change in the racial composition of the ownership and management structures in the skilled occupations of both existing and new enterprises (RSA, 2013; RSA, 2003). The term "black people", as defined by the BBBEE Act, refers to African, Coloured and Indian people who are South African citizens by birth or by descent, or who were naturalised prior to the commencement of the interim constitution in 1993, or those who would have been able to acquire citizenship by naturalisation prior to 27 April 1994 had it not been for the apartheid policy (RSA, 2013; RSA, 2003).

In terms of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act no. 5 of 2000, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE), or BBBEE, as it is technically known, scorecards are a requirement when bidding for tenders in the public sector in South Africa (RSA, 2000). From 2016 all public entities and listed companies are required, in terms of the BBBEE Act, to report on their empowerment status by providing an annual verified BEE certificate. Despite the fact that scorecards are not a requirement when bidding for tenders in the private sector, the de facto situation is that this has become the norm and is, thus, indirectly a requirement. The customers of the suppliers of goods or services tend to request a BEE certificate from their suppliers as the customers can then claim their spending in relation to their own BEE scorecards (GoLegal, 2016; RSA, 2013; RSA, 2003).

Thus, in order for audit firms in South Africa to be competitive when tendering for big government (as well as many private sector) audits and services, a certain BBBEE level, calculated in terms of the BBBEE Act and Codes, is essential (BEESA, 2007). Equity ownership and management representation of the audit firms constitute 25% and 15% respectively when their scores are calculated (GoLegal, 2016). It would, therefore, seem that audit firms favour black women, as defined in the legislation, over white women when it comes to promotion to audit partner as this will help them to achieve a more desirable BBBEE level.

The participants in this study clearly strived to be the best they could be and to realise their full potential. Thus, they demonstrated one of the growth needs, namely self-actualisation, included in Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory in relation to what motivates individuals in the workplace (Kaur, 2013; Maslow, 1943). It would, therefore seem that white women in South Africa are in a precarious position. Initially, they were not seen as equal or competent enough to operate in the man's business world and, more recently, despite the international drive to promote the advancement of women to senior management positions, they are not perceived as making a favourable contribution to the BBBEE scores of firms and companies in South Africa and, as a result, they are not promoted to management levels.

The majority of the women in this study appeared to understand the objective of the BBBEE legislation and they were not against it in principle. However, they did perceive evaluation for potential promotion as based on their race and not performance as unfair when it hindered their career progression. Some of the women gave the impression that they felt powerless and also that the audit firms were also powerless due to the BBBEE legislation enforced by the South African government. They had arrived at the conclusion that they would not be able to reach their full potential at the audit firms where they were audit managers as a result of BEE targets. This realisation had impacted negatively on both their motivation as well as their job satisfaction and, in turn, triggered their turnover intentions.

5.4.2 Firm leadership and organisational culture

Many of the participants mentioned that the reason why they had stayed on in public audit practice after qualifying as a CA(SA) was that they enjoyed the working environment and culture of the audit firms. Corlia highlighted that, at the audit firm, the partners had taken an interest in her development while Hannah indicated that, as a people orientated person, she had loved the environment. Jenna had gone to interviews at all four of the big audit firms when deciding where to complete her training contract but had specifically chosen the audit firm where she had worked as she had seen it as a firm where she would fit in with her personality, personal and work ethics and values. Liana concurred that she had enjoyed both the type of people with whom she had worked, especially the partners and also the culture of the audit firm as an output driven culture. However, some of the participants' perceptions of the firms' leadership and

organisational culture had changed during their tenure at the audit firms and had contributed to their decisions to resign from the firms.

5.4.2.1 Values and quality of firm leadership

Improving manager leadership could measurably increase employee performance and retention (Ernsberger, 2003). A study aimed at establishing the relationship between the leadership style of organisations and staff retention in the organisations reported an inverse relationship between leadership style and intention to leave (Wakabi, 2016). In other words, when the leadership style is unfavourable, the intention to leave increases. Some of the participants in this study agreed that the leadership's values had influenced both their experience as audit managers and their decisions to resign from the audit firms.

Corlia had been an audit manager for six years, of which the last three years had been in the position of a senior audit manager. Corlia had progressed through the ranks relatively quickly and was on her way to becoming an audit partner. As previously indicated Corlia had aspired to become an audit partner at the firm and had appreciated the fact that, in an audit firm, the path to becoming an audit partner is clear. Corlia described her experience as an audit manager as controlling people, controlling work and controlling perceptions. Corlia had enjoyed the project management aspect of being an audit manager, as well as building relationships with the audit clients and learning about their businesses.

Corlia had been approached by the partnership to attend an audit partner assessment programme. Seeing that this was the goal towards which she had been working she agreed. However, it was during this process that Corlia's perception of the audit firm had changed. She explained that, during the process, she had felt attacked and, to a point, degraded. She was accused of being dishonest without reason and, instead of the process assessing her capabilities to become an audit partner, the partner assessment programme panel appeared to have been trying to find reasons why she should not be promoted at that point. Nasir and Mahmood (2018) and Swarnalatha and Vasantham (2014) found that the quality of relationships with supervisors influences turnover intentions. There was a break in the trust relationship between Corlia and the partners whose ranks she had aspired to join and, as a result, the quality of the

relationship had deteriorated and influenced her turnover intention. She decided that if this was the process to which the audit firm subjected potential audit partners and leaders, she no longer wanted to become an audit partner at the audit firm. She did, however, still love auditing and still had aspirations to become an audit partner but not at that specific audit firm. She expressed the following:

> "When I got there, it was tearing up my portfolio of evidence, basically trying to find loopholes, I got feedback as if I were being dishonest" (Corlia:10). "… it changed my perception of the firm" (Corlia:14). "… if this is what 'Firm A' is and a partnership is, I don't want to be associated with it" (Corlia:15). "… the one thing I said is that I enjoy auditing, if another firm comes to me and wants me to come and join, I will definitely join them" (Corlia:17).

Jenna is motivated by a challenge and the knowledge that what she does adds value. She did not enjoy monotonous work and, therefore, working with different people and teams on different clients as an audit manager suited Jenna. In other words, the nature of the work itself, a motivation factor in terms of Herzberg's two factor theory (Yusoff et al., 2013), motivated Jenna in the workplace. Jenna had moved to a division which was responsible for the information technology of financial audits because of her interest in computer science, and the vision of the leadership of this division had attracted her. Working relationships and supervision, both hygiene factors according to Herzberg's two factor theory (Yusoff et al., 2013; Herzberg, 1987), had influenced Jenna's decision to transfer to another division as she was of the opinion that leadership of this division would resonate with her and would increase her job satisfaction.

Certain merges had taken place within the firm and one of the audit partners for whom Jenna had often worked and who she respected highly, resigned from the audit firm. This audit partner had resigned due to his disagreeing with the strategic vision of the new merged division, among other things. According to Jenna, the way in which the business was run subsequent to this audit partner's resignation was different to the way it had been run previously and it was not in line with how she was and how she did things. Her words were "… the leadership values in my business unit and how they did business – did not align with how I am." (Jenna:1). *translated* Jenna no longer felt invested in the audit firm and not a part of the work-family. She started to question whether the firm's strategy was still aligned with her values. In addition, she experienced

interpersonal as well as intrapersonal conflict in the relationship between herself and the leadership to which she was reporting.

The relationships between Jenna and the audit partners of the audit firm where she was an audit manager influenced her levels of job satisfaction and organisational commitment. In addition, the year before Jenna resigned her bonus had been less than one half of a thirteenth cheque despite the fact that she had been awarded the highest possible rating in terms of performance. This, unsatisfactory pay and benefits, another hygiene factor in terms of Herzberg's two factor theory (Yusoff et al., 2013; Herzberg, 1987), decreased Jenna's job satisfaction even more and she decided her investment in the audit firm to become an audit partner was no longer worth it and she resigned.

Beth's experience as an audit manager was negatively affected by her head of department. She revealed that this individual had been very racially orientated. She had made Beth feel uncomfortable on a number of occasions because of her behaviour towards people of a different race to hers. Beth described her experience as follows:

> "She was constantly demotivating people … constantly. She sent nasty emails. So, it was just unbearable. And one day she would greet you, the next day she'll … she would just ignore you … it depended on the mood that she was in. So, some days you knew you were not even going to approach her, the next day, when she was friendly, then you could ask her something. I mean, you can't work for a boss like that" (Beth:10).

Gerstner and Day (1997) found that, where respect for leaders is evident, leaders are reliable and followers are treated fairly, the followers' turnover intentions were low. In Beth's case, she had lost respect for the head of her department because of her actions and behaviour towards people of a difference race to hers. Beth also felt she was not treated fairly as her department did not allow flexible working hours, as did the rest of the audit firm. Furthermore, the leadership of Beth's department was not compassionate and supportive towards mothers when they had to attend to their family's urgent needs, for example, sick children. Beth highlighted this in the following way:

> "I had to be there in the morning … seven thirty. We all know that it's impossible if you're a mom of two and you need to … drop the kids … off, that is a problem. And

then I had to stay there until a quarter past four, regardless. If you had work to do or if you had nothing to do, you had to sit there. We had policemen that were checking you. So, if you were not there, then, all of a sudden, you would get a call asking why you were not in the office" (Beth:11).

"… one day, my son was very sick and I requested my senior manager 'May I please leave? I'll work from home'. He blatantly refused. I was not able to leave, so I had to put in leave for the day but I had work that … I had to do so I completed my work and sent it to him" (Beth:14).

Herzberg's two factor theory highlights working relationships as a determinant influencing job satisfaction (Yusoff et al., 2013; Herzberg, 1987) while work-family conflict (Dambrin & Lambert, 2008) and lack of supervisor support (Lesabe & Nkosi, 2007; Döckel, 2003) are associated with low retention. Beth had experienced a lack of work-life balance and a lack of trust and support from her senior manager when he had refused to allow Beth to work from home while looking after her sick child. These experiences had led to a decrease in Beth's level of job satisfaction and she had developed the turnover intentions that had eventually led to her resignation from the audit firm.

5.4.2.2 Audit firms run by the "old boys club"

The "old boys network" refers to an informal system of friendships and connections through which men use their positions of influence by providing favours and information to help other men. Connections and concessions are made at power lunches, at the sports bar, at the country club or on the golf course (Nelson, 2017). It is this type of "boys' club" domain where women are in the minority (Feagin, 1984:10) which makes it difficult for women to break through the glass ceiling and progress to partnership level as they are not part of this network (Valentine, 2001).

Patricia mentioned that she had experienced the audit world as like a boys' club and, specifically, the audit firm where she had worked. The boys club "run the big clients, and we [women] get what's left type of things" (Patricia:17). When it came to promotions, she felt that, when it is predominantly men making the decisions regarding promotions,

there is a subconscious bias to promote men ahead of women. Patricia explained her opinion as follows:

> "I think there is a boys' club mentality. I think it's not a visible one…it's a subconscious bias, if I could say that. So, it's not that anything would be done to make sure that you don't reach a position because you're a woman but I think it's, just, obviously, men will get on better with men, they'll socialise better and as you move along, those relationships become more and more important. So, I think it just comes more naturally and I think that's just … I suppose its human nature at the end of the day. And, unfortunately, when it comes to those levels of promotions, there is some subjectivity involved. … all of the people making the promotions are still men or the majority are men, it is going to be a little bit more difficult to make a decision to make a woman part of their group" (Patricia:20).

Wendy agreed with Patricia's opinion when she shared her experience:

> "But I feel that, in our department there were several white Afrikaans men, and they formed a clique, and white Afrikaans males, in my experience, I would say are inclined to think that women are not able to operate on the same level as them, do not have the same understanding about things and not the same appreciation for business. Therefore, should they have to choose someone to take with them to a meeting, then they take the man and not the woman. When they, yes, they also go for drinks afterwards, so they build a bond and you are never part of it and never part of that network. And, by the time that it gets to promotions, they will not consider you, they will consider the one with whom they engaged regularly" (Wendy:2). translated

Liana shared Wendy's point of view that the audit world was no different to the rest of the business world and it is difficult for women to be admitted and accepted into the man's world. Liana said:

> "It is … and at the audit firm is was like that as well. There is a boys' club and they go and play golf and they go hunting, and they do things over weekends. And the women are not part of it. It still happens these days, in any company. It is more difficult to become part of that club" (Liana:10). translated

Gammie and Gammie (1995), who highlighted the "*old boys club*" as contributing to the discrimination experienced by women auditors participating in a study in Scotland,

supported the views of the participants. In addition, Coulson-Thomas (1994), and Kerr-Phillips and Thomas (2009) found that "old boys" networks could be considered to promote a culture that does not reward high work performance but rewards people according to their inclusion in informal networks (e.g. the old boys club) and their gender. It appeared, therefore, that little had changed since 1995 as the participants in this study had struggled to become part of these "old boys" networks and had felt excluded due to the men's perception of their competence and commitment. The women's perceptions were that the "old boys clubs" in audit firms remain responsible for the elite audit clients, thus prohibiting women from gaining the experience necessary for promotion.

5.4.2.3 Discrimination experienced in the workplace

Discrimination in the workplace may present itself in many forms (Findlaw, 2018). Some forms of discrimination are manifested in obvious signs of improper behaviour while other signs of discrimination are more subtle (Findlaw, 2018). Discrimination may be said to occur when an employee is treated differently from their peers (Findlaw, 2018). The experiences of some of the participants in this study revealed that they had been treated differently because they were women and, specifically, mothers.

At the time of the study Patricia was a mother of two children. This meant she had to arrange to work from seven o'clock in the morning until four o'clock in the afternoon. This enabled her to be with her children in the afternoons. However, she revealed that fellow managers, men and managers without children of their own mainly, had made comments that:

> "… I was working half day when I would leave at four o'clock in the afternoon. … that did reflect in the ratings at the end of the day, I felt. … there was a change and I felt that my performance was still consistent but the fact that I wasn't putting in those ridiculous hours, like everybody else, and sending e-mails at nine o'clock at night/ten o'clock at night. Even though I would do my seven and a half hours plus come home and do e-mails in the evening. It was all around perception, who was at the office the last? And, for me, it just got to the point where I was … I just said 'What's the point? Because I'm not actually going to be promoted on merit, it's going to be based on perception, which is actually inaccurate … just because some people enjoy living at the office all day'" (Patricia:7).

In addition to the above, Patricia's performance rating had been negatively affected on her return from maternity leave due to the fact that she had not worked for five months of the audit firm's financial year. Patricia had been on maternity leave during the busy period of the audit firm's financial year and another manager had taken over one of her biggest audit clients during this time. Upon her return, she was informed that she would no longer be the audit manager of that specific audit client on which she had been working for the last eight years. As a result, she had had to start building up her portfolio of clients from scratch. In addition, her performance rating had not taken into account the fact that she had been on maternity leave and due to her not working and earning a certain amount of revenue for the firm, her performance rating had dropped to a lower level. Patricia stated:

> "… it was just that I felt like, the treatment and the expectation of me [relating to billing revenue for audit clients served] was exactly the same as for somebody who had had no maternity leave during their year" (Patricia:14).

At this point, Patricia felt that the partners did not value family life and did not support women with children and she "didn't want to carry on working in a place that doesn't actually value the fact that you are a mother and you have a family, that leaving at five o'clock is actually not unrealistic …" (Patricia:15).

The fact that their bonuses for the specific year in question had also been very small, "was the last straw" (Patriacia:25) for Patricia and she resigned from the audit firm. She indicated that the bonus she had received in her last year at the firm had been less than the bonus she had received in her first year as a junior manager, eight years earlier. The reason for this was that her rating had dropped and her bonus had been apportioned due to her maternity leave during the year and the firm's poor performance that year.

Nina had also experienced discrimination at the audit firm where she was employed. The fact that she was on maternity leave for four months during the year had also affected her performance rating and impacted negatively on her salary increase. Nina shared her disillusionment with me:

> "… you know we spoke about the [salary] increase perspective. Well, you weren't here, we [the partners] don't know what your performance was. But I said you have my history so …" (Nina:13).

The study by Zhao and Lord (2016) found that employers in China discriminated against women auditors who were mothers by not giving them fair opportunities for promotion and not valuing them after maternity leave. Likewise, this study found that forms of discriminatory practices appeared to be common. When women returned from maternity leave their audit clients who had been reallocated during their leave were not reallocated to them on their return. In addition, the fact that women were on maternity leave for a year impacted adversely on both their performance ratings and their compensation. This, in turn, had influenced these women's organisational commitment, specifically their affective commitment (Coetzee & Roythorne-Jacobs, 2012:86; Colquitt et al., 2009:68; Meyer & Allen, 1991), as they became despondent about the way in which their employers had treated them and they did not want to continue to work for the audit firms.

5.4.2.4 Lack of female role models

Career success often stems from good role models and career failure from a lack of such role models (Girona, 2002; McQuillan, 2002; Ross, 2002). The majority of the participants in this study had not had female role models to look up to in the audit firms where they were audit managers or to show them that it is possible to climb the corporate ladder despite a woman's responsibilities outside of work. The reason for this lack of role models was that the few women in partnership positions in the audit firms where the participants were audit managers were not perceived by the participants as having work-life balance [relating to work and life outside of work].

At the time of the study Jenna did not have children. She mentioned that there were no women role models at her firm who were women with families and who were demonstrating it was possible to be both a mother and an audit partner. In addition, certain experiences of those women audit managers with children she had witnessed had made her reconsider whether she should remain with the audit firm if she wanted to start a family of her own. The message from firm's leadership appeared to be that if an

employee, especially women employees, wanted a corporate career there were certain things they would have to give up. She shared the following thoughts:

> "So, during my training contract, there was this one female director, but she was not a role model to me of how I would want to be a partner. She did not have a family, she was unmarried, and I am not saying that is the be all and end all but … her work was her life." (Jenna:6). translated "... and there was not even a female in the firm with whom I felt I could discuss matters without their giving me some or other director story that if you want a career, there are certain things you need to give up" (Jenna:7). translated

Diane mentioned that there were female audit partners at the firm where she had been an audit manager but that she had not looked up to any of them and nor had she aspired to be like any of them. Corlia had had the same experience and shared that she had not been able to associate with any of the female audit partners at the audit firm where she worked. In addition, Hannah did not regard any of the female partners at the audit firm where she had worked for as the type of mother she would like to be. The participants all seemed to share the opinion that the female audit partners did not demonstrate balanced lives with sufficient time for their families and themselves and that their lives were just all about work. They commented as follows:

> "There were females in the firm but there was no-one that I thought I wanted to be like one day or I thought they were doing it well or I would want to do it the way they did it. So, there wasn't someone that I looked up to" (Diane:7).

> "... when I look at them, they are not role models for me … when I saw Dora and how she struggled in her personal life, I saw Kgomotso … we are not the same ... so it is difficult to align myself to her" (Corlia:9).

> "… there weren't a lot of women when we were there. It was really only Mariana who didn't have children, and worked like a maniac and whom I really didn't want to be like and then there was Bethany, who was a completely different person to me, she wasn't the type of mom that I wanted to ever be" (Hannah:4).

Sarah was of the opinion that the one or two female audit partners at the audit firm for which she had worked were not role models and people to look up to as they had demonstrated no balance between work and life as all they did was work. This had

probably influenced Sarah's opinion that it was not possible for women to have a successful career as well as a family. Liana agreed and said that not one of the female audit partners at the firm where she had worked had demonstrated the right balance in life. Patricia had had the same experience and shared that she would like to have the time to raise her children herself and not look to a nanny to do this. These three women relayed their opinions as follows:

> "We had one or two [female partners], and those women, I feel, are not good, not mentors, not people to look up to because they are people working themselves into the ground…And that is not a good role model for other women" (Sarah:8). translated

> "… the female partners that were there when I worked there … none of them had the right balance. The one was leaning too far to the one side, and the next one … was leaning too much to the other side …" (Liana:6). translated

> "I never felt as if there was anybody that I … like, represented that balance to me. … most of the women were actually unmarried and single and the ones who were mothers, they still worked ridiculous hours. I don't want a nanny raising my kids" (Patricia:22).

One of the obstacles that result in the underrepresentation of women in leadership and upper level management positions is commonly described in scholarly works and the media as a *glass ceiling* (Barreto, Ryan & Schmitt, 2009; Weyer, 2007). It is a challenge for women to break through the glass ceiling. One of the reasons for this seems to be that the women who do have ambitions and dreams have no one to whom to look up in terms of guidance and support (FAnews, 2017; Bingham, 2012). In a poll conducted in the United Kingdom of 1000 working women between the ages of 18 and 60 years old, 75% of the respondents indicated that they had few or no female role models in their organisations (Bingham, 2012). According to the participants in this study, the women who had progressed to audit partner level in the audit firms where they worked did not demonstrate the type of life that any of them [the participants] would like to have. They were not able to relate to any of the women audit partners because whether they [the women audit partners] were single or married with or without children, they worked extremely long hours and they had limited time to spend on interests outside of work and their family responsibilities.

Women appear to be excluded from senior management positions unless they are prepared to sacrifice family for paid work (Lewis, 2001; Liff & Ward, 2001; White, 2000:166-176). In a study conducted in New Zealand, interviews with women in senior management positions revealed that, for the majority of them, work-life balance was not a goal that they had selected in their pursuit of their careers while most of them with children relied heavily on a support system in the form of nannies, family members and their partners (McGregor, 2002). It would be interesting to investigate whether this is a generational difference in terms of which the younger generation attach more value to a work-life balance or whether the workload of audit partners is of such a nature that a balanced work-life is simply not possible.

5.4.3 Overloaded and undercompensated

Many of the participants mentioned that the working hours they had been required to work to attend to all their responsibilities were sometimes ridiculously long. They had had no work-life balance and had reached a point at which they had asked themselves whether it was really worth it. In addition, the compensation they received was not satisfactory when they reflected on the amount of time they committed to the audit firms. The hygiene factors of pay and benefits, as well as the negative impact on their personal life in terms of Herzberg's two factor theory (Yusoff et al., 2013), had all played a part in decreasing the participants' job satisfaction.

5.4.3.1 No work-life balance

Long working hours are a well-known facet of audit firms and time investment is a fundamental aspect of an auditor's professional identity (Crompton & Lyonette, 2011; Lewis, 2007; Anderson-Gough, Grey & Robson, 2001). The women who had worked towards promotion to partnership level had realised that the hours they were required to work were extremely long and sometimes unattainable but they had persevered as they had hoped their commitment would be recognised and result in promotion. However, they had reached a point where they could not continue at the required pace.

Nina had put in the hours required to progress in the audit firm. This was in line with the views of Coffey (1994) and Anderson-Gough et al. (2001) that time is used to both demand and demonstrate organisational commitment. She had already started her

family by the time she was promoted to audit manager. Accordingly, her working day had started at about seven o'clock to enable her to leave the office at five o'clock to tend to her family's needs. She had then worked later in the evening to finish her work from home. She shared that an individual who is capable of always delivering, no matter what, creates an expectation and that audit partners and audit firms take advantage of this. Nina had been working very long hours and, even during her maternity leave, she had attended to requests made by the audit partners and clients. She had felt that the partners had not respected the fact that she was on leave and had expected her to be available for work commitments. Nina indicated:

> "… that's just expected. … if I give her something at five o'clock, she'll get it to me by the next morning because she's that type of person. "So, it's creating that expectation and people not respecting that she has a life other than just auditing" (Nina:15). "You know, I was working during my maternity leave as well" (Nina:9).

For Wendy it had all just become too much. She had had too many clients to deal with and she was constantly stressed and exhausted. In line with Bakker and Demerouti (2007) who found that job demands such as high work pressure, emotional demands and role stress may lead to burnout and impaired health, the constant stress Wendy was experiencing was depleting all her personal resources and leaving her feeling exhausted. In addition, and in view of the negative correlation between commitment and stress, the constant stress was, in all likelihood, decreasing her affective commitment (Meyer et al., 2002). She expressed her emotional state:

> "… it was just too much work on one client to get to everything" (Wendy:13). translated "And then I also started to feel extremely overwhelmed and I just did not want to anymore … I was just perplexed, seriously. I did not know how to continue going forward" (Wendy:10). translated "I just reached a point where I could not do this anymore, and I did not want to do it anymore, and then, I did a bit of introspection and discussed it with people who are part of my life, and I just realised I have compromised myself for so long in respect of whom I really am. I am permanently in a state of overall exhaustion and stress" (Wendy:11). translated

Corlia felt that the work never ended, with some issues constantly requiring her attention. She was just not able to attend to everything. She also mentioned that, even if

there is some form of flexibility in terms of office hours, the work still had to be completed and so had to be completed after hours. Elsa had also reached the point where she was working nights as well as weekends to attend to everything. Hannah explained that it was not part of her personality to refuse to do something and to say that she had too much on her plate would have felt like a personal failure. This had resulted in her being allocated multiple large clients as well as other firm projects up to a point where she had realised she was overloaded. In their study Ribeiro et al. (2016) found that the impact of job overload and long hours are so pervasive and onerous among women audit managers who work in public audit practice that no single job resource measured in their study was able to buffer this impact. As was evident by the experiences they shared the women who participated in this study seemed to agree:

> "… somewhere along the line, you're going to drop the ball because it's physically impossible to get to everything" (Corlia:3).

> "… you've got the flexibility but you need to make up for it at ten pm at night – catching up on work …" (Corlia:16).

> "…I was miserable. I would cry often and you're working on Saturdays and your friends are out … I was miserable … with the work and the pressure and everything …" (Elsa:11).

> "… eventually, towards the end, I was just overloaded. And the problem was the more you do, the more you get and that's how I was … the problem is also my personality … and for me to say … I've got too much, for me personally that was failure …" (Hannah:7).

Similarly to the findings of Carr, Boyar and Gregory (2008), Jenna and Patricia had also experienced conflict as their work had resulted in tension as well as impacting adversely on their ability to fulfil their work responsibilities and satisfy their interests and responsibilities in their private lives. They shared their thoughts with me:

> "So, then, I started thinking 'why am I working so hard?' Because I do not have work-life balance" (Jenna:11). translated

"…I'm expected to do the same but then, when I get home, I'm also expected to do the same because I also have a husband on the receiving end. So, it's just tough to strike that balance" (Patricia:23).

Several studies have identified long working hours as a factor that pushes women audit managers from audit firms before they reach the level of audit partner (Ruiz Castro, 2012; Gammie et al., 2007; Monks & Barker, 1995; Paisey & Paisey, 1995). Working long hours and feeling overloaded and miserable had made these women reflect on whether it was really worth it to continue pursuing their goal of becoming an audit partner. They realised they had no work-life balance, their affective commitment had decreased due to the negative correlation between affective commitment and work-family conflict (Meyer at el., 2002) while some of them had reached the point where they just could not continue at the required and expected pace any longer.

5.4.3.2 Not paid enough for what we put in

Higginbotham (1997) found that, although high salaries are not essential, good and fair salaries showed a strong correlation with intention to remain with an organisation. According to Johnson and Ng (2015:125) as well as Hertzberg's two factor theory (Yusoff et al., 2013), compensation is a hygiene factor that influences an individual's job satisfaction. In addition, when the millennials feel they are receiving fair compensation, they are less likely to seek alternative employment (Carter, 2015; Maughan, 2014). The majority of the women in this study felt they were not properly compensated for the effort they put in and the sacrifices they made. This was evident in the following comments:

"I think all my friends outside public [audit] practice were getting [being paid] way more than what I was" (Corlia:5). … we're not properly compensated for the work that we do" (Corlia:6).

"… you don't mind putting in the time and the effort if you're going to be compensated for it at some point in time, I stuck it out for ten years to see when … is this going to happen? And it just never happened" (Diane:6).

"… my friends who had left the firm were earning more and having a life and I was working much harder and earning less in the firm" (Hannah:9).

"… remuneration does not justify the amount of time that I spent" (Jenna:5). translated

"… I thought we are being paid too little … for the hours that we put in" (Liana:8). translated

"… while I was there, I did not completely realise how little one was getting paid. Only now that I am out, in commerce, now I realise, oh, my word – they paid me peanuts, but for me it is not about the money" (Sarah:5). translated

The participants' shared experiences are confirmed by the finding of Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2000) that monetary compensation is not the only employee motivator as not one of the participants' decisions to resign from the audit firms had been predominantly influenced by their monetary compensation. In fact, in many cases, it was the secondary contributor. For many of the participants their salary had been acceptable, and, although the annual increases were low, they had felt that these were reasonable, but their bonuses at the end of the year had been disappointing and, in many instances, less than a thirteenth cheque. Thus, together with the rest of their experiences as audit managers, the unsatisfactory compensation had contributed to the decision to resign made by many of the participants.

5.4.4 Ambition to become an audit partner not distinct

Two of the participants shared openly that they never had the dream or ambition to become an audit partner. They had had different passions that were more important to them, for example, spending more time with family and follow a passion to teach. For another participant it had become clear during her time as an audit manager that her passion for strategy and the public sector had outweighed any ambition to climb the corporate ladder in the audit firm where she was working.

5.4.4.1 More important things in life

Diane described herself as not a big risk-taker and had decided to stay on as an audit manager at the audit firm after she had qualified as a CA(SA) as it had been the safe option which guaranteed her a job. The main reason why Diane had left the audit firm had been the workload and responsibilities which had become too much to handle, especially after she had had her children. It seemed that Diane portrayed the need-based career anchor lifestyle (Schreuder & Coetzee 2006:221), as she wanted to integrate her needs with those of her family and her career (Schreuder & Coetzee 2006:221). She had also realised that she was no longer adding value and had decided there were more important things in life than work. She had, therefore, resigned from the audit firm to stay at home to look after her family. Diane shared:

> "So, when I had my kids, that was difficult. … when they had a doctor's appointment or when my son was ill or in hospital or whatever, it just became too much. … to juggle driving to Jo'burg, managing audit teams, attending to my family, … something had to give. … that is basically the main reason why I left. I was even contemplating it before the kids were in the mix just because it got to a point where I wasn't enjoying what I was doing anymore (Diane:3).

> "I realised that there's stuff that's more important to me than just work" (Diane:15). "I think you're either … have that personality where you're driven and you want to climb the corporate ladder and you want to be the partner or the CEO … or you have my personality where … it was never something that I wanted and there were other things that were more important to me" (Diane:12). "I'm fortunate enough that I was able to resign and take it easy for a bit and focus on my family" (Diane:8). "When I resigned, I had two toddlers and I decided I'd rather spend my time on them because, there, I'm adding value and it feels like I'm doing something good, than working until two in the morning trying to balance a cash flow" (Diane:9).

Lewis and Humbert (2010) suggest that an ideal worker in public audit practice is an individual who is available 24 hours a day due to the job characteristics of long hours and deadline-driven and client-focused work (Gammie et al., 2007). This is in most cases almost impossible for women with family responsibilities. The long hours required by the audit profession make it difficult for a mother to tend to the needs of her husband and children and commit the required number of hours to the audit firm. More often than

not, this forces women to choose between their careers and their families and, in many cases, they choose their families. Dambrin and Lambert's (2008) conclusion supports this finding when they found that work-family conflict remains an area that is associated with the low retention of women in the audit profession (Dambrin & Lambert, 2008).

5.4.4.2 Different passions

Anne enjoyed the opportunity to develop young individuals into CAs(SA) at the audit firm as well as mentor trainees with little exposure to future career opportunities. As previously indicated, Anne was passionate about strategy and she was also passionate about working in the public sector. Nevertheless, Anne had realised that her passion to make a difference was not always in line with the strategy of the audit firm, which was to maximise revenue. She shared the following thoughts:

> "… if you're in a business at a big firm, your mandate is not to make a difference, it's to make money" (Anne:9). "… my objective and the business objectives clashed often when I feel I've made a difference … but, revenue-wise, I hadn't done much" (Anne:10).

Anne had recognised that, if she wanted to progress in the firm, she would have to transfer from her current division to the private sector division and focus on winning business and selling more services to clients. This was not close to her heart as her passion was strategy and the public sector and, most importantly, to make a difference. Thus, Anne demonstrated a value based career anchor – dedication to a cause (Schreuder & Coetzee 2006:221). She shared her thoughts:

> "What made me really leave was the options that are out there for me and to go up the ladder [become an audit partner] was not in line with the things I really want to do. I'm not making a difference anymore" (Anne:29).

Anne had therefore decided to resign from the audit firm and follow her true passion. She had left the firm for a CFO position in the public sector where she is involved in strategic decisions on a daily basis. I formed the impression that Anne would have remained at the audit firm if she had felt that the audit firm recognised her efforts as valuable and that there was some sort of future for her at the firm following her true

passion. Anne revealed that she had left the audit firm because she had realised that there was no plan for her there. She commented:

> "… the only thing that probably deterred me to say 'I want to go the full partner route' was the revenue. This means I must chase more money" (Anne:17) "… but what made me leave was that I realised there was no plan for me there. No-one had a plan for me" (Anne:27).

Elsa revealed that she had not had a plan for the next step in her career by the time she had qualified as a CA(SA) so, when the audit firm had approached her and offered her a position as audit manager, she had accepted the offer for two reasons. Firstly, she did not have another job and, secondly, although her passion had always been academia she realised that she first needed more practical experience.

Elsa loves teaching so she also became involved in a training role at the audit firm. However, she always felt that the pressure and deadlines hindered her learning. She shared:

> "I enjoyed learning, so I often felt pressured that I couldn't … I felt contained, I suppose, in an audit environment. I couldn't learn the way I wanted to learn because of a deadline. I just had to rush through things, just do it like it was last year and I didn't want to do that. I don't mind using last year's [working papers] but I want to understand … why we're doing it like that and is there a better way we can do it? … so I always found that the deadlines got in the way of the learning experience" (Elsa:4).

Elsa acknowledged that she is not a risk taker and had been nervous about leaving the audit firm even though she was not enjoying her work anymore and did not feel appreciated for the effort she was putting in. She said that the workload had been of such a nature that she had had to work almost every night as well as over weekends. Her workload had probably resulted in her feeling overloaded in line with the findings in the studies of Ribeiro et al., (2016) and Bakker and Demerouti (2007). In the four months leading up to her resignation, Elsa had realised she was unhappy and needed a change. She had always had a passion for academia, thus also displaying the value based career anchor – dedication to a cause (Schreuder & Coetzee 2006:221) and she knew she did not want to become an audit partner. She, therefore, resigned and joined

a tertiary institution as a senior lecturer in the department of accounting. Elsa expressed herself as follows:

> "… you worked every night, every weekend. I was miserable" (Elsa:12). "I don't want to live like this" (Elsa:5) "… I'm willing to work and put in hours if I know it's going to get me to where I want to be but I think I always knew I never wanted to be an audit partner. … the thought makes me shiver and it still makes me shiver and, at that point, it made me shiver. I was in audit to get experience to be able to teach" (Elsa:6). "I have always been interested in academia, I always knew I wanted to go back [to academia]" (Elsa:2).

Anne had realised her passion to make a difference did not align to the audit firm's objectives which were revenue driven. She had no longer seen a future for herself at the audit firm as she would never have fitted into the culture of maximising revenue above all else. Elsa always knew she wanted to teach. She stayed on as an audit manager to gain experience to enable her to excel as a teacher. She had been unhappy as an audit manager and had never wanted to become an audit partner. No intervention from the audit firm would have made a difference to her decision to resign. She resigned as soon as she felt she had gained sufficient experience to enter academia.

These two women had not resigned from the audit firms because of any of the previous factors identified. The reason for this may have been their value based individual career anchors (Bezuidenhout, Grobler & Rudolph, 2013; Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006:221). Individuals with these career anchors work towards important values in relation to improving the world in some manner (Schreuder & Coetzee, 2006:221) and Anne and Elsa had not foreseen themselves doing this at the audit firms.

5.5 CENTRAL STORY LINE

I summarised the experiences of the women audit managers in this study that had led to their resignations from the audit firms in order to develop a voluntary turnover model relating specifically to women audit managers (refer to figure 5.1). The motivation behind the development of the voluntary turnover model for women audit managers (Figure 5.1) was to develop a tool for audit firms to utilise in designing and implementing

effective retention strategies to increase their retention of women, thus ensuring that they become audit partners.

The ambition of the majority of the participants in this study to become an audit partner was evident. For many this had been apparent from the inception of their careers as audit managers while, for others, it had become clear as their careers progressed. Each participant had had her own unique experience while employed as an audit manager. Nevertheless, it was possible to distinguish emergent themes with similarities between the different experiences becoming obvious. The main themes included no clear progression path in the audit firm, firm leadership and organisational culture, being overloaded and undercompensated and ambition to become an audit partner not distinct.

Many of the participants shared that they had aspired to become audit partners but that they had been uncertain about their career progression paths in the audit firms. In some cases, they had not received clear guidance from the partners about the timing of potential promotions [career development] while, in other cases, the BEE pressures experienced by the audit firms had created the impression that promotions were not based on merit and performance but were aimed at ensuring that the BEE targets of the audit firms were met [BBBEE targets].

Misalignments in relation to the firm leadership and organisational culture had also played a major role in many of the participants' decisions to resign from the audit firms [supervisor relationships]. The participants had felt that the partnerships did not always treat them fairly and did not support them in their family responsibilities. Some of the women had experienced discrimination when their performance ratings were influenced by the fact that they had been on maternity leave, as well as by being expected to work during their maternity leave [discrimination]. Some had felt left out due to the "old boys club" being in charge of the day-to-day decisions and promotions in the audit firms ["old boys club"]. The participants were not able to identify any women role models who portrayed a balanced lifestyle when it came to work and family responsibilities and, as such, there was no one to whom they could look up or aspire to be like [lack of female role models]. All of these experiences had made it difficult for the women to align themselves with the values portrayed by the partners and the organisational culture of the audit firms.

Being overloaded with work to a point where one participant had been perplexed and had not known how to continue moving forward was not limited to that one participant. Many women shared that they had come to a point where it had all just become too much and something had had to give [work-life balance]. The fact that, according to them, their compensation did not satisfactorily take into account the number of hours they worked and the sacrifices they made had, for many, been the final factor that had convinced them to resign from the audit firms [compensation].

For some participants the aspiration to become an audit partner had never been very distinct as they had different passions in life, and things other than work were more important to them [ambition to become partner not distinct]. Although they had also complained about the long working hours and unfair promotion processes, the fact that they had not really wanted to become an audit partner had been the main driver of their decisions to resign from the audit firms.

Obtaining the CA(SA) qualifications had placed the participants in a favourable position in respect of their decision to resign as there were many alternative job opportunities to pursue [job opportunities]. Former audit clients of Hannah, Liana and Sarah had offered them positions, which they had accepted upon their resignations from the audit firms. Other than Diane, Wendy and Corlia, who had decided to take an employment gap after their resignations, all the other participants had found employment shortly after their resignations and in most cases before they had even left the audit firms.

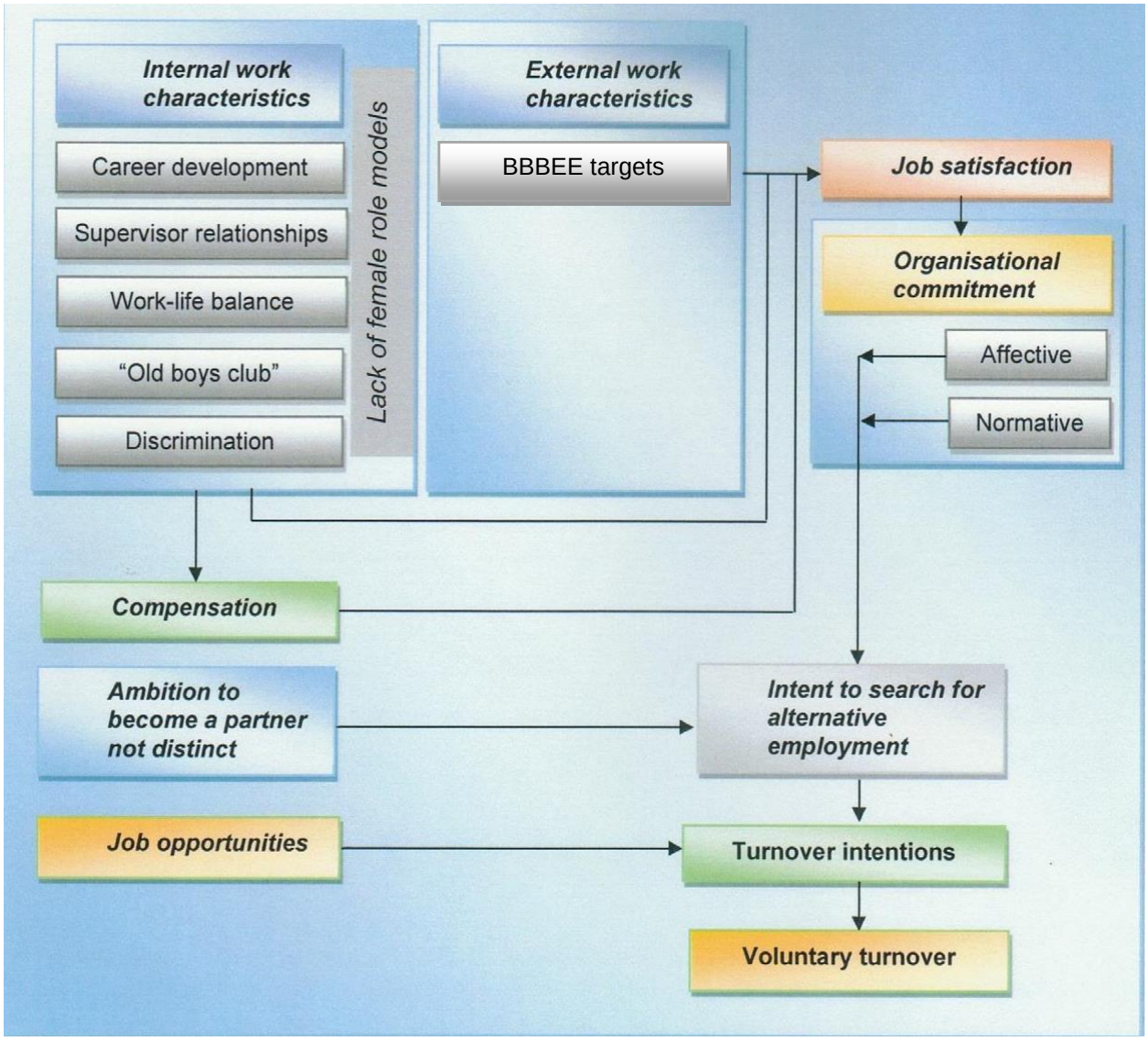

Figure 5.1: Voluntary turnover model for women audit managers

Source: Own compilation

With the exception of the level of education that had resulted in alternative job opportunities for the participants in this study, the demographic characteristics included in the voluntary turnover model of Kane-Sellers's (2007) (section 2.4.1) did not emerge as determinants influencing the turnover intentions and, ultimately, the voluntary turnover of the participants in this study. However, the work characteristics in Kane-Sellers' (2007) voluntary turnover model (section 2.4.1) that were evident in this study were career development and supervisor relationships. Compensation also emerged as a determinant in this study but did not contribute to voluntary turnover as a primary factor but rather as a secondary contributor in conjunction with one of the other work characteristics depicted in figure 5.1. Neither job characteristics nor training and development emerged as work characteristics that influenced the turnover intentions of

the participants in this study. Additional work characteristics that did emerge in this study included work-life balance, “old boys club”, discrimination against women as well as the BBBEE targets faced by the audit firms.

The negative experiences of the participants relating to the work characteristics influenced their job satisfaction levels and, ultimately, the levels of their organisational commitment, specifically their affective and normative commitment. Similar to the Kane-Sellers’ (2007) voluntary turnover model, declining job satisfaction and diminishing organisational commitment were the precursors of the alternative job-search activities that led, in the end, to voluntary turnover.

A determinant of the voluntary turnover of women audit managers that emerged in this study but is not included in the Kane-Sellers’ (2007) voluntary turnover model was “ambition to become a partner not distinct”. It was to be expected that this determinant would not be included in the Kane-Sellers’ (2007) voluntary turnover model as his model was a conceptual voluntary turnover model culminated from the synthesis of a number of the voluntary turnover models developed in turnover research that was not, however, limited to a specific profession, as was the case in this study.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to report on the findings of the study. These findings were related to the purpose of this study, namely, to explore the experiences of women audit managers to understand why they resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level. The data was produced by conducting semi-structured interviews, which were conducted with women audit managers who had resigned from audit firms before they had been promoted to audit partner level.

The interpretation and reporting style used in this chapter were explained in section 5.2 while the context of the interviews was described in section 5.3. The empirical findings were presented in section 5.4 in terms of superordinate and subordinate themes which were supported by verbatim extracts from the transcribed interviews. The main themes included no clear progression path in the audit firm, firm leadership and organisational culture, overloaded and undercompensated and ambition to become an audit partner not distinct. Each theme was then interpreted individually in light of the experiences

shared by the participants and discussed in relation to relevant literature. The experiences of the women audit managers in this study that had led to their resignations from the audit firms were summarised in section 5.5. The experiences explored in this study echoed some of the voluntary turnover determinants identified in previous studies on the turnover of women audit managers in audit firms but, at the same time, the findings resulted in new insights that could be considered by audit firms attempting to retain women in senior management positions. The determinants highlighted in this study were included in the voluntary turnover model for women audit managers presented in figure 5.1.

The next chapter presents an overview of the study and the research conclusions that were reached based on the findings reported in this chapter.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 5 presented the empirical findings of the study that described the experiences of women audit managers that had led to their resignations from the audit firms where they were employed before they had been promoted to audit partner level.

This chapter concludes the research study by presenting an overview of the study and aligning the research question with the empirical findings. In addition, the chapter highlights the contribution of the study, as well as the study's limitations. The chapter also includes recommendations for further research that arose from the study. This is followed by a reflection on the study in order to address the subjective experiences of the researcher and the conclusion to the study.

6.2 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

In general, the representation of women in management positions remains low worldwide (Terjesen et al., 2014). The glass ceiling [the obstacles that lead to the under-representation of women in leadership and upper level management positions] often prevents women from progressing to management positions at the same pace as men. This phenomenon is also evident in the audit profession where more women graduates enter the audit profession each year than men (Gammie et al., 2017; Broadbent & Kirkham, 2008; Gold, 2008a; Crosley, 2006). Nevertheless, the percentage of women audit partners in audit firms remains low (Gammie et al., 2017; FRC, 2016; Human Rights commission, 2012; Khadem, 2012; Kornberger et al., 2011; Wallace, 2009; Broadbent & Kirkham, 2008; Gold, 2008a, Gold, 2008b; Crosley, 2006; Monks & Barker, 1995).

Chapter 1 contained the introduction to the study and explained the problem statement, the purpose statement, the research question and the significance of the study. In addition, the chapter discussed the delineations of the study, the definitions of key terms

and concepts, the research methodology, as well as the research ethics that were taken into account during the study.

Chapter 2 presented a review of relevant literature on employee retention and turnover. It included a discussion on the determinants of voluntary turnover in terms of a conceptual voluntary turnover model which had culminated from a synthesis of a number of voluntary turnover models developed in previous research on employee turnover. Chapter 3, the second literature review chapter, provided context to the study by presenting an overview of the audit profession – the context within which women audit managers function. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the factors reported by research as contributing to turnover of women audit managers at audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner.

Chapter 4 explained the researcher's constructivist paradigm, including her relativist ontology and subjectivist epistemology, which had guided her inquiries and actions and influenced the research approach and design selected to answer the research question. The data production methods were described as well as the techniques used to perform the open coding of the transcribed interviews. The strategies that were implemented to ensure the quality of the data throughout the research process were also discussed. The chapter concluded with an explanation of the ethical considerations which were taken into account throughout the research process. Chapter 5 reported on the findings of the study on the experiences of women audit managers that had led to their resignations from the audit firms where they were employed before they were promoted to audit partner.

6.3 ALIGNMENT OF RESEARCH QUESTION AND EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

This study attempted to answer the research question being: Why do women audit managers resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level?

The empirical findings reported in chapter 5 aligned closely to the literature review, supporting the findings of previous studies on the turnover of women audit managers in audit firms. The experiences explored in this study echoed some of the voluntary turnover determinants identified in previous research, but at the same time, brought new insights that audit firms could consider in order to retain women in senior management

positions. The ambition of the majority of the participants in this study to become an audit partner was evident. For many this had been apparent from the inception of their careers as audit managers while, for others, it had become clear as their careers progressed. Although each participant had had her own unique experience while employed as an audit manager emergent themes were distinguished with similarities between the different experiences becoming obvious.

Work characteristics, including career development, supervisor relationships, work-life balance, “old boys club”, discrimination and BBBEE targets, represent the determinants that initiated the process that had eventually resulted in voluntary turnover in relation to the women audit managers in this study. The work characteristics could be broken down into internal and external work characteristics with the audit firms able to exercise a degree of control over the internal work characteristics but not the external work characteristics. The lack of female role models was also a factor that contributed to voluntary turnover in instances in which the internal work characteristics were evident factors in these women audit managers’ experiences. For example, when a participant experienced discrimination in the form of her performance bonus being adjusted due to her being on maternity leave during the year, she did not have a female role model from whom to seek advice from on how to address the situation. The lack of guidance and support from females in senior positions in the audit firms had made it difficult for the participants to deal with some of the experiences they encountered as audit managers.

In most instances, as soon as one of the internal work characteristics was experienced negatively, the compensation consideration came into play, with the undesirable work characteristics triggering a serious evaluation of the compensation and rewards received. The issue of compensation then became a secondary factor that affected participants’ job satisfaction. Whereas fair and satisfactory compensation could probably have overshadowed some of the negative internal work characteristics experienced and either delayed or halted the voluntary turnover process, unsatisfactory compensation helped to push the participants in the direction of voluntary turnover.

Job satisfaction and organisational commitment represent the psychometric factors that influenced the turnover intentions and, ultimately, the voluntary turnover of the women audit managers in this study. It appeared that, at the start of the careers of the women audit managers, their level of job satisfaction had been high. However, as their careers

progressed, their experiences in relation to opportunities for career development, support from their supervisors, work-life balance, discrimination, “old boys club” and BBBEE targets, together with the unsatisfactory compensation in most instances had impacted negatively on their job satisfaction. Lower levels of job satisfaction had then negatively affected their organisational commitment, specifically their affective and normative commitment. Due to the decreased levels of organisational commitment, the women audit managers had developed intentions to search for alternative job opportunities. Several alternative job opportunities were available to all the participants due to their qualifications and this had also increased their turnover intentions and then led ultimately to their voluntary turnover in the audit firms.

A novel determinant of the voluntary turnover of women audit managers that emerged from this study was that some of the participants’ ambitions to become audit partners had not been clearly articulated. The realisation of what was important to them had triggered their intentions to search for alternative job opportunities. Despite the majority of the women audit managers in this study aspiring to become audit partners, they had relinquished these dreams because of their experiences as audit managers.

6.4 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

The qualification path an individual must follow in order to qualify as a CA and to advance to the level of audit partner is both arduous and challenging. Although several women audit managers do pursue this path, many resign from the audit firms before they reach audit partner level.

Theoretical contribution

The study’s theoretical contribution included the expansion of the existing body of knowledge on the voluntary turnover of women audit managers in audit firms. A voluntary turnover model for women audit managers was developed (refer to figure 5.1 in chapter 5) as a tool for audit firms to utilise in designing and implementing effective retention strategies to increase the retention of women up to and including the position of audit partner. In addition, responding to the call for more interdisciplinary studies to enhance our understanding of the gender inequality phenomenon in accounting, this study provided an in depth exploration into the women audit managers’ experiences to

understand why they had resigned from the audit firms before being promoted to audit partner level.

Applied contribution

The study identified key determinants of the voluntary turnover of women audit managers that could facilitate the development of effective retention strategies by the audit firms to retain women up to and including the position of audit partner. In addition, the findings of the study could facilitate the drive by governments to promote gender diversity in the management structures of organisations in that it identified potential barriers to the equal representation of men and women in senior management positions in South African audit firms, specifically. The study could assist the South African government as well as the private sector in their attempts to address these barriers and, thus, facilitate the rapid acceleration of the diversity transformation process and achieve equality in the workplace.

Methodological contribution

The profile or nature of empirical accounting research in South Africa has been limited primarily to the testing of perceptions through surveys or questionnaires using basic statistical means in order to quantify the research results (Coetsee & Stegmann, 2012). However, many accounting scholars are internationally calling for a move away from mainstream accounting research to more interpretative research (Armstrong, 2008; Baker & Bettner, 1997). This study contributed on a methodological level by moving away from the tradition of quantitative research to the use of an explorative qualitative research approach and an IPA research design to explore and interpret the experiences of women audit managers in audit firms.

6.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although the study was conducted with due consideration of the research design best suited to achieve the purpose of the study, as well as adhering to the criteria for ensuring quality research, certain limitations were noted.

Methodological limitations

A qualitative IPA research design was employed to explore the experiences of the women audit managers. It is, however, acknowledged that a quantitative research approach or the use of an alternative research design may lead to findings which may differ from the findings of this study.

Non-probability sampling was used to select the research participants based on predetermined selection criteria as well as the researcher's personal judgement of participants who would yield relevant, rich data. In addition, the study was delimited to a small number of participants (twelve) as recommended by Smith et al. (2009:49) when using an IPA research design. This choice of sampling technique limited the number of audit firms involved in the study although a relatively homogenous sample was used as recommended by Smith (2008:56) for studies of this type. Consequently, the experiences of the research participants may not be representative of all women audit managers. For this reason, the findings may not be applicable to women audit managers and audit firms other than those included in this study.

Theoretical limitations

The conceptual voluntary turnover model presented by Kane-Sellers (2007), which had culminated from the synthesis of a number of voluntary turnover models developed in previous research on employee turnover, was used in this study to describe the various determinants of voluntary turnover and their interrelationships. These voluntary turnover determinations played a significant role in the development of the interview schedule (Appendix C) used during the data production stage of the study. However, the findings could be different to the findings reported in this study should a different model have been used.

Contextual limitations

This study focused on the experiences of women audit managers only and excluded those of men. The study also limited the audit firms represented in this study to JSE accredited audit firms as well as the AGSA. Consequently, the findings reported in this study may have been different if other audit firms and/or male audit managers had been included in the sample.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Through the analysis of the study findings, the researcher identified several areas for further research.

A voluntary turnover model for women audit managers was developed based on the findings emanating from the participants in the study. An area for future research could be to validate and refine this voluntary turnover model further.

All the participants had been employed by either one of the JSE accredited audit firms or the AGSA before their resignations as audit managers. An area for possible further research may be to explore whether the experiences of women audit managers at small and medium size audit firms are similar to those explored in this study.

Another possible further research opportunity may be to explore the experiences of women audit managers who were retained and promoted to audit partners to identify the possible strategies and interventions that had assisted these women to break the glass ceiling.

Döckel (2003) suggested that career anchors may have significant implications for job satisfaction, commitment and turnover intentions. A potential area for future research may be to identify the career anchors of women audit partners and to explore how audit firms could align their strategies to retain women audit managers. Alternatively, an analysis of the personality profiles of these women audit partners may provide insights into the type of personality traits which are important if women are to progress to audit partner level.

Further research could also include exploring the human resource strategies of the audit firms that are aimed at retaining women until they are promoted to audit partner positions and to assess whether these retention strategies should be adapted based on the experiences of the participants in this study.

6.7 REFLECTIONS ON THE STUDY

A researcher's position and interests affect all stages of the research process. Reflexivity is a research strategy that addresses the subjectivity of the researcher and enhances their ability and their understanding of the research (Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas & Caricativo, 2017). When I embarked on my research journey, I was not knowledgeable about research although I was intrigued by the phenomenon. During my initial reading of scholarly journal articles, my interest was immediately drawn towards qualitative research. Qualitative research appeared to me as more "in depth" and less to do with statistical analysis, which I am not passionate about.

Becoming an audit partner at the audit firm where I had previously been employed had been a dream and an ambition of mine throughout my career as an audit manager. However, significant events and experiences in my life had resulted in my decision to resign from the audit firm after having been an audit manager for seven years. The low representation of women as audit partners has always been a concerning and thought-provoking statistic to me. As a result, I pursued this study to explore the experiences of women audit managers that lead to their resignations from audit firms. I wanted to understand why so many women audit managers resign before they are promoted to audit partner level and I wanted to hear their stories first hand.

During this study, I experienced multiple emotions. Listening to the participants' stories brought back many wonderful, as well as unpleasant, memories of my time as an audit manager. I caught myself on many occasions thinking what would have happened and where I would have been today had I not resigned from the audit firm. I thought about how I would have shared my experiences as a women audit manager if I had been a participant in this study and I noted many similarities between my personal experience and those of the participants.

My research journey was challenging yet very rewarding and I sincerely hope it signifies the beginning of a successful research career.

6.8 CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that more women than men are entering the audit profession each year, women remain underrepresented in senior management positions in audit firms. It is essential that organisations no longer hide behind the excuse that women do not have the ambition to climb the corporate ladder or are content with being the primary caregivers at home. Retention strategies should address turnover determinants relating to women specifically in order to encourage women to break through the glass ceiling.

In the words of Malala Yousafzai:

"We cannot succeed when half of us are held back."

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

TURNOVER OF WOMEN AUDIT MANAGERS IN AUDIT FIRMS

Dear prospective participant

My name is Jurika Groenewald and I a senior lecturer in the Department of Auditing at the University of South Africa (UNISA). I am performing research with Prof E Odendaal, a professor in the Department of Auditing, and Prof A Bezuidenhout, a professor in the Department of Human Resource Management, towards a MPhil in Accounting Sciences at UNISA. I invite you to participate in this study entitled: Turnover of women audit managers in audit firms.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of women audit managers in order to understand why they resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level.

WHY ARE YOU INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited to participate in the research as you are a female chartered accountant (CA) who resigned from a large audit firm in South Africa after having being an audit manager for at least four years and I believe you could provide me with valuable information. Approximately twelve participants will be invited to participate in the study.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY/WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH INVOLVE?

This study involves one 60 to 90 minutes semi-structured, individual interview. The following questions will be posed:

1. Describe your career path since you qualified as a CA(SA).
2. Why did you decide to stay in public audit practice and accept a position as an audit manager after qualifying as a CA?
3. How would you describe your experiences as an audit manager?
4. Tell me about your career prospects at the firm before you resigned?
5. Describe your experiences that lead to your resignation?
6. Which firm intervention could have prevented you from resigning, if any?

The interview is semi-structured and, therefore, these questions form a basic guideline for the interview. Other questions may be asked as the discussion evolves. The interviews will be recorded using a digital voice recording after written consent to do this had been obtained from you. You may request that the voice recorder be switched off at any time.

CAN I WITHDRAW FROM THIS STUDY?

Participation in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and you will be asked to sign a written consent form. You are free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason.

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL BENEFITS OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

There are multiple studies which indicate that there is a shortage of CAs, specifically women CAs, in South Africa and very few women CAs at audit partner level. The study aims to contribute to audit firms as well as to the audit profession in general. Exploring the experiences of women audit managers that lead to turnover before they are promoted to audit partner level could assist audit firms to proactively implement effective retention strategies to retain their top female talent as audit managers and ensure that they progress to audit partners.

In addition, in order to facilitate the drive by the South African government to promote gender transformation this study aims to contribute to this initiative by highlighting the barriers to the equal representation of men and women in management positions in audit firms in South Africa.

WHAT IS THE ANTICIPATED INCONVENIENCE OF TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?

I understand that visiting your workplace during work hours may be inconvenient to you. I will provide you with as much notice as would be reasonably possible and I will be flexible in terms of the interview venues, dates and times. You are reminded that you may withdraw from the study at any time without any penalty.

WILL WHAT I SAY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Your name will not be recorded anywhere and no one will be able to link you to the answers you provide during the interview. You will be assigned a fictitious participant number and you will be referred to in this way in the data, any publications and/or other research reporting methods, such as conference proceedings. The persons transcribing and co-coding the interviews will sign a confidentiality agreement to ensure that the data remains strictly confidential.

HOW WILL INFORMATION BE STORED AND, ULTIMATELY, DESTROYED?

Hard copies of your answers will be stored for a period of five years in a locked cupboard in the researcher's office at Unisa for future research or academic purposes while any electronic information will be stored on a password protected computer. Hard copies of information will be shredded and electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of the computer through the use of relevant software. Copies of your answers will be stored by the researcher on a password-protected computer for a period of five years for future research or academic purposes. Information will be destroyed after a 5-year period has expired.

HAS THE STUDY RECEIVED ETHICAL APPROVAL?

The study has received ethical approval from the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Accounting Sciences at UNISA. A copy of the approval letter (Ref: 2017_CAS_035) may be obtained from the researcher.

HOW WILL I BE INFORMED OF THE FINDINGS/RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH?

If you would like to be informed of the final research findings, please contact me (082 316 8519 or groenj@unisa.ac.za).

Should you require any further information or should you want to contact me about any aspect of this study, you are welcome to do so. Should you have concerns about the way in which the research has been conducted, you may contact my supervisors, Prof E Odendaal (odendem@unisa.ac.za) or Prof A Bezuidenhout (bezuia@unisa.ac.za). In addition, you may contact the chairperson of the Research Ethics Review Committee of the College of Accounting Sciences, Lindie Grebe (grebel@unisa.ac.za), if you have any concerns of an ethical nature.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Kind regards
Jurika Groenewald

APPENDIX B

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that Jurika Groenewald, who is requesting my consent to take part in this research, has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and I have understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and I am willing to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty.

I am aware that the findings of this study will be anonymously processed in a research report, journal publications and/or conference proceedings.

I agree to the voice recording of the semi-structured interview.

Participant name and surname……

Participant signature…….. Date……

Researcher's name and surname……

Researcher's signature…….. Date……

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. INTRODUCTION

Good day. My name is Jurika Groenewald. As discussed telephonically, I am going to conduct a semi-structured interview with you, specifically to discuss your experiences as an audit manager at the audit firm at which you were employed.

Please note that you are not obliged to answer any of the questions. If you so choose you may withdraw from the interview at any stage. The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences of women audit managers to understand why they resign from audit firms before they are promoted to audit partner level. I confirm again that your personal details will remain confidential. The interview should take approximately 60 to 90 minutes. We are now going to start the interview process.

2. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Describe your career path since you qualified as a CA(SA)

2. Why did you decide to stay in public audit practice and accept a position as an audit manager after qualifying as a CA?

    - *Was becoming an audit partner part of your planned career path?*

3. How would you describe your experiences as an audit manager?

    - *Tell me about the characteristics of your daily responsibilities as an audit manager that you enjoyed?*
    - *Which responsibilities as an audit manager did you not enjoy?*
    - *How are you motivated in the workplace?*
    - *Describe how you felt about your compensation?*
    - *Describe your relationships with your fellow audit managers.*
    - *Describe your relationships with the audit partners with whom you worked.*

- *Describe the performance feedback process at the audit firm.*
- *What was your experience of the training and development opportunities at the firm?*

4. Tell me about your career prospects at the firm before you resigned.

   - *Promotion to partner level*

5. Describe the experiences that led to your resignation.

6. Which firm intervention could have prevented you from resigning, if any?

Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experiences in general?

3. CONCLUDING

Thank you for your participation and the time you made available for this interview. Please refer to the information letter again for my contact details and other information.

APPENDIX D

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I …….. (name and surname), hereby agree to the following regarding the transcription of the digital recordings:

- The contents of the digital recordings, as well as the identities of the participants, their organisations and any other individuals or organisations mentioned in the recordings will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
- The digital recordings, the transcriptions or the content thereof will not be discussed with or made available to any person other than the researcher, Jurika Groenewald.
- All digital recordings and transcriptions, whether in electronic or hard copy format, will be kept securely for the entire period since it received and until it is returned/given to the researcher.
- All hard copies of the transcriptions will be shredded once the transcription thereof is complete.
- All copies of the digital recordings will be returned to the researcher and all electronic copies of the transcriptions will be destroyed after copies thereof have been given to the researcher.

Full name and surname: _____
(Transcriber)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX E

CO-CODER CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

I …….. (name and surname), hereby agree to the following regarding the coding of the transcriptions:

- The contents of the transcriptions, as well as the identities of the participants, their organisations and any other individuals or organisations mentioned in the recordings will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.
- The content of the transcriptions and the results of the coding will not be discussed with or made available to any person other than the researcher, Jurika Groenewald.
- All copies of the transcriptions and the coding, whether in electronic or hard copy format, will be kept securely for the entire period since it received and until it is returned/given to the researcher.
- All hard copies of the transcriptions and coding will be shredded once the coding thereof is complete.
- All electronic copies of the coding will be destroyed after copies thereof have been given to the researcher.

Full name and surname: _____
(Co-coder)

Signature: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX F

VERBATIM QUOTES TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

TRANSLATED QUOTES	ORIGINAL QUOTES
"I guess the main reason was that I … I wanted … my original … since I… I did vacation work at Firm B, since … I was a first-year student. So, I have always wanted to be a partner" (Jenna:2).	"Ek skat die groot rede was ek … ek wou … my oorspronklik … al vandat ek…ek het vac work by Firm B gedoen, al van…vandat ek eerstejaar student was. So wou nog altyd 'n vennoot wees" (Jenna:2).
"But there were, you know, why I worked so hard and tried, yes, to deliver the best service to my clients, was not just to get industry experience, it was because I wanted to grow in the company … and maybe become a partner" (Liana:7).	"Maar daar was, jy weet, hoekom ek so hard gewerk het en hard probeer het en, ja, probeer die beste diens lewer vir my kliënte was nie net want ek wil industrie experience hê nie, dit was dat ek wil groei in die company ... en dalk 'n vennoot word" (Liana:7).
"I think I was, maybe, about second year, articles when I decided 'No, I like this, I am definitely going to become a partner'. So, I mean, it was never an issue at all that I would not become a partner. So, when I qualified, I mean, I told everyone I was going to stay on at Firm C and I told everyone I was going to become a partner. So, it was kind of my goal and I ensured that I worked on the right clients, that I worked with the right people, and … but I gave myself ten years from the day I was promoted to an AM [audit manager] to the day that I would become a partner. And … when that ten year mark came and I realised it was not going to happen in the next year or so, then I decided I needed to make a plan" (Sarah:1).	"Ek dink ek was seker omtrent so tweede jaar articles toe't ek besluit nee, ek hou van hierdie ding, ek gaan vir seker 'n vennoot word. So, ek meen, dit was nooit vir my 'n kwessie enigsins ek gaan nie 'n vennoot word nie. So toe ek gekwalifiseer het, ek meen, ek het vir almal gesê ek gaan aanbly by Firma C en ek het vir almal gesê ek word 'n vennoot, so dit was so half my goal en ek het seker gemaak laat ek op die regte kliënte werk, laat ek saam met die regte mense werk, en … maar ek het vir myself tien jaar gegee van die dag wat ek 'n AM [Audit manager] geword het tot die dag wat ek vennoot word. En daai … toe daai tien-jaar mark kom en ek besef dit gaan nie in die volgende jaar of so gebeur nie toe't ek besluit ek moet 'n plan maak" (Sarah:1).
"… I do not believe a woman can have it all. I feel, kind of, you cannot have your cake and eat it. I have never seen someone that could make it work" (Sarah:9).	"... ek glo nie 'n vrou kan dit alles hê nie. Ek voel so half jy kan nie jou brood aan beide kante gebotter hê nie. Ek het nog nooit iemand gesien wat dit laat maak werk nie" (Sarah:9).
"I really wanted to know, I mean, tell me how long I should be here. After five years? What do I need to do? And no one could really give me that answer" (Sarah:10).	"Ek wou graag geweet het, ek meen, sê vir my hoe lank moet ek hier wees. Na vyf jaar? Wat moet ek doen? En niemand kon eintlik daai antwoord gee nie" (Sarah:10).
"I initiated the discussions but it did not result in anything actionable" (Jenna:9). "Or, that is the other thing, if you think you are never going to get there say it. Burst the bubble. There is nothing worse than stringing someone along saying 'Oh, you will be a director one day, and twenty years later you are still a senior manager" (Jenna:10).	"Ek het die discussions ge-initiate maar daar het nooit actionable goed uitgekom nie" (Jenna:9). "Of, en dis die ander ding, if you think they're never gonna get there sê dit. Burst the bubble. Daar's niks erger as om aangestring te word en sê o, jy gaan eendag 'n direkteur wees, en twintig jaar later is jy nog 'n senior manager nie" (Jenna:10).
"… we would make you a partner, but you do not have the right skin colour [being white]" (Sarah:7).	"… ons sal jou 'n vennoot maak maar jou vel [wit] is nie die regte kleur nie" (Sarah:7).
"… it needs to be fair and based on your performance" (Liana:11). "… I cannot go along	"… dit moet regverdig wees en dit moet gebaseer wees op jou performance (Liana:11). … ek kan

TRANSLATED QUOTES	ORIGINAL QUOTES
with something that is not fair" (Liana:13).	nie saamleef met goed wat nie regverdig is nie" (Liana:13).
"… the system … is not fair, and they will definitely not for me … only for me make a decision not to follow the … the country's BEE regulations. I mean, it is ridiculous to expect something like that" (Liana:12).	"… die stelsel … is nie regverdig nie, en hulle gaan natuurlik nie vir my … net vir my 'n besluit maak laat hulle nie meer die … die land se BEE regulasies gaan volg nie. Ek meen, dit is nou...belaglik om so iets te verwag" (Liana:12).
"There … was another girl, she … a black woman … she and I were both senior managers at that stage, and I knew that they would promote her to AD [associate director] because of the BEE factor" (Wendy:1).	"Daai …was 'n ander meisie, sy … 'n swart vroutjie ... ek en sy was op daai stadium saam senior manager, en ek het geweet dat hulle haar gaan promote AD [associate director] toe as gevolg van die BEE faktor" (Wendy:1).
"… the values of the leadership in my business unit and how they did business – did not align with how I am" (Jenna:1).	"... leadership in my business unit se values en hoe hulle besigheid doen – align nie met hoe ek is nie" (Jenna:1).
"But I feel that, in our department there were several white Afrikaans men, and they formed a clique, and white Afrikaans males, in my experience, I would say are inclined to think that women are not able to operate on the same level as them, do not have the same understanding about things and not the same appreciation for business. Therefore, should they have to choose someone to take with them to a meeting, then they take the man and not the woman. When they, yes, they also go for drinks afterwards, so they build a bond, you know, and you are never part of it and never part of that network. And, by the time that they, that it gets to promotions, they will not consider you, they will consider the one with whom they engaged regularly" (Wendy:2).	"Maar ek voel ook in ons departement was daar baie wit Afrikaanse mans, en hulle het 'n kliek gevorm, en wit Afrikaanse mans in my ervaring nou, sal ek sê is geneig daartoe om te dink dat vrouens nie op dieselfde *level* as hulle kan *operate* nie, nie dieselfde begrip van goeters het nie, nie dieselfde waardering vir besigheid het nie. So as hulle moet kies, hulle vat iemand in 'n meeting in, dan vat hulle die man saam met hulle en nie die vrou nie. As hulle…ja, hulle gaan ook vir drinks na die tyd, so hulle bou hierdie hele band, jy weet, en jy's nooit deel daarvan nie, so jy raak nooit deel van daai netwerk nie. En teen die tyd wat hulle…dit kom by promotions, gaan hulle jou nie oorweeg nie, hulle gaan daai een oorweeg met wie hulle die heeltyd engage het" (Wendy:2),
"It is… and at the audit firm is was like that as well. There is a boys' club and they go and play golf and they go hunting, and they do things over weekends. And the women are not part of it. It still happens these days, in any company. It is more difficult to become part of that club" (Liana:10).	"Dit is…en by die oudit firma was dit maar ook so. Daar's 'n *boys' club* en hulle gaan speel gholf en hulle gaan jag, en hulle gaan naweke dit doen. en…en die vrouens is nie deel daarvan nie. Ek dink nie…dit gebeur nou nog in…in enige maatskappy. Dit is moeiliker om in daai club in te kom" (Liana:10).
"So, during my articles, there was one female director, but she was not a role model to me of how I … would want to be a partner. She did not have a family, she was unmarried, and I am not saying that is the be all and end all but her work was her life (Jenna:6). ... and there was not even in the firm a female with whom I felt I could discuss matters without their giving me some or other director story that, you know, if you want a career, there are certain things you need to give up" (Jenna:7).	"So, toe ek in klerkskap was was daar een vrou direkteur, maar sy was nou nie vir my die rolmodel van hoe ek … nou wil 'n vennoot wees nie. Sy het nie 'n familie nie, sy het nie 'n man nie, en ek sê nie dis die be-all and end-all nie maar haar werk was haar lewe. (Jenna:6) ... en daar was nie eintlik vir my eers in die firma 'n vrou wat ek gevoel het ek kan mee gaan praat sonder dat hulle vir my een of ander direkteur storie gee van, jy weet, as jy career wil hê, moet jy sekere goed opgee ..." (Jenna:7).
"We had one or two, and those women, I feel, are not good … good, not mentors, not people to look up to because they are people working	"Ons het een of twee, en daai vrouens, voel ek, is nie 'n goeie … goeie, nie mentors nie, dis nie mense om na op te kyk want dit is mense wat

TRANSLATED QUOTES	ORIGINAL QUOTES
themselves into the ground … And that is not a good role model for other women" (Sarah:8).	hulleself half des moers toe werk ... En dit is nie 'n goeie rolmodel vir ander vrouens nie" (Sarah:8).
"… the female partners who were there when … when I worked there … they did no … none of them had the right balance. The one was leaning too far to the one side, and the next one … I do not know, was leaning too much to the other side …" (Liana:6).	"... die vrou-vennote wat daar was toe…toe ek gewerk het, daar was … hulle het nie…nie een van hulle het die regte balans gehad nie. Die een was te veel die eenkant toe, en die ander een … wa … ek weet nie, was te veel die ander kant toe ..." (Liana:6).
"… it was just too much work on one client to get to everything" (Wendy:13). "And then I also started to feel extremely overwhelmed and I just did not want to anymore … I was just perplexed, seriously. I did not know how to continue going forward" (Wendy:10). "So, yes, I just reached a point where I could not do this anymore, and I did not want to do it anymore, and then, I did a bit of introspection and discussed it with people who are part of my life, and I just realised, you know, I have compromised myself for so long in respect of whom I really am. I am permanently in a state of overall exhaustion and stress" (Wendy:11).	"… dis net te veel werk op een kliënt om by alles uit te kom" (Wendy:13). "En toe het ek ook verskriklik oorweldig begin voel en ek wou net nie meer nie…ek was net so raad op, regtig. Ek het nie meer geweet hoe vorentoe nie" (Wendy:10). So ja, ek het … ek het net 'n algemene punt bereik van ek kon nie meer nie en ek wou nie meer nie, en toe't ek 'n bietjie introspeksie gedoen en ek met mense wat ook deel is van die lewe gepraat, en toe't ek net besef, weet jy, ek compromise my al so lank met wie ek is. Ek is permanent in 'n toestand van algehele uitputting en stress" (Wendy:11).
"So, then I started thinking why am I working so hard? Because I do not have work life balance" (Jenna:11).	"So, toe begin ek dink why am I working so hard? Want ek het nie work-life balance nie" (Jenna:11).
"… remuneration does not justify the amount of time that I sacrificed" (Jenna:5).	*"... remuneration justify* nie die hoeveelheid tyd wat ek opgee nie" (Jenna:5).
"… I thought we are being paid too little… for the hours that we put in" (Liana:8).	"… ek het gedink ons word te min betaal …vir die ure wat ons insit" (Liana:8).
"… so package wise, not too upset about it, but bonuses were a disappointment, my last bonus did not even amount to a thirteenth cheque" (Wendy:6).	"... so pakket-gewys, nie te erg ontsteld daaroor nie, maar bonusse is 'n teleurstelling my laaste bonus was nie eers ekwivalent aan 'n dertiende tjek nie" (Wendy:6).
"Now, while I was there, I did not completely realise how little one was getting paid. Only now that I am out, in commerce, now I realise, oh my word – they paid me peanuts, but for me it is not about the money" (Sarah:5).	"Nou, terwyl ek daar was, het ek nie heeltemal besef hoe min word mens betaal nie. Eers nou laat ek uit is, in *commerce*, nou besef ek, o Vader – hulle't my niks betaal nie, maar dit gaan nie vir my oor betaling nie" (Sarah:5).
"So, it was basically in the sphere where I was, if someone were to be promoted to partner, it had to be a black woman" (Sarah:12).	"So dit was so half, in my sweer waar ek was, was dit as daar 'n nuwe vennoot kom, moet die 'n swart vrou wees" (Sarah:12).
"… so I wanted to move on, I mean, I would have sat there until ten o'clock if I had to or … twelve o'clock or one o'clock to get the work done" (Sarah:18).	"... so ek wou beweeg het so, ek meen, ek sou daar gesit het tot tien-uur as ek moes of … twaalf-uur of een-uur om daai werk gedoen te kry" (Sarah:18).
"So, it was a bit of an emotional rollercoaster because … I felt that I had invested so much time and nothing had come of it" (Sarah:17).	"So dit was vir my 'n bietjie van 'n emotional roller coaster want … ek gevoel ek het so baie tyd geïnvesteer en daar het niks daarvan gekom nie" (Sarah:17).
"… the best person for the job should be chosen, should he be pink, purple, orange, green … whatever, it should be the best one for the job, because when you make that decision, then it is the best for the company" (Sarah:14).	"… die beste ou vir die job moet gekies word, of hy pienk, pers, oranje, groen ... whatever is, dit moet die beste ou vir die job wees, want as jy daai besluit maak, dan is dit die beste vir die maatskappy" (Sarah:14).

APPENDIX G

VERBATIM EXTRACTS SUPPORTING THE SUPERORDINATE AND SUBORDINATE THEMES

THEMES	QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS
Unclear progression path in the audit firm	
No formal or transparent career progression discussions or agendas	"I really wanted to know, I mean, tell me how long I should be here. After five years? What do I need to do? And no one could really give me that answer" (Sarah:10). *translated* "… the problem is that they [audit partners] didn't … they were too scared to make promises [about when promotion to audit partner could be expected]" (Hannah:12). "I'm really working … excuse the language, working my arse off – but not getting clear direction, okay, you are putting this effort in, what am I doing to … you know, to develop you to make you partner …" (Nina:4). "… it needs to be driven from the organisational level…this is what we want to achieve … you need to have that transparency. If they said I … you know, if they had told me 'We don't see you as a partner' that was a different story but don't make empty promises (Nina:7). "… don't leave me hanging and say, okay, do this, do that, but not giving me, you know, you need a timeline or else it's never going to happen" (Nina:16). "… there wasn't proper career pathing. … and the thing is, if you said you wanted to be a partner, there wasn't that conversation to say where you would actually be placed [as a partner in which business unit]" (Patricia:13). "I initiated the discussions but it did not result in anything actionable" (Jenna:9). "Or, that is the other thing, if you think they're never going to get there, say it. Burst the bubble. There is nothing worse than stringing someone along saying, Oh, you will be a director one day, and twenty years later you are still a senior manager" (Jenna:10). *translated*
Perception of unfair and inconsistent promotion processes	"… hoping to become a partner, I would have become a partner, right. Like, I had enough skills to do it but the problem is I would have been in a pipeline and then I was, like, am I going to wait for five years in a pipe doing this job, like, nothing more, which I've already been doing for almost three years, as a senior manager. And then I realised that the pipeline was getting a bit longer and longer and longer" (Hannah:10). "… we would make you a partner, but you do not have the right skin colour [being white]". (Sarah:7) *translated*

THEMES	QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS
	"… it needs to be fair and based on your performance" (Liana:11). *translated* "… I cannot go along with something that is not fair" (Liana:13). *translated* "… the system … is not fair, and they will, definitely, not for me…only for me make a decision not to follow the … the country's BEE regulations. I mean, that is ridiculous to expect something like that" (Liana:12). *translated* "… they were more cognisant or more inclined to promote African females as compared to Indian females. I noticed a lot of inconsistencies [in the promotion process]" (Nina:2). "… my … my intentions were very clear and upfront, this is what I want to do, and, whenever you asked the questions, no, you know, you need to do this, and then you see, you know, African ladies going on leadership forums … and they … they … they're working at levels beneath you. It actually makes you very despondent and why … you know … very despondent, where do you … do they actually see your worth?" (Nina:5). "There … was another girl, she … a black woman … she and I were both senior managers at that stage, and I knew that they would promote her to AD [associate director] because of the BEE factor" (Wendy:1). *translated* "… the politics in the office and the BEE stuff that they brought in, it just felt, at some point, that it was a bit unfair, you know. People who, maybe, became managers, after me, were promoted to senior manager in a much shorter time and they were on the cards for going to partner assessments …" (Diane:14). "I did apply [for promotion to senior manager] quite a few times in the firm but, due to targets, equity targets, I was not promoted" (Beth:9).
Firm leadership and organisational culture	
Values and quality of firm leadership	"When I got there, it was tearing up my portfolio of evidence, basically trying to find loopholes and, I mean, I got feedback as if I were being dishonest, you know, like, your answers are, like, rehearsed. You know, those…are the type of feedback and I was, like but, guys, this is not how you do things" (Corlia:10). "…it changed my perception of the firm" (Corlia:14). "… if this is what 'Firm A' is and a partnership is, I don't want to be associated with it" (Corlia:15). "So, I mean, the one thing I said is that I enjoy auditing, like, if another firm comes to me and wants me to come and join, I will definitely join them" (Corlia:17). "… the values of the leadership in my business unit and how they did business – did not align with how I am" (Jenna:1). *translated*

THEMES	QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS
	"She was constantly demotivating people … constantly. She sent nasty emails. So, ja, it's … it was just unbearable. And, one day, she would greet you, the next day she'll … she would just ignore you … it depended on the mood that she was in. So, some days you knew you were not even going to approach her, the next day, when she was friendly, then you could ask her something. I mean, you can't work for a boss like that" (Beth:10). "I had to be there in the morning … what was it? Seven thirty? We all know that it's impossible if you're a mom of two and you need to … drop the kids … off, that is a problem. And then I had to stay there until a quarter past four, regardless. If you had work to do or if you had nothing to do, you had to sit there. We had policemen that were checking you. So, if you were not there, then, all of a sudden, you would get a call asking why you were not in the office?" (Beth:11). "So, one day, my son was very sick and I requested my senior manager 'May I please leave? I'll work from home'. He blatantly refused. I was not able to leave, so I had to put in leave for the day but I had work that … that I had to do so I completed my work and sent it to him" (Beth:14).
Audit firms run by the "boys club"	"… at the end of the day, it became almost like this is the boys' club, they run the big clients, and we get what's left type of things" (Patricia:17). "I think there is a boys' club mentality. I think it's not a visible one … it's a subconscious bias, if I could say that. So, it's not that anything would be done to…like, to make sure that you don't reach a position because you're a woman but I think it's, just, obviously, men will get on better with men, they'll socialise better and, you know, as you move along, those relationships become more and more important. So, I think it just comes more naturally and I think that's just … I suppose its human nature at the end of the day. And, unfortunately, when it comes to those levels of promotions, there is some subjectivity involved. … all of the people making the promotions promotions are still men or the majority are men, it is going to be a little bit more difficult, you know, to make a decision to make a woman part of their group" (Patricia:20). "But I feel that, in our department there were several white Afrikaans men, and they formed a clique, and white Afrikaans males, in my experience, I would say are inclined to think that women are not able to operate on the same level as them, do not have the same understanding about things and not the same appreciation for business. Therefore, should they have to choose someone to take with them to a meeting, then they take the man and not the woman. When they, yes, they also go for drinks afterwards, so they build a bond, you know, and you are never part of it and never part of that network. And, by the time that they, that it gets to promotions, they will not consider you, they will consider the one with whom they engaged regularly" (Wendy:2). *translated*

THEMES	QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS
	"It is … and at the audit firm is was like that as well. There is a boys' club and they go and play golf and they go hunting, and they do things over weekends. And the women are not part of it. It still happens these days, in any company. It is more difficult to become part of that club" (Liana:10). *translated*
Discrimination experienced in the workplace	"… comments that I was working half day when I would leave at four o'clock in the afternoon. From my fellow staff, mostly guys, and people without kids. So, without understanding and, for me, that did reflect in the ratings at the end of the day, I felt. I don't know if they will ever say that it was … but it, definitely … there was a change and I felt that my performance was still consistent but the fact that I wasn't putting in those ridiculous hours, like everybody else, and sending e-mails at nine o'clock at night/ten o'clock at night. Even though I would still do my seven and a half hours plus still come home and do e-mails in the evening. It was all around perception, who was at the office the last? And, for me, it just got to the point where I was … I just said 'What's the point? Because I'm not actually going to be promoted on merit, it's going to be based on perception, which is actually inaccurate…just because some people enjoy living at the office all day'" (Patricia:7). "… it was just that I felt like the treatment and the expectation of me [relating to billing revenue for audit clients served] was exactly the same as for somebody who had had no maternity leave during the year" (Patricia:14). "I didn't want to carry on working in a place that doesn't actually value the fact that you are a mother and you have a family and that leaving at five o'clock is actually not unrealistic …" (Patricia:15). "… you know we spoke about the increase perspective. Well, you weren't here, we don't know what your performance was. But I said you have…you have my history so …" (Nina:13).
Lack of female role models	"So during my articles, there was one female director, but she was not a role model to me of how I … would want to be a partner. She did not have a family, she was unmarried, and I am not saying that is the be all and end all but her work was her life" (Jenna:6)" ... and there was not even a female in the firm with whom I felt I could discuss matters without their giving me some or other director story that, you know, if you want a career, there are certain things you need to give up" (Jenna:7). *translated* "There were females in the firm but there was no-one that I thought I wanted to be like that one day or I thought they were doing it well or I would want to do it the way they did it. So there wasn't someone to whom I looked up" (Diane:7). "... when I look at them, they are not role models for me…I mean when I saw Dora and how she struggled in her personal life, I saw, like Kgomotso … and that's … we are not the same ... so it is difficult to align myself to her" (Corlia:9). "There were females in the firm but there was no-one that I thought 'I

THEMES	QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS
	want to be like that one day' or I thought they were doing it well or I would want to do it the way they do it. So there wasn't someone to whom I looked up" (Diane:7). "… there weren't a lot of women when we were there. It was really only Mariana who didn't have children, and, like, worked like a maniac and whom I really didn't want to be like and then there was Bethany, who was a completely different person to me, like, completely, and she wasn't the type of mom that I wanted to ever be" (Hannah:4). "We had one or two, and those women, I feel, are not good…good, not mentors, not people to look up to because they are people working themselves into the ground … And that is not a good role model for other women" (Sarah:8). *translated* "… the female partners who were there when…when I worked there … they did not … none of them had the right balance. The one was leaning too far to the one side, and the next one… I do not know, was leaning too much to the other side …" (Liana:6). *translated* "I never felt as if there was anybody who I … like, stopped that balance to me. Yes, and most of the women were actually unmarried and single and then, the ones who were mothers, they still worked ridiculous hours. And that's … for me, I don't want a nanny raising my kids because then I'm not there" (Patricia:22).
Overloaded and undercompensated	
No work-life balance	"… that's just expected. You know, if I give her something at five o'clock, she'll get it to me by the next morning because she's that type of person, she'll go to bed, she'll get up at two o'clock in the morning, and she will get it done. So, it's creating that expectation and people not respecting that, okay, she has a life other than just auditing" (Nina:15). "You know, can I tell you something? I was working during my maternity leave as well" (Nina:9) "… it was just too much work on one client to get to everything" (Wendy:13). "And then I also started to feel extremely overwhelmed and I just did not want to anymore … I was just perplexed, seriously. I did not know how to continue going forward" (Wendy:10). "So, yes, I just reached a point where I could not do this anymore, and I did not want to do it anymore, and then, I did a bit of introspection and discussed it with people who are part of my life, and I just realised, you know, I have compromised myself for so long in respect of whom I really am. I am permanently in a state of overall exhaustion and stress" (Wendy:11). *translated* "And, somewhere along the line, you're going to drop the ball because it's physically impossible to get to everything" (Corlia:3). "… you actually never had … yes, you've got the flexibility but you

THEMES	QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS
	need to make up for it, you know, at ten am in … I mean, ten am at night – catching up on work …" (Corlia:16). "But I was miserable. Like I … like, I would cry often and you're working on Saturdays and your friends are out and … but I was miserable …with the work and the pressure and everything …" (Elsa:11). "… eventually, towards the end, I was just, like, I was overloaded. I was like, really overloaded. And the problem was, like I said earlier, like, the more you do, the more … the more you get and that's how I was and, yes, I could…the problem is also my personality is not to say … and for me to say this…I've got too much, for me personally that was failure …" (Hannah:7). "So, then I started thinking why am I working so hard? Because I do not have work-life balance" (Jenna:11) *translated* "… whereas, for me, I'm expected to do the same but then, when I get home, I'm also expected to do the same because I also have a husband on the receiving end. So, it's just tough to strike that balance" (Patricia:23).
Not paid enough for what we put in	"I think all my friends that are outside public [audit] practice were getting [being paid] way more than I was" (Corlia:5). "… we're not properly compensated for the work that we do" (Corlia:6). "… you don't mind putting in the time and the effort if you're going to be compensated for it at some point in time and, I mean, I stuck it out for ten years to see when … when is this going to happen? And it just never happened" (Diane:6). "… my friends who had left the firm were earning more and having a life and I was working much harder and earning less in the firm" (Hannah:9). "… remuneration does not justify the amount of time that I sacrificed" (Jenna:5). *translated* "… I thought we are being paid too little … for the hours that we put in" (Liana:8). *translated* "… so, package wise, not too upset about it, but bonuses were a disappointment, my last bonus did not even amount to a thirteenth cheque" (Wendy:6). *translated* "Now while I was there, I did not completely realise how little one was getting paid. Only now that I am out, in commerce, now I realise, oh my word – they paid me peanuts, but for me it is not about the money" (Sarah:5). *translated*
Ambition to become an audit partner not distinct	
More important things in life	"I realised that there's stuff that's more important to me than just, you know, work" (Diane:15). "I think you're either like, you have that

THEMES	QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS
	personality where you're driven and you want to climb the corporate ladder and you want to be the partner or the CEO … that type of thing or, like, I would say, you have my personality where I wasn't … it was never something that I wanted and, like I said, there were other things that were more important to me" (Diane:12). "I'm fortunate enough that I was able to resign and take it easy for a bit and focus on my family" (Diane:8).
Different passions	"What made me really leave was the options that are out there for me and to go up the ladder [become an audit partner] was not in line with the things I really want to do. I'm not making a difference anymore" (Anne:29). "… and I knew … I'm willing to work and put in hours if I know it's going to get me to where I want to be but I think I always knew I never wanted to be an audit partner. Like, the thought makes me shiver and it still makes me shiver and, at that point, it made me shiver" (Elsa:6). "I have always been interested in academia. So, I always knew I wanted to go back [to academia]" (Elsa:2).

APPENDIX H

ETHICAL APPROVAL CERTIFICATE

UNISA university of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF ACCOUNTING SCIENCES ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date 2017-08-02

ERC Reference:
2017_CAS_035
Name: Ms J Groenewald
Student/ Staff #: 90226348

Dear Ms J Groenewald

Decision: Ethics Approval from 2017-08-02 to 2020-08-01

Main researcher: **M J Groenewald**
groenj@unisa.ac.za

Working title of research:

Turnover of women audit managers in audit firms.

Qualification: Non-degree research

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the Unisa College of Accounting Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period indicated above.

The application was reviewed by the College of Accounting Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee on 25 July 2017 in compliance with the Unisa Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment, and approved.

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.
2. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the College of Accounting Sciences Research Ethics Review Committee.
3. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.

Prof E Sadler, Executive Dean: College of Accounting Sciences
University of South Africa, AJH van Wyk Building 2-113
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392, UNISA 0003, South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 4432 Facsimile: 086 510 8807
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4. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
5. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
6. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data require additional ethics clearance.
7. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date of this certificate.

Note:

The reference number of this certificate should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Yours sincerely,

Ms L Grebe
Chair of CAS RERC
E-mail: grebel@unisa.ac.za
Tel: 012 429 4994

Prof E Sadler
Executive Dean CAS