

Closing the Executive Leadership Gender Gap in the UAE

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Abstract

This research presents the findings of a study in which 115 participants from a broad range of sectors and backgrounds in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) provided their views about women and leadership in the UAE. The research involved administering a quantitative survey instrument to 115 survey participants, and a series of qualitative face-to-face interviews with a select group of six Emirati men and women. It defines and validates a model of behavioural competencies that facilitate women's ability to be successful in leadership roles, assesses the competency similarities and difference between gender groups in the UAE, explores the expectations of male and female leaders, studies the situational similarities and differences between gender groups with regard to the obstacles and challenges they have encountered in their leadership roles, identifies the barriers that potentially make it more difficult for Emirati women than men to be successful in leadership, and develops a competency model that is appropriate for the culture of the UAE. Recommendations from this research are that ultimately, everyone in UAE society has a role to play in achieving greater representation of Emirati women in positions of leadership, including women themselves, organisations, the government, and mentors.

Key words: leadership, competency, Emirati women, United Arab Emirates

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents who I owe the greatest debt and thanks. To my father who I love very much, thank you for being such a kind and sympathetic father.

To my lovely mother, who taught me how to value education and work diligently to achieve one of my goals, thank you for being a wonderful mother. It is all because of you being always there, your tireless dedication, sacrifices, determination, positive attitude, and most of all, your love. You lifted me up when I was down, you inspired me to aim high, you helped me conceptualize what appeared to be impossible, you carried extra load when I was exhausted, and most important you had faith in my own ability.

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I pledge deep love to my wonderful sister, Laila, who I thank for her time, perseverance, support, and consolation. I am eternally grateful.

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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| List of Tables..... | I |
| List of Figures..... | II |
| List of Abbreviations | III |
| CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| 1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM..... | 1 |
| 1.2 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES..... | 1 |
| 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS..... | 2 |
| 1.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESEARCH..... | 2 |
| 1.5 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS | 4 |
| 1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS..... | 5 |
| CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND..... | 7 |
| 2.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW..... | 7 |
| 2.2 UAE ECONOMY AND CULTURE | 8 |
| 2.3 GOVERNMENT POLICY AND UAE WOMEN..... | 9 |
| 2.3.1 <i>Women and Families</i> | 9 |
| 2.3.2 <i>Women and Education</i> | 9 |
| 2.3.3 <i>Women and Employment</i> | 10 |
| 2.3.4 <i>Women and Leadership</i> | 10 |
| 2.4 RELIGION AND UAE WOMEN..... | 14 |
| 2.5 UAE CULTURE AND UAE WOMEN..... | 16 |
| 2.6 CONCEPTS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE UAE | 18 |
| 2.7 CURRENT RESEARCH/THINKING ON UAE WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP..... | 19 |
| 2.8 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY..... | 21 |
| CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW – PART 1..... | 22 |
| 3.1 OVERVIEW..... | 22 |
| 3.2 LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND MODELS – AN OVERVIEW | 22 |
| 3.3 MODERN THEORETICAL MODELS | 23 |
| 3.3.1 <i>Transformational Leadership</i> | 24 |
| 3.3.2 <i>Servant and Situational Leadership</i> | 25 |
| 3.4 THE COMPETENCIES APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP..... | 26 |
| 3.4.1 <i>Introduction – Definitions and Controversies</i> | 26 |
| 3.4.2 <i>Why Seek to Identify Competencies?</i> | 27 |
| 3.4.3 <i>Can Competencies be Learned?</i> | 28 |
| 3.4.4 <i>Competency Models – Examples</i> | 28 |
| 3.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION..... | 39 |
| CHAPTER FOUR: LITERATURE REVIEW – PART 2..... | 41 |
| 4.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW..... | 41 |

| | | |
|---|---|------------|
| 4.2 | MALE VERSUS FEMALE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES DEBATE | 42 |
| 4.3 | POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO WOMEN ATTAINING LEADERSHIP | 45 |
| 4.3.1 | <i>Sex-Role Stereotyping</i> | 47 |
| 4.3.2 | <i>Issues Relating to Role Congruity / Incongruity</i> | 47 |
| 4.3.3 | <i>Support Infrastructure Issues</i> | 48 |
| 4.3.4 | <i>'Glass Ceiling' Issues</i> | 49 |
| 4.4 | THEORIES/RESEARCH ON HOW TO ADVANCE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP | 52 |
| 4.4.1 | <i>'Top Down' Approaches</i> | 53 |
| 4.4.2 | <i>'Bottom Up' Approaches</i> | 55 |
| 4.5 | SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION | 56 |
| CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY | | 58 |
| 5.1 | INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW | 58 |
| 5.2 | ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS | 58 |
| 5.3 | PILOT STUDY | 59 |
| 5.4 | WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE | 59 |
| 5.4.1 | <i>Selection of Participants</i> | 59 |
| 5.4.2 | <i>Survey Distribution</i> | 60 |
| 5.4.3 | <i>Response Rate</i> | 60 |
| 5.4.4 | <i>Overview</i> | 61 |
| 5.4.5 | <i>Information Provided to Participants</i> | 61 |
| 5.4.6 | <i>Language</i> | 61 |
| 5.4.7 | <i>Survey Questions, Research Objectives and Research Questions</i> | 62 |
| 5.4.8 | <i>Scaling of Responses</i> | 65 |
| 5.5 | FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS | 65 |
| 5.5.1 | <i>Selection of Participants</i> | 65 |
| 5.5.2 | <i>Information Provided to Participants</i> | 66 |
| 5.5.3 | <i>Ethnographic Approach</i> | 67 |
| 5.5.4 | <i>Interview Questions, Research Objectives and Questions</i> | 67 |
| 5.5.5 | <i>Language</i> | 70 |
| 5.5.6 | <i>Question Format</i> | 70 |
| 5.6 | SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION | 70 |
| CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS | | 72 |
| 6.1 | INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW | 72 |
| 6.2 | DATA ANALYSIS | 73 |
| 6.2.1 | <i>Written Questionnaire</i> | 73 |
| 6.2.2 | <i>Interviews</i> | 95 |
| 6.3 | FINDINGS AGAINST RESEARCH OBJECTIVES | 102 |
| 6.3.1 | <i>Summary</i> | 102 |
| 6.3.2 | <i>Findings Against Research Objectives</i> | 102 |
| CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS | | 108 |
| 7.1 | THE WAY FORWARD – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN | 108 |
| 7.1.1 | <i>The role of Emirati women in supporting other women</i> | 111 |
| 7.1.2 | <i>The role of organisations in supporting women</i> | 112 |
| 7.1.3 | <i>The role of the UAE government in supporting women</i> | 112 |
| 7.1.4 | <i>The role of mentoring in supporting women</i> | 113 |

| | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| 7.1.5 | <i>The role of leadership education / training in supporting women</i> | 113 |
| 7.2 | CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH | 114 |
| | REFERENCES | 116 |
| | APPENDICES..... | 131 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|--|----|
| Table 3.1: <i>“Taxonomy of Leadership Competencies”</i> | 30 |
| Table 3.2: <i>“Eight Managerial Roles and Their Key Competency”</i> | 33 |
| Table 3.3: <i>“The Leadership Skills Strataplex”</i> | 34 |
| Table 3.4: <i>“A Synthesis of Leadership Competencies”</i> | 38 |
| Table 4.1: <i>“Glass Ceiling Barriers”</i> | 51 |
| Table 4.2: <i>“Comparison of Traditional Bureaucratic, Normative, and Feminist Types of Organisations”</i> | 54 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|-----------------|----|
| Figure 4.1..... | 44 |
|-----------------|----|

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|--------|--|
| UAE | United Arab Emirates |
| GCC | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| DWE | Dubai Women's Establishment |
| MBRPLD | Mohammed Bin Rashed Program for Leadership Development |
| WLP | UAE Women Leadership Programme |

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Women, who hold up half the sky, have the same full rights as do men to play a key role in the development of their country's politics, economy, education, and society. The UAE has provided its women with full support to be well educated and to enter the workplace. However, there is still a scarcity of Emirati women occupying the positions with the highest level of seniority in organisations since women appear to face challenges when they seek promotion to executive roles. This may be due to different factors including culture, tradition, gender issues, and stereotypes. Emirati women in leadership positions encounter different issues and expectations than those faced by their male counterparts and some of those expectations may relate specifically to gender discrimination. The research aims to identify the behavioural competencies that facilitate the ability of Emirati women to be successful in leadership positions and explore any differences found between these and those demonstrated by men in these positions. It also aims to provide meaningful recommendations for women, organisations, and other groups to work to help increase the representation of women in senior positions in the UAE.

1.2 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this research is to investigate the behavioural competencies and strategies that have and will help Emirati women to play positive leadership roles as their male counterparts, as well as to help organisations and others understand what role they can play in the effort. In order to achieve this research aim, six research objectives have been formulated, namely:

- Research objective #1 – to define and validate a model of behavioural competencies that facilitates women's ability to be successful in leadership roles;

- Research objective #2 – to assess the competency similarities and differences between gender groups;
- Research objective #3 – to explore the expectations of male and female leaders;
- Research objective #4 – to study the situational similarities and differences between gender groups with regard to the obstacles and challenges they have encountered in their leadership roles;
- Research objective #5 – to identify the barriers that make it more difficult for Emirati women than men to be successful in leadership; and
- Research objective #6 – to develop a competency model that is appropriate for the UAE's culture.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the differences in leadership competencies possessed by men and women in the UAE?
2. How does gender affect the advancement of women in organisations in the UAE?
3. Do Emirati women receive the same organisational and social support as their male counterparts?

1.4 THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS RESEARCH

This research is important because it is desirable to identify whether or not women in the UAE possess leadership competencies or styles that differ, potentially, from leadership competencies or styles that tend to be possessed by men. One reason this is important is that if there *are* differences, organisations should understand what they are and ensure that women are not unfairly treated simply because they are different but not necessarily less effective in their approaches to leadership. Another reason to examine this issue is that women may need to possess *additional* competencies to men in order to reach

the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE, and if they do, it is critical to understand what they are, so that women can learn them and share their learning experiences with other women.

On the issue of differences between men and women in terms of their leadership styles, this research will be asking both Emirati men and Emirati women about their views on this matter. It is also important to acknowledge that the issue of gender differences is not a static phenomenon and there is a great deal of variety and different degrees of change within and between countries and regions. To ensure sufficient scope and depth of treatment of the problem of study, the empirical research attempts to elicit information from people in a range of organisations (including organisations from both the private and public sector in the UAE), and over a range of groups according to variables such as seniority. The views of Emirati nationals as well as expatriates from a variety of countries are elicited.

This research also tackles the essential question of whether Emirati women receive the same organisational support as their male counterparts, and what features of organisations might be more conducive to seeing women attain the most senior positions. The practical relevance of this is obvious. If there are organisations that seem to have certain characteristics which enable women to progress to positions of leadership and to continue to act effectively while in such positions, these characteristics should be understood, so that they can form a model for other organisations wanting to see more women attain positions of leadership.

The research anticipates the likelihood that women in the UAE have in the past and probably do still today experience barriers to their achievement of leadership positions, and addresses this possibility directly. The relevance of knowing whether this is the case is that one can then attempt to understand how it is that some women, *despite* experiencing barriers, have been able to overcome them and become leaders. If it is able to be determined how these women succeeded in overcoming obstacles, it may be possible to educate younger women about how they too can succeed as leaders by overcoming as many

obstacles in their paths as possible (including, where possible, cultural barriers that stand in their way).

The research does not preclude the possibility that some Emirati women have not succeeded in attaining leadership positions not because of any organisational (or even cultural) barriers, but rather because they do not possess certain necessary leadership competencies for success in the UAE. The importance of allowing for this possibility is that if it is possible to identify what the 'lacking competencies' are, then it will be possible to go on to suggest information for the design (for example) of leadership competency training programs to assist women who wish to rise to positions of leadership in UAE organisations.

1.5 RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The primary limitation of the research is found to be that the majority of the literature conducted on the subject tends to be mostly carried out within Western societies, and in particular, the United States of America. The written questionnaire and many of the interview questions that form the backbone of this research were developed using the theoretical insights provided by this research literature, meaning that it is possible that idiosyncratic features of the UAE, its people, and its organisations have not been incorporated into the models tested by this research. To some extent this has been allowed for by having some open-ended questions in the face-to-face interviews in order to allow for creative, unexpected, or different suggestions about barriers to women attaining leadership positions and other aspects of the research to be presented. Where this has happened, such observations and suggestions can form the basis of future research. Overall, despite such limitations, it is believed that it is important to review and assess such literature because it provides a good, theoretically-grounded starting point for a study of women and leadership in the UAE. The scope of the research is admittedly ambitious, but such ambition is considered necessary in light of the very limited research pertaining to women in leadership in the UAE. It is hoped that this research will impel other researchers to extend and deepen the findings of this research into narrower areas of focus,

thus contributing even more to understanding and addressing this important social issue.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter Two provides a background to the UAE, including a discussion of its unique history and its culture. There is then a discussion of past and current government policies pertaining to women in the UAE, in relation to women and families, women and education, women and employment, and women and leadership. There is also a discussion of the role of religion and culture, as well as a survey of current research and thinking about UAE women and leadership.

Chapter Three contains the first part of a two-part literature review. This chapter presents an overview of major leadership theories and models, such as transformational leadership and servant leadership. There is also a detailed discussion of the competencies approach to leadership, including why it is important to identify competencies, whether competencies can be learned, and some models of leadership competencies. These are presented because they form the basis of the written questionnaire about leadership competencies (amongst other matters), such that this research can test and validate a model of leadership competencies for women in the UAE and for the UAE generally.

Chapter Four presents the second part of the literature review. This explores the current debate in the literature about whether there are distinctly male and female leadership styles and competencies, again to provide a foundation for the written questionnaire instrument and the interviews that form the backbone of this research. There is also a discussion of potential barriers to women attaining positions of leadership as suggested by the research literature, and these are identified to be sex-role stereotyping, issues relating to role congruity/incongruity, support infrastructure issues, and general 'glass ceiling' issues. Again, this is important to provide a theoretical basis for the research instruments used for this study. Finally, there is a discussion of current theories and research about how best or most effectively to create conditions in which

women can advance to positions of leadership. These are classified according to two broad types – ‘top down’ (e.g., organisation-led) and ‘bottom up’ approaches, and the differences are explained.

Chapter Five presents the methodology used in this research, including ethical considerations, the pilot study which was conducted prior to the final study, and an explanation of the contents of the written questionnaire, as well as technical information about selection of participants, response rate considerations, language matters, and the relationships between the survey questions, and the research objectives.

Chapter Six presents the data analysis and findings from both the written questionnaire and the face-to-face interviews. These are presented, in the case of the written questionnaire results, first in terms of general findings about leadership in the UAE, such as the importance of education, the existence of mentoring programmes and career tracking programmes, and general questions relating to differences between men’s and women’s experiences in leadership in the UAE. Next, the results from questions relating to organisational barriers to leadership for men and for women in the UAE, such as organisational support, gender discrimination, exclusion from important organisational or professional networks, and others. Then, there are the results of the questions relating to non-organisational barriers to leadership for men and for women in the UAE, such as lack of social support, lack of necessary abilities, cultural issues, family commitments, and others. Finally in this section, there is a discussion of findings about features of organisations, such as whether there is a consultative or authoritarian style of leadership predominating, and the extent to which these features may be more or less conducive to seeing women reach the most senior positions. The results across the entire range of questions are presented in terms of overall or average responses, and then discussed according to any differences or lack of differences as between participants on the basis of such variables as gender, age, and working sector. Chapter Six also includes a discussion of the results of the six interviews conducted face-to-face with three male and three Emirati females.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND

2.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The UAE is a federation of seven emirates that was founded on 2nd December 1971 by H.H Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan with the cooperation of H.H Sheikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, the Late Ruler of Dubai. The seven emirates are Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah. The capital of UAE is Abu Dhabi, which is the largest emirate in the country. Sheikh Zayed Sultan Al Nahyan who served as ruler of the UAE until his death in 2004. Currently, the President of the UAE is the late Sheikh's son, Khalifa Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The Supreme Council of Rulers comprises the hereditary rulers of the seven Emirates of the UAE, and is the highest governmental authority in the country.

Since the foundation of UAE, Sheikh Zayed was an advocate for the education and participation of women in the development of the country. Although there were many obstacles that prevented Emirati woman from playing a full role in UAE society, Sheikh Zayed worked diligently to ensure that women enjoyed their full rights. He was very liberal towards women's rights compared to his contemporaries in the Gulf Countries:

Women have the right to work everywhere. Islam affords to women their rightful status, and encourages them to work in all sectors, as long as they are afforded the appropriate respect. The basic role of women is the upbringing of children, but, over and above that, we must offer opportunities to a woman who chooses to perform other functions. What women have achieved in the Emirates in only a short space of time makes me both happy and content. We sowed our seeds yesterday, and today the fruit has already begun to appear. We praise God for the role that women play in our society. It is clear that this role is beneficial for both present and future generations. (UAE Interact, 2008, p. 20).

The right of Emirati women to contribute in the country's development is laid out in the UAE's Constitution. In compliance with the Islamic principles whereupon the Constitution is based, women are guaranteed different rights that the UAE's Constitution reinforces in legal terms that apply throughout the country. Although Emirati women were supported from the beginning by the UAE government, however, they still face many challenges in attaining the most senior positions in society.

2.2 UAE ECONOMY AND CULTURE

Economically, the UAE is a country undergoing rapid and dramatic transition. Since the discovery of oil in the Emirates, the economy of the UAE has grown at a staggering rate, transforming from a traditional agriculturally-based economy dependent mainly upon fishing, pearling and some trading to a fully-fledged, diverse, and modern economy with one of the highest and fastest growing rates of per capita GDP in the world (Gallant, 2006; Hallett-Jones, 2000; Al Baik, 2005). While the government of the UAE has been behind most of the initiatives to diversify the economy beyond the oil sector into fields such as manufacturing, tourism, and financial services, it has also been successful in its objectives of attracting global firms to locate within the UAE (DDIA, 2002; DIFC, 2002).

The rapid pace of change has been possible not just because of the vast revenues provided by the country's oil wealth, but also because of the rapid influx of foreign workers in all areas of the economy. Currently, less than 25 per cent of the people living within the UAE are UAE nationals (citizens) (CIA, 2010). Concerns about the country's reliance on foreign workers (Al Rostamani, 2004; Hijab, 1988), including concerns about the social impact of the large number of such workers (Gallant, 2006), have been reflected in the adoption of an official policy of 'Emiratisation' in the UAE. Emiratisation entails attempting to reduce the country's dependency on foreign ('expatriate' or 'guest') workers, particularly highly-educated and skilled foreign workers, by increasing the uptake of jobs currently held by foreign workers by UAE citizens. Underpinning the policy of Emiratisation are policies designed to educate Emirati nationals to international standards and to have a 'global mindset' (Gulf News, 2001) such

that they are at least as highly, if not better, qualified for the positions than foreign workers (Abdelkarim, 2001, p. 9).

2.3 GOVERNMENT POLICY AND UAE WOMEN

As well as ensuring sustained economic growth and increasing prosperity for its people, Emiratisation, discussed above, sits at the heart of many of the UAE government's priorities and policies. These have had important implications for women in the UAE, who have responsibilities in terms of having large families, gaining education, seeking employment, and meeting the challenges of leadership.

2.3.1 WOMEN AND FAMILIES

Current government policy in the UAE is to encourage its citizens to have large families as a means to redress the growing imbalance between UAE nationals and expatriates, who currently outnumber nationals by more than four to one (Kawach, 2003b, p. 1; Adam, 2003; MOIC, 2004). Families are encouraged by the government to have at least six children (Nazzah, 2004, p. 3), and the UAE's current high rate of population growth of 3.69% (CIA, 2010) indicates that nationals are responding to government policies, such as the Marriage Fund, supporting large families.

2.3.2 WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Education has always been accorded great importance under Islam, and the pursuit of knowledge is considered a duty for both men and women (Al Faruqi, 1988; Harik and Marston, 2003; Ahmad, 1978). The government of the UAE has been actively encouraging and supporting Emirati women to pursue post-school education in a number of fields. By 2007, it was reported that more than 70 per cent of all university graduates in the UAE were women (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, n.d., p. 2).

2.3.3 WOMEN AND EMPLOYMENT

The representation of women in the UAE workforce has increased rapidly. Between 1980 and 1995, for example, the percentage of working women in the UAE increased from 5.3% to 13% (Adams, 2003). The official policy aspiration of the desirability of women's employment in the paid sector of the economy and the extent to which this aspiration is being reflected is shown clearly in the following statement on 'Women in the Workforce' (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, n.d., p. 3):

Today UAE women account for 59% of the national UAE labour force market in fields as diverse as engineering, science, healthcare, media, computer technology, law, commerce, university lecturers, government and the oil industry. This positive development was not only the result of substantial enrolment by women in education, but also because of the open social attitudes towards women's employment and the fact that work was increasingly been seen as part of establishing a personal as well as professional identity. There is also no doubt that women role models are encouraging women to break away from traditional areas of employment.

Thus, while it is conceded that there is still a tendency for women to be concentrated in some sectors and occupations, as has been found by other research suggesting women have tended to be concentrated in areas such as administrative jobs, school teaching, the public sector, and the health sector (Adams, 2003; Baud and Mahgoub, 2001a, p. 155; ECSSR, 2002b, p. 1), it is noted that this is changing. There is also a clear indication, however, that women are more likely to work in organisations, such as public sector organisations, which are more sensitive to their culture and their religion (Adams, 2003; Morada, 2002, p. 6).

2.3.4 WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

Emiratisation and the demands of the economy, however, are not the only motivations for the current policies of the government of the UAE in respect of

women. UAE women nationals are not just being asked to bear more children, become more educated, and engage in more paid work. They are also being asked to take much greater roles as *leaders*. The nature of and motivations behind the government's desire to see more women leaders is seen in the following statement by the late President, H.H. Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahayan (cited in Sayed, 2001, p. 13) (emphasis added):

The means to develop a country and modernise its infrastructure is a magnificent burden that should not be taken up by men only. The loss would be huge, for women will be paralysed without any participation in productivity. It would lead to an unbalanced rhythm of life. Hence, women's participation in public life is required and we must be prepared for it.

Further, the late President is quoted as saying ('Women in the UAE', 2010):

Nothing could delight me more than to see the woman taking up her distinctive position in society ... Nothing should hinder her progress ... Like men, women deserve the right to occupy high positions according to their capabilities and qualifications.

The government of the UAE has actively encouraged women to become leaders and social and cultural leaders have also been actively engaged in the cause to help more women in the UAE attain the most senior positions in all walks of life, and these efforts are described in the subsections following. These initiatives have been effective, and no doubt will continue to be effective, but there is still concern that the pace of change is not sufficiently fast, and that there is still a very long way to go before women take an equal role in leadership when compared with their male counterparts. Greater understanding of the potential barriers that may be impeding the path of women attaining positions of leadership is still required.

I. Educational Policies

At the foundation of the UAE government's desire to see more women in leadership are its policies encouraging and supporting women in pursuing

higher education, including in fields of management. The government has played a very important role in this respect by supporting the development of on-line learning which can help overcome barriers to women pursuing education posed by problems of time or inability to travel (Al-Nowais, 2003b, p. 1; Adams, 2003; Gallant, 2006; HCT, 2002).

II. Women's Leadership Groups and Initiatives

Private associations designed to assist women leaders and aspiring women leaders in the UAE, particularly in the field of business, have proliferated. Many of these associations receive government sponsorship and official encouragement. Notable examples in this respect include the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry's women's business group, which provides financial support, legal advice, and resources to national women in small business (Adam, 2003), and the UAE General Women's Union (GWU), which is chaired by H.H. Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, wife of the late President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, which is an umbrella association for all the women's associations in the UAE funded by the government, and which is vested with responsibilities such as aiding women in small business and formulating recommendations for changes to laws "in order to benefit women" (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, n.d., p. 9). The GWU in particular has been applauded as providing an environment for women to network with each other when participation in male-dominated networks may be closed to them (Adam, 2003), and the role of H.H. Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak herself in demonstrating an important leadership role herself is important to showing women in the UAE that it is possible for women to hold the highest positions.

Another significant organisation which promotes increased participation of women in the public and economic life of the UAE, including leadership positions, is the Dubai Women's Establishment (DWE), which has the following objective (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, n.d., p. 11):

To contribute to the policy making of economic, human and social development that aims at creating opportunities to engage UAE women in the country's development process.

A key leadership initiative of the DWE has been the UAE Women Leadership Programme (WLP) which has been formed in partnership with the Mohammed Bin Rashed Program for Leadership Development (MBRPLD) and developed especially for Emirati female leaders. It is worthy to draw the attention to the importance of MBRPLD as it is the first leadership program in the UAE that was initiated by H.H Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE Vice President, Prime Minister and Ruler of Dubai. This program is an innovative leadership program designed to develop competent UAE national leaders through a comprehensive development system.

In addition to government-sponsored or supported organisations designed to encourage greater participation by women Emiratis in leadership like Dubai Electricity and Water Authority which provides a women's leadership program designed especially for their female employees, some semi-government and private organisations have implemented leadership programs; for example, the Dubai Leaders Program (a mixed program for both males and females) that is developed by Dubai World.

III. Champions of Women Leaders

The UAE has produced many notable women leaders, and its government champions of the cause of seeing more UAE women leaders by highlighting, at every opportunity, that women are capable of holding the most senior positions and by showing aspiring women leaders in the UAE what is possible. Examples (*Women in The United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, n.d., p. 5) of female role models held up by the government of the UAE include government leaders such as Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, the UAE Minister of Foreign Trade, Mariam Mohammed Khalfan Al Roumi, the UAE Minister of Social Affairs, Dr. Maitha Salem Al Shamsi, the UAE Minister of State, and Reem Ibrahim Al Hashimi, also the UAE Minister of State. They also include the nine female members of the Federal National Council, and the female judge, Kuloud Ahmed Juoan Al-Dhaheri. The UAE government also notes that "women in the diplomatic service and higher posts of government amount to 30 per cent of the UAE's civil service" (*Women in The United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, n.d., p. 5). These

examples are clearly presented to motivate other women to follow in the footsteps of these women leaders. As Gallant (2006) observes (emphasis added):

Highly skilled women are slowly being recognised and are beginning to be awarded leadership positions providing hope and encouragement for others to follow.

A leading exponent of increasing the representation of women in positions of leadership in the UAE is the President of Dubai Women's Establishment, Her Highness Sheikha Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, wife of H.H Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs. Under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai and the support of Her Highness Sheikha Manal, the Arab Women Leadership Forum has been held yearly since 2009. In addition to offering vital networking opportunities for women, the Forum awards prizes in the categories of Business Woman of the Year, Woman – Friendly Employer, Woman Initiative of the Year, Leading Woman in Public/Social Sector, Leading Woman in Science and Technology, Leading Woman CEO, and Leading Woman CFO. The prestige of these awards, and the positive media attention covering the Forum, are important to supporting women in leadership.

2.4 RELIGION AND UAE WOMEN

Systems of governance and social custom are, in most countries, impacted at least to some extent by dominant religious or philosophical traditions of their peoples. This is the case for the UAE. Most citizens of the UAE are Muslim, and consequently the principles of Islam and Islamic Sharia (laws) and fatwa (legal opinions) underpin the UAE's legislation and social customs, including family relations (Ruff, 1998; Gallant, 2006; Bates, 2002).

It is a popular misconception, particularly amongst Western commentators, that Islam necessarily, or even usually, *oppresses* women. It is usually pointed out, in rebuttal of this caricature, that in the very early days of the religion, compared

with other religions it was quite 'revolutionary' (Ruff, 1998; Gallant, 2006) in its prescriptions about the equality of worth of men and women within an overall belief structure that men and women nevertheless have different roles (Al Faruqi, 1988). Further, just as there is heated debate within a religion such as Christianity about the 'correct' interpretation of the Bible, so too has there been considerable difference of opinion within Islam about the correct interpretation of women's rights in the Holy Quran, and this difference of opinion continues today.

Citing AbuKhalil (1993), Gallant (2006) explains that there are, broadly, three 'schools of thought' in relation to the position of women under Islam. The first suggests that Muslim women have more rights than Western women, the second that Islam has tended to be (perhaps wrongly) interpreted by men in a way that has seen women occupy a subordinate position, and the third that it is entirely possible to 'reinterpret' Islamic texts such as the Holy Quran in a way that accords greater freedoms and more expanded roles for women under Islam. Gallant (2006), citing Al Faruqi (1988), Doumato (1989), Haddad and Smith (1996), Harik and Marston (2003), and Hijab (1988), argues that 'most authors' consider that views about what is and is not permissible for women to do under Islam has tended to be informed more by local culture and less by correct application of Islamic principles. In the view of the author of this Dissertation, it is not particularly helpful to participate here in a discussion about which school is correct in its interpretation. The important point is that, at least in the case of the UAE, there currently *does* appear to be a social debate about permissible roles for women under Islam, and further that the leadership of the UAE is demonstrating that it is willing to engage actively in this debate, adopting a more liberal interpretation of Islam and women than perhaps some of the country's Arab neighbours.

The importance of the point made in the previous paragraph cannot be overstated. Stated again, there is a current social debate about what it is and is not permissible (and indeed desirable) for women in the UAE to do with their lives. Naturally, as with any society in any sort of transitional phase, there will be

tensions between conservatives and those who wish to see change. Herein the debate, however, can be found most of the solutions to the current problem faced by the UAE in attempting to attract more women not only to the workforce, but to positions of social, economic, and political leadership. By understanding the concerns of social conservatives, and by seeking to accommodate their concerns to the greatest extent possible, it is most likely that workable solutions will be found, rather than 'answers' that merely alienate those whose genuine acceptance and cooperation are vital for change to succeed. This is well exemplified by the following statement by the UAE government (*Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress*, n.d., p. 2):

... not only has the traditional role of women changed over the last two generations, but UAE society as a whole has been changed in numerous and positive ways, creating a bridge between the traditional and the modern without sacrificing the heritage and culture that defines this society's national identity.

2.5 UAE CULTURE AND UAE WOMEN

Arab women, including women in the UAE, have traditionally been perceived as having a critical role as wives, mothers, and family caregivers (Gallant, 2006; UNDP, 2003, p. 7). Culturally, and under government direction, women in the UAE are also currently being encouraged to marry early and to have large families, and still receive a high degree of social status when filling their traditional roles as wives and mothers (Gallant, 2006; Dirie, 1998; Harik and Marston, 2003; Sha'aban, 1996; Soffan, 1980). While some women are insisting prior to marriage that they be able to maintain their careers after they are married (Gallant, 2006), for most women in the UAE, maintaining a career after marriage has not been the norm (Adam, 2003). At the same time, however, UAE women are being encouraged by their government to become educated, and to take their place alongside men as economic participants in the UAE. Thus, not only are UAE women at the nexus of an important social change occurring within the UAE, they are currently seeing the expectations placed upon them increase.

In the UAE, as in other Islamic countries, cultural traditions have placed certain restrictions upon women's conduct, although there are indications that such traditions are being eroded at the margins as the social debate over the rights and roles of women is conducted. For example, while it has been traditional that providing financial support to the family has tended to be the exclusive domain of males (Joseph, 1996), women in the UAE are increasingly joining the workforce. Not only are UAE women entering the workforce in ever greater numbers, they are beginning to move beyond being preponderant in 'gendered occupations' such as teaching and are now moving increasingly into non-traditional occupations such as management, the military, and others, as UAE society changes its attitudes to the types of work deemed suitable for women and indeed its attitudes to the idea of women working at all (Al Marzouki, 2004, p. 1; ECSSR, 2002a, p. 1).

Some traditions, however, remain, and perhaps may remain in perpetuity in the absence of significant shifts in social opinion. Married women are still expected to defer to the wishes of their husbands. Women's contact with men is also circumscribed by culture and tradition. For example, male guardians (husbands, fathers, brothers, etc.) are able to decide whether and to what extent women under their care can travel or work (Sakr, 2002). There is also a remaining tendency for some (albeit more conservative) families to require women to be chaperoned when travelling outside the home (Gallant, 2006; Mahdi, 2003), although generally today, the preference appears to be that while women can travel outside the home, they should at least drive themselves so as to avoid being in contact with males who are not members of their family. In some families too, women may be prevented from engaging in conduct (which could include aspects of work or education) which might be perceived as being incompatible with social expectations of appropriate conduct of women, incompatible with perceptions of their primary role as family breadwinners, or as undermining conceptions of family honour (Gallant, 2006; Harik and Marston, 2003; Harfoush-Strickland, 1996). Interestingly, however, ideas about what brings honour to a family are beginning to change, and it is clear that the UAE government has played an important role in helping to change such ideas. The

benefits women can bring to their families from work are beginning to be associated with greater prestige and therefore desirability, such as contributing to the betterment of UAE society and bringing extra income into households (Gallant, 2006; Mohsen, 1985; Sherif, 1999; Rugh, 1985).

An area of resistance to the increased participation of UAE women in working and public life appears to be conflict over the dual roles of women as mothers and caregivers with other responsibilities. As intimated earlier, women are being expected to *increase* their contributions to UAE society. H.H. Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, wife of the late President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan is quoted as saying (Bibbo, 2002, p. 7) that:

The UAE woman has a pivotal role in the prosperity and development of the Emirates ... Women must surpass their conventional roles and become decision makers participating in the development of UAE society.

A question facing women in this respect is with whom the additional burdens should be shared. While some women are able to receive support from extended families in shouldering family responsibilities, there is a strong reluctance throughout UAE society to see greater reliance on paid domestic help (usually in the form of foreign labour) in matters of childcare (Zeitoun, 2001), and Emirati women are still believed to have the primary responsibility in such matters and such responsibilities are still generally perceived to have primacy over other responsibilities (Gallant, 2006; Treacher, 2003; Baud and Mahgoub, 2001a, p. 146).

2.6 CONCEPTS OF LEADERSHIP IN THE UAE

Concepts of leadership are almost certainly culturally mediated, at least to some extent. For this reason, it is useful to present here some mention of the impact of UAE culture on conceptions of leadership because it offers potentially valuable insights into the issue of women in leadership in the UAE. It has been found that, traditionally, leadership has been constructed as a male form of expression, under the still patriarchal society of the UAE (Al Faruqi, 1988, p. 43). Women are

at all times under the broad control of a man – as daughters, as wives, and even as sisters (Hijab, 1988). This is not to say that the leadership has not been benevolent, nor that women have not had (even very significant) influence or power (Gallant, 2006; Sabbagh, 1996, p. xvi), but it has almost certainly informed both men’s and women’s conceptions of leadership as being the domain of males (Gallant, 2006). Such attitudes are sometimes resistant to change.

Gallant (2006) further conceptualises (following Khadra, 1990) leadership in the UAE as being heavily influenced by what Khadra calls the ‘prophetic-caliphal’ leadership model, characterised by a tendency to make decisions without necessarily basing such decisions on group wishes (although an ‘open door’ style of leadership in which followers are genuinely encouraged to share their views is distinct), and by a ‘great man predisposition’, encouraged to no small extent by the indisputably wise and benevolent, but nonetheless patriarchal / paternalistic style of leadership historically adopted by UAE’s supreme leadership. While this view may be challenged in some respects, it has, as Gallant (2006) herself considers, tended to enshrine an expectation that leaders are *male*.

2.7 CURRENT RESEARCH/THINKING ON UAE WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

There is, to date, a paucity of research on UAE women and leadership, which this research is attempting in part to redress. What research has been conducted, however, has tended to support the views that the current low representation of women in leadership is a function of cultural resistance amongst some parts of society (e.g., employers and others) to the idea of women leaders, reluctance on the part of women themselves to strive for the most senior positions for reasons associated with social status or the wishes of their husbands, problems for women in balancing work and family obligations, and cultural constraints which may impede women’s ability to undertake certain activities (e.g., meeting with male clients) (Adams, 2003; Gallant, 2006; Aryee, Fields and Luk, 1999; Hijab, 1988; Rugh, 1985; Sha’aban, 1996, Nazzal, 2004; UNDP, 2003; Daniel, 2002; Menon, 2003). Overt gender discrimination is also mentioned (Ahmed, 2003, p. 1). Lack of government support and encouragement and a lack of educational opportunities do not appear to be causative, and cultural or social issues appear

to offer the best explanation for the current situation, although there have been recent suggestions that paid maternity leave in the UAE may be still inadequate ('Working women need a break too', 2010).

Recent research by Madsen (2010) into women and leadership in the UAE has found that a wide variety of influences (including parents, siblings, influential individuals, schooling activities and experiences, and struggles/difficulties) during the early stages of women's lives prove to be important experiences in developing women's leadership skills and abilities. This also tends to confirm that culture plays an important part in influencing women's attitudes to leadership.

An interesting but mainly unexplored contention is the suggestion that women in the most senior positions may not currently be meeting the expectation that they should assist younger women through effective mentorship (Adams, 2003).

Recently, the Arab Women Leadership Forum (organized by the Dubai Women's Establishment – DWE) in a plenary session entitled *Women's Leadership in Organisations: Towards New Conceptions of Work-Life Balance* ('Dubai Women Establishment Concludes the Arab Women Leadership Forum', 2010) hosted speakers who found linkages between the greater participation of men in involvement in family life and greater empowerment of women to progress in their careers. Aisha Al Suwaidi, the General Director of Dubai Women's Establishment, reflected the general consensus of the session, saying:

... empowering women is not the responsibility of women alone, men play an essential role as well. To achieve balance it requires both parties to share the responsibility, the more support the husband gives his wife and family, the more he participates in supporting the wife's progress at work and achieving and overall healthy and balanced society.

A similar sentiment is expressed by Bibbo (2002, p. 7), who sees the problem as one requiring a change in attitudes of both men and women:

Awareness has to be created among UAE men and women about the need for a change in the perception of the woman's role.

The role of employers has also been noted as something that needs to be re-evaluated; however, and not just the role of men. In a recent article published in the Gulf News ('Working women need a break too', 2010), it was written that (emphasis added):

The second Arab Women Leadership Forum ... has addressed gender equality laws and work policies that are supportive of women. This, of course, highlights other related problems such as inadequate maternity leave and the circumstances that force women to choose between staying home to take care of their families or venture out into the workplace. For many, this comes as a difficult balancing act as one or the other has to be eventually be given up. It is an uphill task for many Emirati women to make this balance a success – not only because of the challenges they face, but also as a result of how society perceives their roles. Yet if women are to become an integral part of development, the entire set-up at the workplace needs to be addressed.

2.8 CONCLUSION AND SUMMARY

Although many people might argue that there is still much work to be done in the UAE, including by women themselves, to see women realise their full rights, remarkable progress has now been completed by Emirati women, who are actively involved in the development of the country's politics and economy, by taking up different types of positions at all levels in the government and private sectors. Challenges, of course, remain, and this research is intended to help understand these challenges and suggest ways to meet them head on.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW – PART 1

3.1 OVERVIEW

As mentioned previously, there is very little research directly on the question of women and leadership in the UAE. Nevertheless, it is important to provide a theoretical grounding to this research, and there is considerable research on leadership generally, and on women and leadership available, even though it has been conducted mainly in a Western setting. This chapter attempts to cover a very wide range of leadership literature, but focuses primarily on literature relevant to the essence of the research questions for this Dissertation. Section 2 is presented by way of background to explain something of the development of leadership scholarship, and to highlight modern approaches to leadership, including disagreements that are commonplace within the literature. Section 3 presents modern theoretical models of leadership, while Section 4 discusses the competencies approach to leadership studies, including a discussion of controversies surrounding such approaches, an explanation of why it can be considered important to define leadership competencies, consideration of whether competencies can be learned, and a presentation of four examples of leadership competency models, culminating in a synthesis of leadership competencies to be used in this research. Section 5 concludes the chapter, and presents a summary of findings.

3.2 LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND MODELS – AN OVERVIEW

Leadership is both a position and a quality. Understanding leadership is something that is of great interest not only to management academics, but to organisations and national governments, and has been studied extensively. Tubbs and Schulz (2005, p. 1) offer a common definition of leadership as being about influencing others to reach organisational goals. Similarly, Williams and Winston (2003, p. 389) note that leadership is about enhancing the success of the organisation. Most scholars (cf. Anderson, 2006) consider that effective leadership is essential to ensure the effectiveness of an organisation. The

literature on leadership, however, is vast, and it can be difficult to identify consistencies and commonalities within it.

Theories and models of leadership abound in the academic literature, and it is still far from the case that a unified, universally agreed upon understanding of what constitutes effective leadership can be enunciated with any confidence. While it is useful to present here an overview of some of the most common leadership theories and models, it is important to bear in mind important qualifications to the relevance of this literature. The first is the shortcoming identified by Uhl-Bien, Marion and McKelvey (2007), that most theories and models of leadership have been developed in the context of largely bureaucratic organisations and within economies focused primarily on manufacturing production and less on knowledge-intensive industries. This evidently places them apart from the situation in the now heavily knowledge-based economic structure of the UAE economy. The second limitation is as identified by Zaccaro and Horn (2003), who note that a problem with all leadership theories is that they have failed to help practitioners resolve the challenges and problems that occur in organisational leadership. More generally, an important qualification to almost all leadership literature is that it has tended to be developed within a Western (mainly North American) context, thus rendering its applicability to non-Western settings, such as the Middle East, questionable or at least of limited generalisation and therefore relevance.

3.3 MODERN THEORETICAL MODELS

McLaurin and Al Amri (2008), in summarising the development of leadership theories, note that the most significant change in scholarship has been an evolution of theories away from a focus on leadership traits, behaviours and situations towards an approach that might be referred to as a 'change oriented'. Examples of this focus on change would include the theory of transactional leadership developed by Burns (1978), which proposed that leadership could be conceptualised as an exchange of benefits between leader and follower.

3.3.1 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The concept of 'transformational leadership' (often confounded with 'charismatic leadership') has perhaps been the most significant, popular, and most widely studied and cited theory of leadership in the modern literature. It was first described by Burns (1978) when making a distinction between transformational and transactional leadership, and then was developed further by Bass (1985). Transformational leadership has been said to have greater applicability than other theories in achieving organisational success especially within the context of the modern 'learning organisation' (Bryant, 2003; Bass, 2000).

Jung, Bass and Sosik (1995, p. 4) describe the four main features of transformational leadership as being: (a) raising followers' awareness of organisational vision and the importance of goal accomplishment; (b) helping followers transcend their self-interest for the overall success of the organisation; (c) stimulating followers to view old problems in new ways; and (d) providing individualised consideration to followers. Transformational leadership is able to be applied alongside transactional leadership according to some researchers including Burns (1978). Looking at transformational leadership from the perspective of the behaviours of transformational leaders, McLaurin and Al Amri (2008) propose that its key behaviours include empowerment, role modeling, creating a vision, acting as change agents, and making norms and values clear to all followers. They argue that what is described by some scholars as 'charismatic leadership' should really be considered as just an aspect of transformational leadership – charisma is just one of the qualities of a transformational leader. They define charisma as including the possession of high self-confidence and a clear vision, engaging in unconventional behaviour and remaining realistic about environmental constraints, and associated behaviours which include role modelling, image building, articulation of goals, showing confidence, and arousing followers' motivation.

Some scholars (e.g., Aymar and Stone, 2007; Kouzes and Posner, 1987) consider that 'visionary leadership' can be distinguished from other leadership models.

Although visionary leadership is said to involve challenging the process, inspiring a shared vision, enabling others to act, modelling the way, and encouraging the heart, it appears to share many similarities with transformational/charismatic leadership with only a few differences.

3.3.2 SERVANT AND SITUATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Two models or theories of leadership that are quite different from transformational/charismatic/visionary leadership are servant leadership models and situational leadership models.

I. Servant Leadership

The concept of servant leadership has recently enjoyed a resurgence of interest. Servant leaders are said to be characterised by the following (Spears, 1997): (1) reinforcing communication skills by listening to others; (2) striving to understand and empathise with others; (3) learning to heal themselves and others; (4) strength through self-awareness; (5) reliance on persuasion rather than positional authority; (6) the ability to conceptualise and to see beyond the day-to-day; (7) foresight; (8) stewardship; (9) commitment to the personal, professional, and spiritual growth of all of the organisation's members; and (10) seeking to identify means for building community amongst those in the organisation. Stone, Russell and Patterson (2004) draw a distinction between the transformational leader and the servant leader as being that with transformational leadership the leader focuses on the organisation and ensures followers are committed to the organisational objectives, whereas the servant leader leads through organisational objectives being related to the needs of his or her followers.

II. Situational Leadership

There are several situational leadership models. The situational leadership model of Hersey and Blanchard (1988), for example, in a manner similar to earlier situational leadership models, specifies four potential 'styles' of leadership (delegating, participating, selling, and telling), with indications of each

style's appropriateness dependant on factors such as the ability and willingness of followers to support the desired outcomes. However, it may theoretically be possible in the view of this author to incorporate the majority of the models and theories of leadership into a general situational leadership framework. This view is supported by Dunkerley (1972) who surveys the literature and finds that leadership styles and leadership effectiveness are specific to the situation under review. Vilkinas and Cartan (1993, p. 33) make this excellent observation about managers of the future:

They will need to become experts in reading their environment, in determining which cues are the most important, and what is the most appropriate managerial role to use in response to each cue. They will also need to have a range of competencies on which to draw to meet the ever-changing demands of their environment. They will not be able to rely on a couple of well developed managerial roles and their accompanying competencies.

3.4 THE COMPETENCIES APPROACH TO LEADERSHIP

3.4.1 INTRODUCTION – DEFINITIONS AND CONTROVERSIES

Something of a repetitive theme in research focus emerges from study of the leadership literature. It was mentioned earlier that theoretical leadership models evolved from an early focus on traits, and then moved away from such conceptualisations. However, as noted by Spendlove (2007, p. 409), there has been a resurgence of interest in the last ten or so years into identifying leadership competencies, and essentially, in the view of this author, this might be considered to be a renewed search for leadership 'traits' under the heading of leadership 'competency models' (see Burgoyne, 1993). Although Collins (1989) notes that there are many different definitions of competency, a broad and widely accepted definition of competencies is provided by Bartram (2005) as being sets of behaviours instrumental in delivery of desired results or outcomes, which, for example, (Boyatzis, 1982, p. 28) could be superior organisational performance. Similarly, Quinn et al (1990, p. 14) define competencies as

knowledge and skill necessary to perform a certain task or role (see also Jacobs, 1989). *Leadership* competencies are defined as being statements of the areas of knowledge and the abilities that are necessary for successful leaders (Williams II and Winston, 2003: p. 388).

This return to interest in competencies or traits is not without its criticisms. For example, competency models have been criticised as being inappropriate for their apparent implicit assumption that there is a single set of characteristics that adequately describes effective leaders, although this criticism is rejected by advocates of competency models on the basis that, strictly, competency models can differ according to circumstances (Hollenbeck et al, 2006). This latter point is supported by Greatrex and Phillips (1989) who argue that competencies must, by necessity, be situationally specific and reflect the organisational culture, and cannot be universally listed in a general sense.

3.4.2 WHY SEEK TO IDENTIFY COMPETENCIES?

If competency models have been criticised and if it is perhaps not possible to define universal leadership competencies, why then would one seek to identify leadership competencies for the purpose of this Dissertation research? The answer is that they appear to offer the best way forward in understanding, within a specific set of situations or contexts, which types of knowledge, skills, and abilities are desired and / or necessary for a leader. In other words, the competency model approach enables making a transition from the academic literature to more practical prescriptions that can be of value to organisations. As noted by Hollenbeck et al (2006), competency models seek to capture the lessons, knowledge and experiences of experienced leaders and in doing so can help guide others. They would appear to be particularly valuable for leadership development initiatives (McDaniel, 2002). Just as important, however, competencies can be measured and competency models can be tested for validity (Williams II and Winston, 2003, p. 388). Finally, as the following subsection examines, if competencies can be learned, then there is additional value in a competency approach to organisations or countries which wish to increase

representation of particular subgroups of society (such as women) in positions of leadership.

3.4.3 CAN COMPETENCIES BE LEARNED?

If competencies cannot be learned by current or aspiring leaders, it may still be that it is important to arrive at suitable leadership competency models appropriate to particular organisational or cultural settings. For example, as noted by Spendlove (2007, p. 409), defining particular competencies can provide a guide for strategic human resource management practitioners, including, for example, in recruitment and selection. However, the weight of academic opinion seems to be that leadership competencies, at least to some extent, can in fact be learned (Williams II and Winston, 2003; Intagliata, Ulrich and Smallwood, 2000; Tubbs and Schulz, 2005). Interestingly, given the importance and relevance accorded to transformational leadership models, it has even been suggested that transformational leadership behaviours can be learned (Avolio and Bass, 1998; Russell and Mizrahi, 1995). A way of conceiving of the extent to which leadership competencies can be learned is provided by Tubbs and Schulz (2005). They argue that leadership competencies comprise three things: (a) an individual's personality (which is 'relatively permanent', formed by 'hereditary, cultural, familial and social interactions' and not very amenable to change; (b) values, which can be taught and learned, but not to the extent that behaviours can be taught and learned; and (c) leadership behaviours, which can be taught and learned.

3.4.4 COMPETENCY MODELS – EXAMPLES

Even though competency models are said to not necessarily be capable of definition for the universal case of leadership, many writers nevertheless attempt to set out a one-size-fits-all leadership competency model based on 'universal', 'desirable' or other all-encompassing conceptions of leadership behaviours, or sets of knowledge, skills, and abilities. Given the nature of this research, it is critical to note at this point that few such writers attempt to indicate whether or not they have attempted to validate such leadership

competency models as being applicable to both men and women, and / or as being relevant to all types of cultures or nationalities.

However, despite these sorts of limitations, it is useful to present some examples of generic leadership competency models because they can provide a starting point for attempts to define and validate gender- and culturally-appropriate leadership competency models. Before proceeding to these models, two more qualifications are made. First is to note that there are countless leadership competency models, even 'universal' ones, and that it is impossible to review them all. Second is to point out that those leadership competency models which have been selected for presentation here are those which offer relatively detailed sets of leadership competencies. While it is acknowledged that some researchers (e.g., Klenke, 2002) have attempted to simplify leadership competency models, such research is difficult to replicate and apply.

I. Tubbs and Schulz (2005) – Metacompetencies and Competencies

Tubbs and Schulz (2005) provide a taxonomy of (teachable and learnable) leadership competencies using a framework of seven 'meta-competencies' and fifty competencies. These are presented in Table 3.1.

The metacompetency entitled 'understanding the big picture' is said to be important largely because it is believed to enable leaders to gain their followers' respect by showing that they have a good understanding of the entire organisation (i.e., they can see the 'big picture'). Tubbs and Shultz (citing Gibson and Birkinshaw, 2004) suggest a number of behaviors that a leader can demonstrate to engender such respect, including: using systems theory to show an understanding that changes to one aspect of the organisation affect other aspects of the organisation; utilising technology like the Internet and an Intranet; demonstrating global sensitivity; utilising effective compensation plans; and demonstrating an overarching dedication to ethical practices.

The metacompetency called 'attitudes are everything' is said to be encapsulated by behaviour that, overall, will lead to organisational success. Behaviours said to be demonstrative of such a general type of behaviour include: demonstrating and

pursuing a compelling and achievable vision; showing inclusiveness and respect for diversity; overcoming obstacles and adversity (Seijts, et al, 2004); and demonstrating both confidence in oneself and in others.

The metacompetency ‘leadership, the driving force’ is a generalised leadership metacompetency which is said to be demonstrated by such behaviours as inspiring others (Ellemers et al, 2004); resisting ineffective or outdated practices; trust-building; varying leadership to the situational demands; effective delegation; evaluating others; mentoring; leading with empathy and sensitivity; seeing alternatives in a nuanced manner; and being a role model.

‘Communication, the leader’s voice’ is a metacompetency related generally to effective communication, and is said to be demonstrated by such behaviours as (Tubbs and Moss, 2003): demonstrating emotional intelligence; using active listening; non-defensiveness; skilful and appropriate language and body language use; effective interviewing and negotiation; rumour control; ‘techno-etiquette’ (an understanding of the proprieties required when using technological means of communication such as email); and presentational skills.

The ‘innovation and creativity’ metacompetency is said to encapsulate such behaviours as: creating an organisational climate supportive of innovation; improving creative decision-making; using effective but ‘weird’ ideas; resisting vacillation based on the use of outdated paradigms; demonstrating an ability to ‘reframe’ problems; and continually encouraging people to develop and use creative abilities (Sheremata, 2004).

Table 3.1: *“Taxonomy of Leadership Competencies”*

Adapted from Tubbs and Schulz (2005, pp. 3-5)

| Metacompetency | Competencies |
|---|---|
| <p>Metacompetency I: Understanding the Big Picture</p> | <p>Demonstrating knowledge of the entire organisation. Use of systems theory. Effective utilisation of technology. Demonstrating global sensitivity. Utilising effective compensation. Demonstrating ethical practices.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Metacompetency II: Attitudes are Everything.</p> | <p>Demonstrating a vision. Showing inclusiveness and respect for diversity. Overcoming adversity. Demonstrating appropriate confidence in self and others.</p> |
| <p>Metacompetency III: Leadership, The Driving Force</p> | <p>Inspiring others. Going against outdated or ineffective practices. Building trust. Varying leadership to the demands of the situation. Delegating. Evaluating others. Mentoring others. Demonstrating sensitivity and empathy. Seeing nuances of alternatives, not just either / or extremes. Serving as an appropriate role model.</p> |
| <p>Metacompetency IV: Communication, The Leader's Voice</p> | <p>Demonstrating appropriate emotional intelligence. Using active listening. Demonstrating non-defensiveness. Skillful use of language. Skillful use of body language. Effective interviewing. Effective negotiation. Presentational skills.</p> |
| <p>Metacompetency V: Innovation and Creativity</p> | <p>Developing an innovative organisational climate. Improving creative decision-making. Using weird ideas that work. Avoiding indecision based on old paradigms. Learning reframing. Continually encouraging people to use and develop their creative abilities.</p> |
| <p>Metacompetency VI: Leading Change</p> | <p>Creating transformational change. Developing a continuous learning culture. Building support mechanisms to create and sustain change efforts. Managing the change process. Developing change agents. Encouraging individual change. Encouraging structural change.</p> |
| <p>Metacompetency VII: Teamwork and</p> | <p>Learning to focus. Employing no-fault problem solving.</p> |

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| Followership | Developing a team oriented culture. Developing team-based incentive and reward systems. Managing your boss. Effectively navigating organisational politics. Supporting others on the team. Effectively utilising empowerment. Developing self-directed work teams. |
|---------------------|--|

The 'leading change' metacompetency, as the name implies, relates to a leader's ability to lead and manage change, and behaviours said to be associated with this ability include: creating transformational change; creating an organisational culture which welcomes continuous learning; creating support mechanisms that create and sustain change efforts; managing the process of change; developing agents of change; and encouraging both structural and individual organisational change.

Finally, Tubbs and Schulz's last metacompetency, 'teamwork and "followership"' is said (Kirkman et al, 2004; Tubbs, 2004) to be demonstrated by such behaviours as: learning to focus; using no-fault problem solving; developing both a team-oriented culture and team-based reward and incentive systems; navigating organisational politics effectively; supporting others; utilising empowerment effectively; developing work teams that are self-directed; and improving organisational effectiveness by utilising process improvement teams effectively.

Clearly, Tubbs and Shultz (2005) have developed a very detailed leadership competency model that has been built based on an understanding of the theoretical literature on transformational, charismatic, and visionary leadership, as well as situational leadership and servant leadership, but which goes further by including specific behaviours associated with general leadership competencies.

II. Quinn et al (1989) – Eight Managerial Roles

Quinn et al (1989, p. 21) offer a different but similar taxonomy to the leadership competency model of Tubbs and Schulz (2005), but unlike Tubbs and Schulz

(2005), their description of eight ‘managerial roles’ and the key competencies associated with each role was tested empirically. Their leadership competency model is presented in Table 3.2.

Quinn et al (1989) use something of a situational approach to leadership competencies, listing eight overarching ‘roles’ of a leader as being those of facilitator, mentor, innovator, broker, producer, director, co-ordinator, and monitor. Each ‘role’ is supported by examples of specific competencies. For example, the ‘facilitator’ role is associated with the competencies of team building, participative decision making, and conflict management.

The leadership competency model of Quinn et al (1989) has similar strengths to that of Tubbs and Schulz (2005) in the sense that they both attempt to define specific behaviours that can be associated with general leadership ‘roles’ or ‘meta-competencies’. There are, obviously, further similarities between the two models. For example, the ‘metacompetency’ ‘communication, the leader’s voice’ in Table 3.1 overlaps in its content with the ‘roles’ of ‘mentor’ and ‘broker’. The model of Quinn et al (1989) is neither superior nor inferior to that of Tubbs and Schulz (2005); rather it offers a different way of viewing the leadership competency problem. One potential advantage of the model of Tubbs and Schulz (2005) is that, despite not having been subject to empirical testing, it is a little more detailed than that of Quinn et al (1989).

Table 3.2: “Eight Managerial Roles and Their Key Competency”

Adapted from Quinn et al. (1989, p. 21)

| Role | Competency |
|-------------|--|
| Facilitator | Team building Participative decision making Conflict management |
| Mentor | Understanding self and others Communication Develop subordinates |
| Innovator | Living with change Creative thinking Managing change |
| Broker | Building a power base Negotiating agreement |

| | |
|--------------|---|
| | Negotiating and selling ideas |
| Producer | Personal productivity Motivating others Time and stress management |
| Director | Taking the initiative Goal setting Delegating effectively |
| Co-ordinator | Planning Organising Controlling |
| Monitor | Organising information Evaluating information Responding to information |

III. Mumford et al (2007) – The Strataplex Model

Mumford et al (2007) synthesise a very large body of research on leadership competencies to arrive as what they call a ‘strataplex model’, in which the most senior levels of management are conceptualised to require cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, business skills, and strategic skills. The broad elements of their strataplex model are shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: “The Leadership Skills Strataplex”

Adapted from Mumford et al. (2007)

| Cognitive Skills | Interpersonal Skills | Business Skills | Strategic Skills |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Investigating | Supervisory | Coordination | Planning |
| Monitoring | Negotiating | Staffing | Evaluating |
| Disseminating | Leader | Resource allocator | Figurehead |
| Information gathering and dissemination | Negotiator | Technical know-how | Spokesperson |
| General cognitive capacities | Disturbance handler | Allocating resources | Liaison |
| Basic cognitive capacities | Human relations | Functional expertise | System perspective |
| | Supervision | | Decision-making |
| | People orientation | | Problem solving |
| | Social complexity | | Intellectual competence |
| | Social judgment | | Cognitive complexity |
| | Social capacities | | Problem solving skills |
| | | | Higher cognitive capacities |

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
| <p><i>Collecting, processing and disseminating information</i> (Lau and Pavett, 1980; Mintzberg, 1973; Zaccaro, 2001).</p> <p><i>Learning</i> (Mahoney et al, 1965)</p> <p><i>Speaking</i> (Graham, 1983; Shipper and Dillard, 2000; Yukl, 1989).</p> <p><i>Active listening</i> (Graham, 1983).</p> <p><i>Writing</i> (Luthans, Welsh and Taylor, 1988; Wright, 1996; Zaccaro, 2001).</p> <p><i>Active learning skills</i> (Jacobs and Jaques, 1987).</p> <p><i>Adaptive behaviours and strategies to deal with emergent, non-routine and dynamic components of jobs</i> (Kanungo and Misra, 1992).</p> <p><i>Critical thinking</i> (Gillen and Carroll, 1985).</p> | <p><i>Interacting with and influencing others</i> (Katz, 1974; Mumford et al, 2000).</p> <p><i>Social perceptiveness</i> (Graham, 1983; Mintzberg, 1973; Yukl, 1989).</p> <p><i>Coordination of oneself and others</i> (Gillen and Carroll, 1985; Mumford et al, 2000).</p> <p><i>Negotiation skills</i> (Copeman, 1971; Mahoney et al, 1963; Mahoney et al, 1965; Mintzberg, 1973).</p> <p><i>Persuasion skills</i> (Katz, 1974; Mintzberg, 1973; Yukl, 1989)</p> | <p><i>Skills related to specific functional areas</i> (Hambrick and Mason, 1984; Zaccaro, 2001).</p> <p><i>Management of material resources</i> (Katz, 1974).</p> <p><i>Operations analysis</i> (Hoffman and Hegarty, 1993).</p> <p><i>Management of personnel resources</i> (Luthans et al, 1988; Mahoney et al, 1963; Mahoney et al, 1965).</p> <p><i>Management of financial resources</i> (Copeman, 1971; Katz, 1974).</p> | <p><i>Visioning</i> (Conger and Kanungo, 1987).</p> <p><i>Systems perception</i> (Connelly, Marks and Mumford, 1993; Copeman, 1971; Gillen and Carroll, 1985; Mumford, Dansereau and Yammarino, 2000; Mumford, Zaccaro et al, 2000).</p> <p><i>Identification of downstream consequences and identification of key causes</i> (Cox and Cooper, 1988; Kanungo and Misra, 1992; Mumford, Zaccaro et al, 2000).</p> <p><i>Problem identification skills</i> (Cox and Cooper, 1988; Yukl, 1989).</p> <p><i>Solution appraisal and objective evaluation skills</i> (Mumford, Marks et al, 2000).</p> |
|--|--|--|---|

Mumford et al (2007) have built on the early work of Mintzberg (1973) in devising this leadership competency framework. In Table 3.3, the leadership competencies are not only described in general terms (like ‘meta-competencies’ or ‘roles’) with supporting competencies for each category, the top level competencies (which they call ‘skills’) of cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, business skills, and strategic skills are presented from left to right in declining order of importance. Cognitive skills are said to be the most fundamental type of leadership skill, encompassing things like collecting, processing and disseminating information, as well as speaking, writing, and learning, and critical thinking. Interpersonal skills are the next in order of importance, and include,

amongst others, negotiation and persuasion skills. Next are business skills, which include things like management of personnel and financial resources. Finally, there are strategic skills, which include things like problem identification skills and objective evaluation skills.

The second row in Table 3.3 is drawn from earlier research of Mahoney et al (1965), Mintzberg (1973), Katz and Kahn (1978), Lau and Pavett (1980), Kanungo and Misra (1992), Hooijberg et al (1997), Connelly et al (2000), Mumford et al (2000), and Zaccaro (2001), and cited by Mumford et al (2007). It describes the subset of skills associated with each 'top level' skill in quite general terms. The third row is drawn from the article by Mumford et al (2007) and shows the supporting research cited by the authors for each type of skill listed. This third row also shows more specific examples of the subset of skills said to be associated with each 'top level' skill.

As with the models presented in Tables 1 and 2, the model in Table 3.3 attempts to define specific behaviours that can be associated with general leadership 'roles' or 'meta-competencies', instead calling them 'skills'. Mumford et al (2007). This model, however, adds to the previous two by categorising these skills in order of their importance.

IV. Leadership Competencies for a Modern, Global World

It was noted earlier that a potential problem with leadership competency models is that they may not be applicable to certain cultures or nationalities. An interesting contribution to the literature about leadership competencies therefore relates to consideration of whether there are certain leadership competencies that can be considered, in a modern, globalised world, to transcend national and cultural barriers. Muczyk and Holt (2008, p. 277) contend that it may be possible to identify a 'global leadership construct' that will most likely not be the same as the North American models of leadership competencies. This is despite research that suggests that cultures vary as to the extent that they deploy or place value on various leadership behaviours (Aimar and Stough, 2007; Den Hartog et al, 1999; Hofstede, 2001; Peterson and Hunt, 1997). For

example, Javidan et al (2006) consider that the following leadership competencies can be considered 'universal' across cultures and nationalities:

1. Being trustworthy, just, and honest;
2. Having foresight and planning ahead;
3. Being positive, dynamic, encouraging, and motivating and building confidence; and
4. Being communicative, informed, a coordinator, and a team integrator.

Spreitzer et al (1997) also attempt to define 'universal' leadership competencies, but claim they are:

1. Seeking opportunities to learn;
2. Being open to criticism;
3. Seeking and using feedback;
4. Being committed to making a difference;
5. Learning from mistakes;
6. Being insightful;
7. Acting with integrity;
8. Having the courage to take risks;
9. Adapting to cultural differences;
10. Having broad-based business knowledge; and
11. Bringing out the best in people.

This research adds a number of new competencies to the models presented in Tables 1, 2, and 3, and would be of interest to test in further research, perhaps by asking respondents directly about their views on any special competencies they feel do or should transcend national and cultural barriers.

V. Synthesising Competency Approaches

A major difficulty in attempting to synthesise the various competency approaches presented in this chapter as well as incorporating the various theoretical models presented is the lack of consistent terminology across models. A further problem is that the terminology used by academicians may not always

be understood readily by individuals in organisations, be they leaders or otherwise. An important consideration in conducting the research for this Dissertation was to translate from the academic, theoretical literature, into a list of leadership competencies that could be understood and commented upon by participants in this research. Table 3.4 presents a list of leadership competencies that draws upon the research literature presented in this chapter, synthesises it, and rewords it so that it is explicable to research participants.

Table 3.4: "A Synthesis of Leadership Competencies"

| | |
|---|--|
| Adapting to cultural differences and having respect for diversity. | Being able to create radical organisational change. |
| Being able to deal effectively with people to whom you are accountable. | Being able to focus intensely on issues. |
| Being able to see subtle differences rather just extremes. | Being fair. |
| Being good at interviewing people. | Being good at mentoring other people. |
| Being good at negotiation. | Being kind. |
| Being skilled in the use of body language. | Being able to build a power base. |
| Building support mechanisms to sustain change efforts (e.g., encouraging an entire organisation to change its structure if needed). | Changing your leadership styles in different situations. |
| Collecting, organising, processing, responding to, and disseminating information. | Continually seeking opportunities to learn (including seeking feedback from others and learning from mistakes). |
| Creating an innovative organisational climate/culture (e.g., developing a culture of continuous learning). | Creating organisations with good internal communication and in which there is mutual trust and respect for everyone. |
| Delegating effectively. | Demonstrating sensitivity and empathy for other people. |
| Demonstrating you have a vision for the organisation. | Developing a self-directed, team-oriented organisational culture. |
| Doing things differently if the old ways are not working. | Employing democratic decision making. |
| Encouraging individuals to change if change is needed and developing people who convince others of a need for change. | Getting others to trust your abilities and what you say. |
| Having good active listening skills. | Having good organising/coordinating skills. |
| Having good presentation skills. | Having good written and spoken language skills. |
| Having high emotional intelligence. | Having high levels of personal productivity. |
| Having knowledge of the entire organisation and | Having the attitude that all problems can be |

| | |
|---|---|
| being able to 'see the big picture'. | overcome. |
| Having the courage to take risks. | Helping people work to their best abilities (e.g., encouraging people to develop their creative abilities). |
| Increasing creative organisational decision-making. | Inspiring and motivating others. |
| Leading by example. | Looking at situations from different perspectives. |
| Managing your own time and stress effectively. | Receiving criticism without getting upset. |
| Resolving conflict. | Seeing what is likely to happen in the future and planning ahead. |
| Setting and meeting goals. | Showing appropriate confidence in yourself and others. |
| Showing initiative. | Solving problems without blaming anyone. |
| Supporting others and developing incentive and reward systems. | Thinking creatively. |
| Understanding and dealing effectively with organisational politics. | Using ethical practices and acting with integrity. |
| Using strategies to empower people within the organisation. | Using technology effectively. |
| Wanting to 'make a difference' in some way. | Welcoming a challenge. |

3.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This review has provided an overview of salient themes emerging from the literature on general leadership issues. It was shown that there are many theoretical models of leadership, and that although transformational leadership appears to currently have a somewhat favoured position in the literature, it is by no means the only accepted model of leadership. Other approaches are servant leadership and situational leadership.

The leadership competency approach to leadership studies was then presented and it was noted that although there have been criticisms of this approach, it does seem to offer the best framework for achieving a practical understanding of leadership knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as enabling studying possible different leadership competencies possessed by men and women. The importance of using a competency approach to studying leadership was also said to be in the fact that it is generally agreed that (at least some) leadership competencies can be learned. This has obvious relevance for potential

recommendations regarding women in leadership – if competencies can be taught and learned, then it may be possible to enhance women leaders' competencies to enable them to achieve better success as leaders. Such competencies may even need to be those that help women leaders overcome some of the barriers to leadership advancement that will be identified in the second part of this literature review in Chapter 4, following – sex-role stereotyping, issues relating to role congruity, support infrastructure issues, and general 'glass ceiling' issues.

Finally, the research literature on leadership models and leadership competency models was drawn together in Table 3.4 to present a list of leadership competencies that could be used to address the following research objective: *To assess the similarities and differences in leadership competencies between gender groups as they are perceived by men and women in the UAE*; and to help answer the following research question: *What are the differences in leadership competencies possessed by men and women in the UAE?*

CHAPTER FOUR: LITERATURE REVIEW – PART 2

4.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The first part of the literature review for this Dissertation, in Chapter 3, was devoted to explaining the development of leadership scholarship, highlighting modern approaches to leadership, including disagreements within the literature, and presenting modern theoretical models of leadership. It also discussed the competencies approach to leadership studies, including a discussion of controversies surrounding such approaches, an explanation of why it can be considered important to define leadership competencies, consideration of whether competencies can be learned, and a presentation of four examples of leadership competency models, culminating in a synthesis of leadership competencies to be used in this research.

This chapter is also devoted to an analysis of leadership literature, but focuses on literature which attempts to elucidate possible differences in leadership competencies between men and women, potential barriers to women attaining positions of leadership, and theories and research about how to advance women leaders. Section 4.1 of this chapter presents a discussion of the current academic debate as to whether or not there are distinctly ‘male’ and ‘female’ leadership competencies, and presents research which suggests characteristics which are said to be more closely identified with female leaders as opposed to male leaders, whilst acknowledging the limitations of this research. Section 4.2 goes on to survey the research literature on potential barriers to women attaining positions of leadership. Again acknowledging the limitations of this research, it is suggested that four important potential barriers to women leaders include sex-role stereotyping, issues relating to role congruity/incongruity, support infrastructure issues, and a set of catch-all ‘glass ceiling’ barriers. Finally, Section 4.3 presents a summary of the literature on how to advance women to positions of leadership in organisations, and divides the research into those approaches which may best be described as ‘top down’ approaches (in which the focus is on changing things within the organisation or even the culture in which

the organisation operates) and those which may best be described as 'bottom up' approaches (in which women are presented as being able to change the way in which they do things so as to overcome barriers to their leadership advancement).

4.2 MALE VERSUS FEMALE LEADERSHIP COMPETENCIES DEBATE

A very difficult question to resolve when considering the published literature is whether leadership can properly be defined as an androgynous concept or construct, or whether instead there are distinct 'male' and 'female' leadership competencies. The only realistic, overall conclusion that can be drawn is that the evidence for or against the existence of distinctly male or female leadership competencies is inconclusive, despite the plethora of published studies (Murphy Jr et al, 1995; Park and Krishnan, 1997). The overall inconclusiveness of the findings is a function of the body of literature both for and against each position. It is also a function of important limitations in most of the studies. In this respect, Bourantas and Papalexandris (2007) make the observation that most studies attempting to answer the male versus female competencies debate are inconclusive because they have not covered all dimensions of leadership behaviour and because they have tended to be conducted almost exclusively within the United States (see also Parker and Ogilvie, 1996). Thus, in proceeding to explicate which types of leadership competencies might potentially be classified as being unique (or at least more prevalent) amongst women leaders, based on research in this area, it is critical to keep these limitations in mind.

Nonetheless, it is worthwhile presenting an overview of these studies, because they yield possible sets of competencies that can be tested and validated in this Dissertation and other research studies. In proceeding to examine possible differences, the work of scholars finding no significant differences between males and females in certain leadership competencies is acknowledged (e.g., Vilkinas and Cartan, 1993; Chow, 2005; Hopkins and Bilimoria, 2008; Challahan et al, 2005; Day and Stogdill, 1972; Dobbins and Platz, 1986; Maher, 1997; Nieva

and Gutek, 1980; Powell, 1990; Petrides and Furnham, 2000; Petrides and Furnham, 2006; Bourantas and Papalexandris, 1990).

Characteristics that have been suggested to be more closely identified with women leaders include:

- using consensus decision-making and viewing power in relational terms (Stanford, Oates and Flores, 1995);
- encouraging conflict resolution and developing team-oriented work environments (Helgeson, 1990; Rosener, 1990);
- possession of better people skills (Rutherford, 2001);
- the ability to be more visionary (Vinnicombe, 1987);
- preference for a leadership style that is more democratic than that of men (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Furst and Reeves, 2008; Stanford, Oates and Flores, 1995);
- a more transformational style in which interpersonal skills and consideration are relied upon to a greater extent than men (Bass and Avolio, 1997; Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Druskat, 1994; Burke and Collins, 2001);
- having greater emotional and social intelligence than men (Groves, 2005);
- being more receptive to new talent and innovative, bold ideas (Furst and Reeves, 2008);
- having greater conflict resolution skills (Omeltschenka and Aarmitage, 2006); and
- being more humane-oriented (Omeltschenka and Aarmitage, 2006).

Some of these competencies have been drawn together by Stanford, Oates and Flores (1995) to develop a suggestion for a uniquely female leadership competency model (see Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 suggests that a female leader is likely to be one who is a visionary who facilitates communication, involves employees in team building, prefers referent or reward power bases, inspires and motivates, and fosters mutual trust and respect. It also suggests the way in which female leaders go from creating a

vision to leading her followers to the realisation of that vision. The ‘steps’ in this process need some elaboration to show ways in which Stanford, Oates and Flores (1995) present a woman’s leadership style as being potentially different from that of a male leader.

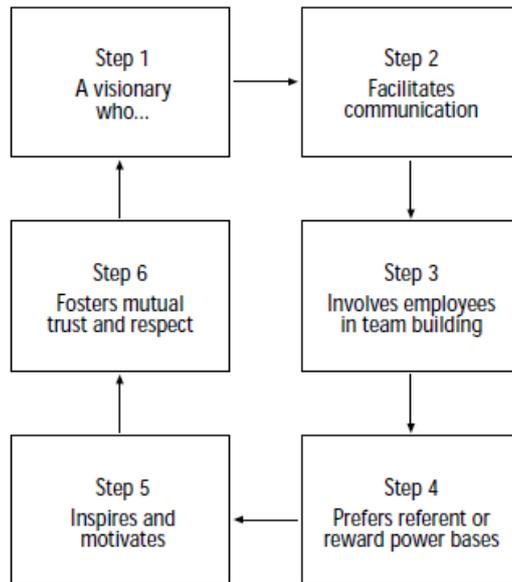


Figure 4.1

Adopted from Stanford, Oates and Flores (1995, p. 15)

Most of the steps in the model in Figure 4.1 are self-explanatory, but one requires further elucidation. The preference of women leaders for referent or reward power bases is said to be in contrast to other possible bases of power, and is suggested to be an important difference between male and female leaders. Stanford, Oates and Flores (1995, p. 11) present the well-known model of power outlined by French and Raven (1959) who conceptualise power as having five potential bases – coercive (power based on the creation of fear in subordinates), reward (power based on the granting of rewards to subordinates), legitimate (power resulting from one’s position in a hierarchy), expert (power based on possession of expertise), and referent (power based on the support of subordinates granted willingly because of the subordinates’ attitudes towards the leader) power. Thus, it is suggested that a woman leader is less likely than her male counterpart to use coercive leadership techniques, less likely to expect

follower compliance because of the formal title or position she holds (e.g., 'general manager'), and less likely to expect follower compliance by virtue of her expertise or qualifications (e.g., possession of an MBA).

The model presented by Stanford, Oates and Flores (1995) was based on an exploratory study of a sample of women business owners and managers and, in addition to the limitation of being based on Western leaders, had, as the authors themselves acknowledge, limitations based on the small size of the sample, lack of randomisation, and possible interviewer bias possibly associated with the use of partially-structured, open-ended questioning. However, the model is very valuable in attempting to link together the possibly unique competencies of women leaders to show how these competencies combine to provide effective leadership. This is something that this research will attempt to answer in the case of women leaders in the UAE.

4.3 POTENTIAL BARRIERS TO WOMEN ATTAINING LEADERSHIP

Very few people attain positions of leadership, and the competencies required to be an effective leader, however they may be defined, and whether or not they can be learned, can certainly be regarded as comparatively rare amongst people within organisations. Leaders are often considered to be exceptional people who have risen to the top of their field or organisation because they have possessed and practiced the necessary competencies for leadership. The exercise of leadership is often fraught with difficulties, and is not typically sought by the faint-hearted. Further, there is likely to be fierce competition for positions of leadership, as such positions tend to be associated with prestige and high levels of pecuniary and non-pecuniary benefits. However, in addition to the normal barriers to leadership, it is also possible that certain groups within a culture may, despite possessing desirable competencies, still fail to reach positions of leadership. In the case of women leaders, this has been suggested to account for the very low percentages of women leaders across all fields, all organisations, and all cultures. For this reason, it has been a theme of considerable research to identify what barriers, if any, might be specific to women. Only by understanding

the nature and operation of such barriers is it possible to understand why women who otherwise possess desirable leadership competencies might fail to attain positions of leadership alongside equally talented men.

As with much of this literature review, some qualification needs to be stated regarding its relevance for the UAE, other Gulf countries and the Middle East region. The primary qualifying comment that needs to be made is to note that much of the research into barriers to women attaining leadership positions has been conducted in a Western, particularly North American, setting. Thus, the findings and analytical approaches of such studies may not necessarily have application outside of the Western world, or even outside the United States of America. Nevertheless, the insights from published studies of gender and leadership attainment are important as a preliminary step to applying or testing the concepts in the UAE setting.

In much of the discussion on gender and leadership, the political or legal restrictions on women being able to attain positions of leadership (e.g., laws preventing women from working) are not addressed, even though it is acknowledged that throughout history, and still in some countries, such restrictions have applied to women (Porterfield and Kleiner, 2005, p. 49). Further, when overt discrimination against women is acknowledged to occur, it is not evaluated in much depth. Neither is the issue of culture, even though it is likely to play an important part in leadership. One reason for excluding a detailed discussion of culture is that it depends on the country being examined and therefore is resistant to generalisation. Instead, focus is placed on more subtle, but nevertheless potentially powerful, barriers to women's advancement: sex-role stereotyping; issues relating to role congruity / incongruity; support infrastructure issues; and the generic, catch-all category of 'glass ceiling' issues. There is considerable overlap between each of these areas, and it should also be observed that there is a lack of consistent use of terminology throughout the literature. Nevertheless, the most important contributions from the literature are believed to be summarised here.

4.3.1 SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING

Sex-role stereotyping may present a significant barrier to the advancement of women to positions of leadership. The essence of the problem of sex-role stereotyping as it applies to women in leadership is that there is considerable evidence, at least in Western studies, that leadership is conceived (by both men and women) as something men, not women, do (Connerley, Mecham and Strauss, 2008; Schein, 1973; Schein, 1975; Embry, Padgett and Caldwell, 2008; Koch, Luft and Kruse, 2005; Powell, Butterfield and Parent, 2002; Schein, 2007; Thackray and McCall, 1997; Duehr and Bono, 2006). The operation of sex-role stereotyping could be that women are (unfairly) perceived as not possessing leadership competencies by men. It could also be, as suggested by Powell et al (2002), that women themselves internalise sex-role stereotypes and themselves consider themselves, by virtue of their sex, as not possessing leadership competencies, even when they do. Sex-role stereotyping, as well as potentially directly leading to problems for women attaining leadership, could also place additional stress on female leaders, which could adversely affect the quality of their leadership or lead younger women who are seeking appropriate role models to form the view that leadership is not something they would enjoy pursuing (Okanlawon, 1994). Stress might arise from women attempting to contort themselves and their personalities to 'fit the mould' where the mould is most distinctly a male one. For example, Kumra and Vinnicombe (2008) in a study of women lawyers in the UK showed that such women considered that to attain partnership they would have to be 'like' the existing partners (mainly men), including, if necessary, being seen as a 'good bloke'.

4.3.2 ISSUES RELATING TO ROLE CONGRUITY / INCONGRUITY

Role congruity theory is very similar to the concept of sex-role stereotyping, but offers a deeper understanding of the operation of sex-role stereotyping in thwarting women's advancement as leaders. Role congruity theory goes further than sex-role stereotyping theory in that it shows not only that women may be regarded as not possessing required leadership competencies, but also that women, *even if* they are regarded as possessing required leadership

competencies, will be viewed unfavourably (by men, by other women, and even by themselves). The latter point needs some explanation. The reason for this outcome is that there can be prejudice against women who display leadership behaviour (Eagly and Karau, 2002; Eagly et al, 1995) because such women are not conforming to expected or 'normal' gender roles, in which men lead and women do not. This problem for women leaders is exacerbated if they adopt a leadership 'style' that is more 'strong and tyrannical' than 'soft' and 'feminine' (Jonson et al, 2008). As with sex-role stereotyping, issues relating to role congruity/incongruity, as well as possibly causing problems for women attaining leadership, could also place additional stress on female leaders, which could then adversely affect the quality of their leadership or lead other women observing women in positions of leadership to conclude that leadership is an unattractive proposition (Okanlawon, 1994).

4.3.3 SUPPORT INFRASTRUCTURE ISSUES

Another potential obstacle to women may be found in the fact that aspiring women leaders may be far less likely than their male counterparts to have access to vital, informal networks that may help with attaining positions of leadership or developing contacts and information required for effective leadership performance. Such exclusion from social networks could also incorporate exclusion from formal or informal mentoring systems (Okanlawon, 1994). As Okanlawon (1994, p. 26) observes:

While it remains that informal networks can be seen as important for transmitting information and arriving at effective decisions, many writers on female managers have noted that women are often excluded from the informal networks ... It is without a doubt that such exclusion results in women being unable to participate fully in strategic decisions in organisations. ... [F]ailure to achieve membership of an informal system cuts an individual off from significant aspects of organisational life, and can have severe job and personal consequences. An important aspect of strategic decision making is gaining co-operation from others within the organisation, an aspect which women are denied when excluded from informal networks.

A different but related observation is that women may not have the same access as men to management development or leadership development courses as their male counterparts, or that even if they do have such access, because of the predominance of men in such courses, they are prevented from fully benefiting from them. A primary benefit of such courses is noted to be not just learning relevant information, but also forming informal networks amongst aspiring leaders, and women are more likely to form such networks amongst other women. Research tends to suggest that women benefit most from women-only leadership development courses as compared to mixed-sex courses, but, somewhat paradoxically, encounter prejudice when they participate in such courses because they are perceived by men within the organisation to be enjoying an unfair advantage (Okanlawon, 1994; Harlan and Weiss, 1980; Langrish, 1980).

4.3.4 'GLASS CEILING' ISSUES

The issues relating to sex-role stereotyping, issues relating to gender role congruity/incongruity, and support infrastructure issues offer valuable insights into possible reasons women do not succeed in leadership positions, even if they possess leadership competencies. However, it may be difficult for women, when being asked to identify their experiences of problems in organisations, to correctly identify whether such forces have been in operation. For this reason, it is useful to present here an extremely useful and detailed list prepared by Chugh and Sahgal (2007, pp. 354-355) and drawing upon an extensive body of research of generic, or 'catch-all' 'glass ceiling' issues which may operate as barriers to the advancement of women leaders. This list is also useful because it captures not only barriers described in this literature review, but also several specific types of gender discrimination, gender bias, or other important potential obstacles to women's progression. This list is shown in Table 4.1.

Most of the points in the table are self-explanatory, but some require clarification; in particular, the first two points next to the heading 'Position and Power in the Workplace'. The 'visibility-vulnerability spiral' is explained by Chugh and Sahgal (2007, pp. 361-362) as being: "about the projective processes

(almost invisible) which get stirred when women are placed in formal organisations. In leadership roles women will be experienced as violating traditional role expectation either of leaders or of women or both.” This appears to be a restatement of the problem identified by role congruity theory discussed earlier in this chapter (Section 3.2). Further to this, Chugh and Sahgal (2007, p. 358) make an interesting contribution to this by citing research by scholars such as Bem (1981), Deaux and Kite (1993), Deaux and LaFrance (1998) and Powell and Butterfield (2003) suggesting that some women voluntarily describe themselves as possessing more ‘masculine’ than ‘feminine’ characteristics and not only are quite comfortable with this but are then more likely to aspire to positions of leadership. The second point under the heading ‘Position and Power in the Workplace’ (“fear of success defined as specific motive to avoid success because of its perceived negative consequence”) would appear to be an extension of the first point about the ‘visibility-vulnerability spiral’, but could also be because of other reasons, such as, perhaps, fears about conflicts with lifestyle or family life associated with holding a position of leadership.

The value of the table for this research is that, although it incorporates, includes or crosses over with many of the points raised in this section, and there is obvious overlap between many of the points within it, the issues are presented in simple, largely non-academic language. This research will involve discussing women’s actual experiences, and a colloquial or informal discussion of their experiences will therefore be warranted. The points raised in the table can easily be translated into suitable interview questions. The importance of questioning women widely about their experiences is supported by research by Hagan and Kay (2007) which has suggested that, at least in the case of the Canadian legal profession, women may present something of a paradox in that on the one hand they report being satisfied with their work, but nonetheless leave the profession. The point here is that respondents may need to be prompted to some extent about their experiences to draw out from them vital information about how their aspirations to positions of leadership have been either facilitated or frustrated by ‘glass ceiling’ issues.

Table 4.1: "Glass Ceiling Barriers"
Adapted from Chugh and Sahgal (2007)

| Type of Barrier | Examples of Barrier | Supporting Literature |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| Career in Management | Female managers are overall less likely than males to see progression to senior management position as a career goal. | Hede and Ralston (1993); Oakley (2000) |
| | There are stereotypes and preconceptions about women's abilities and suitability for business careers that adversely impact their progression to positions of leadership. | Catalyst (1990); Mattis (1995) |
| | Lack of access to line positions is a common ailment that women managers experience. Line positions are more likely to lead to progression of positions of leadership. | Catalyst (1990); Mattis (1995); Oakley (2000) |
| | Women managers lack careful career planning and planned job assignments. The suggestion is that women tend to make career progression decisions for reasons other than a desire to progress to leadership. | Catalyst (1990); Mattis (1995) |
| | Short-term adjustments in working schedules (flexi-time) results in long term reduction in earnings and advancements. The suggestion is that women more likely than men to require working schedules that prevent them from progression along a career path leading to leadership. | Rosener (1995) |
| | Senior management assumes that married women do not want international careers. This is a problem because CEOs and other leaders are now generally expected to have international experience. | Van Der Boon (2003) |
| | Assumptions about inadequate commitment of working mothers adversely influence advancement. | Rosener (1995) |
| | Women are increasingly leaving organisations to start up companies around their own unique styles rather than adapt to environments which do not welcome them. | Burke (1996) |
| Position and Power in Workplace | 'Visibility-vulnerability spiral' which renders women as violating both role of a leader and role of a woman. | Rosener (1995) |
| | Fear of success defined as specific motive to avoid success because of its perceived negative consequence. | Buddhapriya (1999) |
| | Excluded from overseas experience, women are excluded from promotions and power in multinational organisations. | Van Der Boon (2003) |

| | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| | Overt prejudice: "There's not a woman in this country I would want on my board." | Wall Street Journal Europe (2001); Van Der Boon (2003) |
| Cultural and Organisational Barriers | Exclusion of women from informal channels of communication and networks and counterproductive behaviour of male coworkers. | Catalyst (1990); Mattis (1995) |
| | Lack of influential mentors for women in management. | Catalyst (1990) |
| | According to CEOs: Women have not been in pipeline long enough. | Mattis (1995) |
| | Cultural bias coupled with their not being viewed as primary income-earners are major obstacles for women's advancement. | International Labour Organisation (1997); Van Der Boon (2003) |
| | Higher performance standards are often expected of women than of men. | International Labour Organisation (1997); Van Der Boon (2003) |
| | Barriers for promotion to top levels cited by men reported issues like family etc., whilst women perceived barriers such as exclusion from informal networks, personal style differences and lack of political awareness. | Singh and Vinnicombe, (2003) |
| | It would take several generations for women to achieve proportional representation at the top of American businesses. The period may be much longer for other nations. | Fortune Marketing Report for Deloitte and Touche LLP (1996) |
| | When a corporation has many more men than women (or vice versa) in influential positions, the culture tends to adopt attributes that favour the dominant gender. In relation to barriers that impede women's career development, culture is further delineated into stereotyping and organisational climate. | Jackson (2001) |

4.4 THEORIES/RESEARCH ON HOW TO ADVANCE WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Obviously, any conclusions made about how to advance women in positions of leadership must be conditional upon their specific circumstances and based on a careful study of which factors are actually operating to impede women's progression within a given organisational or national setting. However, it is possible here to provide useful insight into two broad approaches to the issue. Morley (1993) has noted that commentators tend to be heavily polarised according to their preference for either approach, although this polarisation is

somewhat difficult to understand, since it appears that it would be possible to implement measures from both approaches.

4.4.1 'TOP DOWN' APPROACHES

The first type of approach might be described as 'top down' methods, where the focus is on changing things within the organisation or even the culture in which the organisation operates, in order to get more positive outcomes for women in leadership. Here, the focus is not on women changing what they do or how they do it, but rather ensuring that others (e.g., men) change what they are doing. Examples of such changes could include organisations developing strong policy commitment to see women rise to positions of leadership and even undertaking organisational or structural changes such as alteration of rules and adoption of quotas (Trebilcock, 1991), although the latter has often been controversial. A specific example of changing rules might be in changing the way in which work is conducted within the organisation to better accommodate women's work and family obligations (Schein, 2007). Clearly, information such as that presented in the discussion of 'glass ceiling' barriers earlier in this review are relevant here to identifying potential barriers that may require the action and commitment of organisations or even broader society to change.

Interesting research by Martin, Knopoff and Beckman (1998) proposes a distinction between organisations built on the model of the traditional bureaucracy (characterised by such things as strong hierarchies, sex-segregated occupations, and discouragement of emotional expression) or 'normative' organisations (which are moderately 'flat' in their structure, although women tend to be clustered at the bottom) and distinctly 'feminist' organisations which, implicitly, are likely to be ones in which women will be more comfortable, their talents more likely to be recognised, and their leadership aspirations more likely to be realised). Noting that their 'feminist' organisation bears some, but not entire, similarity with collectivist organisations as described by scholars such as Mansbridge (1973), Garnson and Levin (1984), Jackall and Levin (1984), Rothschild and Whitt (1986) and Whyte and Whyte (1991), they provide a table

comparing and contrasting the three types of organisations which is reproduced here in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: "Comparison of Traditional Bureaucratic, Normative, and Feminist Types of Organisations"
Adapted from Martin, Knopoff and Beckman (1998, p. 431)

| Dimensions - Degree to which: | Traditional Bureaucratic | Normative | Feminist |
|---|--|---|--|
| Hierarchy is emphasised | High: hierarchical; authority at the top | Low: relatively egalitarian; authority within collective | Low: egalitarian; authority dispersed throughout organisation |
| Division of labour is formal and specialised | High: formalized; specialised | Low: informal; nonspecialised | Low: informal; nonspecialised |
| Employment is based on expertise | High: employment based on technical qualifications; previous thorough training in a specialized area; little or no job rotation | Low: employment based on skills and knowledge; training on the job; job rotation | Low: employment based on commitment to feminist agenda; training on the job; job rotation |
| Jobs are segregated by gender | High: not explicitly addressed, but norm is high segregation by job title; women clustered at bottom | High: not explicitly addressed, but norm is high segregation by job title; women clustered at bottom | Low: goal is minimal segregation: many feminist organisations all female |
| Leadership style is authoritarian | High: authoritarian leadership emphasized; autocratic | Moderate-low: authoritarian leadership de-emphasised; participative | Low: authoritarian leadership de-emphasised; participative |
| Control is direct | High: control is direct | Low: control unobtrusive, through internalised values | Low: control unobtrusive, through internalised values reflecting feminist ideology |
| Decision making centralised and concentrated at high levels | High: centralized decision making at higher levels; decisions final | Moderate: consensual decision making within groups; open to renegotiation | Low: decentralized decision making; open to renegotiation |
| Corporate culture emphasises competition | High: competitive culture; status, rewards based on individual achievement | Moderate: cooperative culture; fewer status differences; rewards distributed across collective | Low: cooperative culture; status differences minimised; rewards somewhat equalised |
| Work behaviour determined by impersonal rule | High: impersonal decisions; based on formal rules, applied consistently | Moderate-low: group-specific decisions based on group norms rather | Low: individualised decisions based on personal relations and |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| | | than formal rules | formal rules that are open to renegotiation |
| Emotion treated as acceptable form of expression | Low: emotional expression generally discouraged, devalued as irrational | Moderate: emotion sometimes expressed, primarily for instrumental purposes | High: emotion openly expressed, personal and work related |
| Work and private life regarded as separate | High: private life presumed to be separate from work activity; private adapted to work | High: private life presumed to be separate from work activity; private adapted to work | Low: private life concerns are primary; work adapted to private rhythms |

The value of this ‘model’ of a ‘feminist organisation’ shown in the last column of Table 4.2 is potentially extremely high because it shows, by implication, the sorts of organisational characteristics which are likely to be conducive to the success of women leaders. In this dissertation, it will be of interest to identify whether any of the interview participants mention whether and if so to what extent their organisations bear similarities with this model. Any correspondence between their success in leadership and the presence of such similarities may lend some possible support to this organisational model, with potential implications for organisations wishing to ensure that women leaders are represented in greater numbers. Further, research participants can be asked about their agreement with dimensions of the model as presented by Martin, Knopoff and Beckman (1998).

4.4.2 ‘BOTTOM UP’ APPROACHES

On the other hand, there are what might be termed ‘bottom up’ approaches to advancing women leaders. Here, instead of (or perhaps in addition to) ‘top down’ approaches, women are presented as being able to change the way they do things so as to overcome barriers to their leadership advancement. Broadly, this might be described as ‘empowerment’, but another way of looking at the problem is to say that what is being suggested is that aspiring women leaders need to learn additional competencies in order to overcome barriers to attaining leadership. Obviously, if one were to accept the ‘bottom up’ approach to advancing women leaders, one would have to at least partially accept that there might be some differences in leadership competencies between men and women.

Pringle and Gold (1990) note that there is no shortage of advice to women about how to succeed despite the barriers they face to attaining leadership, and summarise such strategies into six groups: (a) 'learn male rules'; (b) 'superwoman'; (c) 'personal change'; (d) 'female niche'; (e) 'reformist'; (f) 'woman-centred.' Whether or not such approaches would be appropriate in the UAE is something that this research will attempt to answer as well as identify other relevant strategies for women's development.

The bottom up approach is not without controversy, although its critics have tended to be writing from a Western, mainly American, perspective, and the problems identified by them may not necessarily be as relevant in the context of UAE society. A clear endorsement of a bottom up approach is given by Schein (2007) who states that it is important to recognise that negative attitudes towards women are likely to be 'intractable' and that the only realistic approach to solving the problem of low rates of women in positions of leadership is for women themselves to learn strategies to ensure that such negative attitudes do not 'derail their success'. Bottom up approaches have, however, been stringently criticised. One ground for criticism is well enunciated by Morley (1993) is that they tend to classify women as a 'remedial group' which needs extra help to achieve positions of leadership. Such a view could possibly serve to further undermine the ability of women to achieve positions of leadership. Thus, it would be important before considering recommending a specific 'bottom up' approach to consider whether this factor would apply.

4.5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This review has provided an overview of salient themes emerging from the literature on women in leadership, including possible differences in competencies held by women leaders, possible barriers to women achieving leadership positions, and possible approaches to reversing the current low representation of women in leadership positions. Barriers to leadership advancement identified in this literature review were discussed under the headings sex-role stereotyping, issues relating to role congruity, support infrastructure issues, and general 'glass ceiling' issues. Potential approaches to

addressing any low representations of women in organisations were said to include both 'top down' and 'bottom up' approaches. Top down approaches were said to be those which focus on changing conditions within the organisation or even the culture in which the organisation operates in order to achieve more positive outcomes for women in leadership. Such approaches were said to include, potentially, changing organisational characteristics such as divisions of labour, employment practices and matters of corporate culture. Bottom up approaches were said to be those which imply the need for women to change the way in which they do things so as to overcome potential barriers to their advancement as leaders. Broadly speaking, this approach was suggested to be synonymous with 'empowerment' strategies, but implicit within this approach was said to be the suggestion that aspiring women leaders might need to learn additional competencies in order to overcome barriers to leadership. The controversial dimension of endorsing 'bottom up' approaches was noted as being the possibility that it tends to classify women as something of a 'remedial group' needing extra help to achieve positions of leadership.

As a final note, while the research literature presented in this chapter is important to grounding the quantitative and qualitative research of this Dissertation, it is also acknowledged that neither competency development nor even 'top down' approaches (nor even a combination of the two) may be sufficient (or even possibly effective) in changing the current situation regarding low representation of women in leadership positions in the UAE, and for this reason, impediments beyond the capabilities of women leaders or aspiring women leaders to change may need to be examined and recommendations formulated for appropriate change at the societal level in the UAE. For this reason, as explained in the following chapter, the research design has allowed for research participants to comment openly about their views about potential societal dimensions of women in leadership in the UAE, and the written questionnaire also includes various questions designed to throw light upon this area.

CHAPTER FIVE: METHODOLOGY

5.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The theoretical framework for the research was grounded in the literature surveyed and analysed in Chapters 3 and 4 of this Dissertation. A combination of quantitative and qualitative research was conducted, the former to allow statistical analysis of results, and the latter to enable more descriptive information to be presented and discussed. This chapter outlines the design and methodology used in the research. It sets out the research aims, objectives and questions, and discusses the ethical considerations associated with this research and the steps taken to meet such considerations. It also discusses the pilot study which preceded the main study, and then explains the quantitative part of this research – the written questionnaire – including information that was provided to participants, how participants were selected, distribution of the survey, the response rate, language issues, the survey questions and their relationships to research objectives and research questions, and how responses were scaled. There is also a discussion of the qualitative part of this research – the face-to-face interviews – including how participants were selected and their characteristics, information that was provided to participants, discussion of the ethnographic approach to research, the interview questions and their relationship to the research objectives and questions, language issues, and question format.

5.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participants in both the pilot study and the subsequent written questionnaire and face-to-face interviews were advised that their contributions were entirely confidential and that their contributions would remain anonymous to others. Further, they were assured that their contributions would not be published in any way that could identify them to others. Participants were also advised that they were free, for any reason, and at any stage during the research process, to withdraw from the process [See appendix 1and2].

5.3 PILOT STUDY

A pilot study was conducted prior to the final study, and was administered to improve the research instruments and ensure that they were of the highest possible quality. Three people participated in the pilot study. These were an Emirati female in a middle management position working in the government sector, a male Emirati working in the government sector, and a male expatriate working in the private sector.

Pilot study participants offered valuable contributions to the format of the written questionnaire and the proposed face-to-face interview questions, as well as the list of 'Leadership Competencies' (see Table 3.4) provided to interview participants during the face-to-face interview questions. Pilot study participants made contributions such as suggestions for simplification of language for both the written questionnaire and the face-to-face interview questions and suggestions for ways to shorten the written questionnaire through the elimination of duplication where it existed, and also made suggestions for the inclusion of more questions that would be beneficial to the overall research [See sample in appendix 3].

5.4 WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE

5.4.1 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

It was desired to interview a balanced representation of views from both male and female participants, and also to ensure that the views of both UAE nationals and expatriates were also elicited. The latter was considered important so as to identify views and possible solutions from both people who have been born and raised within the UAE's culture and from people who, as it were, sit in the position of 'outsiders' looking in on the culture of the UAE.

The written questionnaire was distributed by the researcher to specific groups in the UAE who then in turn forwarded it to people in their networks, as well as to individuals whom it was thought would be likely to be interested in contributing to the research. The groups and individuals who received the questionnaire

included the Women Leadership Program (of which the researcher is a member) run by the Dubai Women Establishment, and its members. It also included various other leadership programs in the UAE, researchers and faculty from the Dubai School of Government, the researcher's workplace colleagues, and several government, semi-government, and private organisations. A key consideration in the distribution of the questionnaires was to ensure a good mix of government, semi-government, and private organisations and their members.

5.4.2 SURVEY DISTRIBUTION

The written questionnaire was mailed to prospective respondents who were asked to fill out the questionnaire and then return it to the researcher via the post. A well-known and difficult to overcome problem associated with mail or email surveys include non-response (Groves, Cialdini and Couper, 1992). For this reason, a large number of questionnaires were distributed to guard against possible non-response problems. A total of 217 questionnaires were distributed via the researcher through different email and through distribution of hardcopies of the questionnaire.

It is recognised that by allowing participants to decide whether or not to respond to the survey that there was a risk of self-selection bias, but it was considered that this potential detriment was outweighed by the fact that it is known that participants who choose to participate in research of this kind can often be more interested and involved in the topic of study (Anderson et al, 2005), and therefore more likely to provide considered responses.

5.4.3 RESPONSE RATE

A response rate of 53 per cent was achieved, which is satisfactory. Improved response rates early in the distribution of the written questionnaire were achieved by the researcher following up routinely with organisations and individuals who received the questionnaire, and also by the involvement of many organisations in forums such as internal workshops.

5.4.4 OVERVIEW

The written questionnaire that was used in this research is available at appendix 1. In order to allow for cross-comparisons between the responses of survey participants on the basis of: (a) gender; (b) age range; (c) marital status; (d) job status (e.g., senior management, middle management, and entry level positions, and non-management positions); (e) sector (public, semi-government, and private), (f) number of years work in current organisation; (g) number of years worked in current position; and (h) UAE national or expatriate status, a series of preliminary questions were asked of participants. Participants were then requested to complete the remainder of the written questionnaire, which comprised a total of 58 statements spread over four parts – Part A, Part B, Part C, and Part D. Numerical responses to the various statements were sought so as to allow for quantitative analysis using SPSS.

5.4.5 INFORMATION PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS

Written questionnaire participants were provided, along with the written questionnaire, a written brief about the nature, purpose and importance of the research. Participants were also informed that their responses to the written questionnaire were entirely confidential and that their contributions would not be published in any way that could identify them to others. They were also advised that they were free, for any reason and at any stage, to withdraw from the research. Finally, participants were provided with the researcher's email address should they require additional information relating to the questionnaire or to the research.

5.4.6 LANGUAGE

The written questionnaire was in the English language only. Although it was recognised that this could pose some difficulty for some research participants, it was important to ensure that responses were based on the same questions, and it was also considered that participants with English as a second language would

have considerable time to complete the questionnaire and were free to contact the researcher with any questions about the written questionnaire.

5.4.7 SURVEY QUESTIONS, RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I. Part A – General Leadership Questions

Part A of the written questionnaire comprised twelve statements designed to elicit participants' views about very general issues associated with the research. These included statements about the importance of education in attaining leadership positions in the UAE, the availability and importance of mentoring and career tracking programs in UAE organisations, general attributes of UAE organisations as they relate to things such as required leadership attributes and policies in respect of the advancement of women, and potential issues affecting the advancement of Emirati women in UAE organisations. The questions in Part A were framed especially to provide information pertinent to the second research question ('Do Emirati women receive the same organisational and social support as their male counterparts?').

II. Part B – Leadership Organisational Barriers

As discussed in Chapter 4 of this Dissertation, several potential barriers to women attaining positions of leadership have been proposed by the literature. This chapter also highlighted research which suggests that certain organisational characteristics might be more conducive to women attaining positions of leadership. Chapter 2 raised several potential issues relating to the culture of the UAE and to the social position of Emirati women that might possibly have an influence on the extent to which Emirati women rise to the most senior positions. For the purposes of the written questionnaire, it was considered desirable to collate potential barriers and support that related specifically to conditions *within* organisations (Part B – discussed below) and to separate out potential barriers and support that related to conditions largely or entirely *outside* the control or influence of organisations in the UAE (Part C – discussed below). This was considered to be important in allowing a distinction to be made in answer to the third research question ('do Emirati women receive the same

organisational and social support as their male counterparts?') and also to point the way to addressing especially the sixth research objective ('to offer suggestions as to how the current 'executive leadership gender gap' could be reduced in the UAE').

Part B of the written questionnaire comprised eleven statements. This part was designed to elicit responses from participants relating to a series of propositions about the experiences of Emirati men and Emirati women in relation to organisational barriers and organisational support to their becoming leaders. Proposed organisational barriers or supports to women and men becoming leaders were levels of organisational support, gender discrimination, involvement or exclusion in important organisational networks, cooperation or otherwise of subordinates, the way in which the organisation rewards people for their leadership style, and performance expectations.

The responses to the statements in Part B were used to address the following research objectives: 2. ('to explore the expectations of male and female leaders as they are identified by men and women in the UAE'); 3. ('to study the similarities and differences between gender groups, as they are identified by men and women in the UAE, with regard to the obstacles and challenges they have encountered in their leadership roles'); and 4. ('to identify the barriers that potentially make it more difficult for Emirati women than men to be successful in leadership positions, as perceived by men and women in the UAE'). They were also used to answer the following research questions: 2. ('how does gender affect the advancement of women in organisations in the UAE?') and 3. ('do Emirati women receive the same organisational and social support as their male counterparts?' – but in respect of organisational support only).

III. Part C – Leadership Non-Organisational Barriers

Part C of the written questionnaire comprised twenty-five statements. Part C was designed to obtain the views of survey participants in relation to a series of propositions about the experiences of Emirati men and Emirati women in relation to non-organisational barriers and non-organisational support to their becoming leaders. Proposed non-organisational barriers or supports to women

and men becoming leaders were levels of help from family, possession or otherwise of necessary abilities, cultural issues, involvement or otherwise in important social and professional networks, access or otherwise to leadership / management training, desire or otherwise to reach senior positions, family commitments, degree of career planning, level of international experience, availability or otherwise of a mentor, cooperation from people other than subordinates, and amount of leadership experience.

The responses to the statements in Part C were used to address the following research objectives: 3. ('to study the similarities and differences between gender groups, as they are identified by men and women in the UAE, with regard to the obstacles and challenges they have encountered in their leadership roles'); and 4. ('to identify the barriers that potentially make it more difficult for Emirati women than men to be successful in leadership positions, as perceived by men and women in the UAE'). They were also used to answer the following research questions: 2. ('how does gender affect the advancement of women in organisations in the UAE?') and 3. ('do Emirati women receive the same organisational and social support as their male counterparts?' – but in respect of social support only).

IV. Part D – Organisation Characteristics

Part D of the written questionnaire comprised ten statements and was designed to have participants indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about the types or characteristics of organisations in which they believed it would be more likely that Emirati women would become leaders. Proposed organisational characteristics which it was suggested might be more conducive to Emirati women becoming leaders were: those in which staff performed tasks according to the needs of the organisation rather than according to their formal job title; those in which promotion decisions were made more on factors such as commitment to the organisation than on the basis of factors such as expertise; those in which there was little gender segregation; those in which a consultative rather than an authoritarian leadership style tended to prevail; those in which there was decentralised decision-making; those in which the

organisation's culture was more cooperative than competitive; those in which formal status differences between people were not strictly observed; those in which people tended to be free to organisation their work according to their individual personalities or lifestyle commitments; those in which the organisational culture tended to make people comfortable expressing their emotions or feelings; and those in which personal life was considered to be as important as professional life.

Part D was included to enable testing of a model similar to that of research by Martin, Knopoff and Beckman (1998) presented in Table 4.2. As discussed in Chapter 4, it was noted that the model implied that there were certain organisational characteristics which were more likely to be conducive to the success of women leaders, and that it would be of interest to identify the extent to which they agreed with this model. Such information would have potentially important implications for organisations wishing to ensure that women leaders are represented in greater numbers, and thus be germane to the sixth, and most practical, of the research objectives ('to offer suggestions as to how the current 'executive leadership gender gap' could be reduced in the UAE').

5.4.8 SCALING OF RESPONSES

It was important for the research to use scaled responses for the written questions because it was desired to obtain indications of the *extent* to which participants held particular views about the research questions. The Likert scale was adopted because it was likely to be familiar to participants as a common questionnaire format, and also because it allowed participants to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements or propositions. A five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ('Strongly Disagree') to 5 ('Strongly Agree') was chosen, with the intervening points being 2 ('Disagree'), 3 ('Neutral'), and 4 ('Agree').

5.5 FACE-TO-FACE INTERVIEWS

5.5.1 SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Six individuals were interviewed in face-to-face interviews with the researcher. All six interview participants were UAE nationals and therefore the views of expatriates were not solicited in this area. While it was recognised that it may have been valuable to identify views and possible solutions from both people who were born and raised within the UAE's culture and from people who, as it were, sat in the position of 'outsiders' looking in on the culture of the UAE, practical considerations meant that only UAE nationals were interviewed. However, this limitation was not considered to be especially problematic because, as noted above, there were expatriates who responded to the written questionnaire, so their views were also able to be represented in this research.

For the face-to-face interviews, it was desired to interview a balanced representation of views from both male and female participants, so three of the participants were male and three were female. Balanced representation was also achieved in the fact that two of the face-to-face interview participants held senior management positions, two middle management positions, and two non-management positions.

5.5.2 INFORMATION PROVIDED TO PARTICIPANTS

Face-to-face interview participants were provided, via the post, with a written brief about the nature, purpose and importance of the research. This was provided to the participants along with the written questionnaire, which they were also invited to complete. Additionally, at the commencement of the interview, participants were thanked for their participation and given a short, verbal overview of the nature, purpose and importance of the research to remind them of what was being sought to be achieved, to help them to focus their responses, and to ensure that interview subjects perceived that their responses were likely to help bring about desired changes:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview today to discuss your views about closing the executive leadership gender gap between Emirati men and women. There is no right or wrong answer to any question that I ask today. I am interested in your considered thoughts about the research

questions. Please also feel completely free not to answer any of the questions if you would prefer not to. Although I am tape-recording our interview today, your contribution will remain anonymous to others, and further, your contributions will not be published in any way that could identify you to others. Today's interview will involve my asking you about your thoughts about closing the executive leadership gender gap between Emirati men and women. I anticipate that the entire interview will take approximately 15-30 minutes. We will begin with some preliminary questions and then move on to the substantive interview questions.

5.5.3 ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

An ethnographic approach was adopted in the administration of face-to-face interviews with participants. Ethnographic research involves descriptive and detailed study of a group of people and its behaviour, culture, and characteristics, and is considered to be particularly useful when seeking insights that may not be possible from other research methods.

5.5.4 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

A number of interview questions were framed to enable the research objectives to be met and the research questions to be answered, with the researcher being free to seek elaboration of anything an interview participant said, and being free to further explain any questions should they have been unclear to participants.

At the beginning of the interviews, participants were asked, if they were leaders (e.g., from senior management positions), to describe themselves as leaders, and were also asked to speak about the personal characteristics that they felt had made them successful leaders. Because it was desired to check participants' responses against the theoretical literature discussed in Chapters 3 and 4, participants were handed a list of possible characteristics. This list of 'Leadership Competencies' is shown in Table 3.4. It should be noted that the list was deliberately written using simple, non-theoretical language in recognition of the fact that participants would not necessarily be familiar with the theoretical literature about leadership and would be more likely to be able to describe their

leadership characteristics in vernacular terms. These early questions were designed to allow answers against the first research objective ('to assess the similarities and differences in leadership competencies between gender groups as they are perceived by men and women in the UAE'), the fifth research objective ('to develop a leadership competency model for women that is appropriate for the UAE's culture'), and the first research question ('what are the differences in leadership competencies possessed by men and women in the UAE?').

Participants in the face-to-face interviews who identified as leaders were also asked to comment upon the expectations they believed people (e.g., their direct reports, peers, or those in higher level positions) had of them as a leader. Again, participants were referred to the list of 'Leadership Competencies' shown in Table 3.4. These participants were also asked to comment upon the extent, if any, to which they felt that the expectations held by such people of them as leaders related to the participant's gender. This was primarily to enable answers against the second research objective ('to explore the expectations of male and female leaders as they are identified by men and women in the UAE').

The six interview participants were asked a number of questions generally about differences between men and women leaders in the UAE. Participants were asked to give their general views about the extent to which they believed men and women leaders in the UAE possessed or needed to possess different leadership competencies. If participants had not already been provided with the list of 'Leadership Competencies' they were given this list to help them turn their minds to possible sources of difference, and to allow comparison with available theoretical literature.

Other questions designed to elicit participants' views about possible differences between males and females in leadership in the UAE and thereby address the third research objective ('to study the similarities and differences between gender groups, as they are identified by men and women in the UAE'), the fourth research objective ('to identify the barriers that potentially make it more difficult for Emirati women than men to be successful in leadership positions, as

perceived by men and women in the UAE'), the second research question ('how does gender affect the advancement of women in organisations in the UAE?'), and third research question ('do Emirati women receive the same organisational and social support as their male counterparts?') included the following:

Do you think the leadership styles of Emirati men and women are different? If you do, how do you think they are different?

Do you think Emirati women and men face different expectations when they are in the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE? Please elaborate if you can.

Do you think Emirati women face any barriers to reaching the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE? If so, what are they?

Do you think culture is one of the factors that could hinder the advancement of women in organisations in the UAE?

Do you think that there are different challenges for Emirati men and Emirati women when they seek to reach the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE? If so, what are the differences?

To what extent do you feel that the expectations people have of leaders generally in the UAE relate to their gender?

Interview participants were also asked a number of questions designed to elicit their views about other matters integral to this research. For example, questions such as 'What have you done as an individual to advance your own career?' and 'What relationships with others have helped you to advance and develop professionally?' and 'What role do you think formal education plays in leadership?' and 'How would you describe the leadership culture that organisations in the UAE should maintain?' and 'How much do you think the relationships (e.g., mentoring, coaching) can influence the advancement of UAE women in organisations?' were asked to enable responses mainly against the sixth research objective ('to offer suggestions as to how the current 'executive leadership gender gap' could be

reduced in the UAE'). Similarly, the questions '*What, if anything, do you think Emirati women themselves could do to increase the number of Emirati women reaching senior positions in organisations in the UAE?*' and '*How much do you think policies and legislation in the UAE support the career advancement of Emirati women?*' and '*What, if anything, do you think organisations in the UAE could do to increase the number of Emirati women reaching the most senior positions?*' were asked to enable responses against the sixth research objective.

To allow for the possibility that interview participants wished to add to their earlier responses, or to comment more generally upon the research, the research objectives, and the research questions, participants were asked at the end of the research '*Is there anything else you would like to comment upon in relation to this research?*'

5.5.5 LANGUAGE

The language in which interviews were conducted varied according to the preferences of the research participants. All interviews were then translated into English to allow for cross-comparisons of responses.

5.5.6 QUESTION FORMAT

Open-ended questions were used to enable identification of creative and unexpected solutions to problems being experienced, as well as to enable interviewees to comment naturally on issues of UAE culture they felt might be important to the research (Converse and Presser, 1986, pp. 34-35).

5.6 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to answer the research questions. The quantitative aspect of this research was to administer to survey participants in the UAE a 58-item written questionnaire with responses over a 5-point Likert scale. These questions were designed to elicit participants' views to provide information mainly for all but the first research objective, and to answer the second and third research questions. The first research objective

and the first research question were addressed primarily through face-to-face interviews with 6 participants. Several such interview questions required interview participants to provide their thoughts about important personal characteristics or leadership competencies (or abilities) for leaders in the UAE. Participants were referred to a list of 56 leadership competencies (see Table 4.1). This list was compiled after a thorough researching of current leadership literature.

CHAPTER SIX: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

6.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The written questionnaire was completed by 115 participants. The breakdown of participants was as follows:

- 64 of the participants were female, and 51 were male;
- By working sector, 68 were employed in the government sector, 25 in the semi-government sector, and 22 in the private sector;
- By job status, 12 were in senior management positions, 50 in middle management positions, 48 in non-management positions, and 5 in entry-level/recent graduate positions;
- By age, 72 of the participants were aged between 25 and 34, 32 between 35 and 44, and 11 between 45 and 64;
- By marital status, 49 were single, 58 married, and 8 divorced/widower;
- By number of years worked in the current organisation, 31 had fewer than 2 years, 44 between 2 and 7 years, 28 between 8 and 13 years, 7 with between 14 and 19 years, and 5 with 20 or more years;
- By number of years worked in the current position or job, there were 42 with fewer than 2 years, 48 with between 2 and 7 years, 23 with between 8 and 13 years, one with between 14 and 19 years, and one with 20 or more years; and
- 77 of the participants were UAE nationals, and 38 were expatriates.

Thus there was good representation across the dimensions of gender, working sector, job status, age, national or expatriate status, marital status, years in the current organisation, and years in the current job [See appendix 4].

6.2 DATA ANALYSIS

6.2.1 WRITTEN QUESTIONNAIRE

I. General Leadership Questions

Part A (Questions 1 to 12) of the written questionnaire invited participants to provide their views about general leadership issues. The statements aim to obtain participants' views on different general issues related to the research, such as the importance of education, mentoring programs, career tracking programme, etc.

- **The importance of education (Question 1):**

Across all participants, there was an agreement with the proposition that education is an important factor for reaching the most senior levels in organisations in the UAE. In terms of responses by years in the current position/job, the longer the participant had worked in his or her current position/job, the more they agreed with the statement. There was no significant difference in responses according to gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, or national/expatriate status.

- **The existence of mentoring programmes (Question 2):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that organisations in the UAE generally do not have mentoring programmes that provide coaching, development and management experience. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.004$) between the responses of male and female participants, with male participants being slightly more inclined to disagree with the statement than female participants who tend to be neutral in their view. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they agreed with the statement. Participants who were at entry-levels, disagreed with the proposition while others who were at senior-levels agreed with it. There was also a difference according to the years in which participants had worked in their current position/job. The longer a participant had worked in his or her current position or job, the more the participant disagreed that UAE do not have mentoring programmes that

provide coaching, development and management experience. A further difference occurred between participants who were Emirati nationals and participants who were expatriates, with expatriates tending to disagree more with the statement than UAE nationals. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of age groups, marital status, working sector, or years in the organisation.

- **Career tracking programmes (Question 3):**

Across all participants, there was an agreement with the proposition that career tracking programme that provides special training, experience, and skills is an important factor for people wishing to reach the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of gender groups, age groups, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriates.

- **The importance of mentoring programmes (Question 4):**

Across all participants, there was an agreement with the proposition that the existence of a mentoring programme in organisations is an important factor for people wishing to reach the most senior levels in organisations in the UAE. There was no significant difference in responses between gender, age groups, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriates.

- **Policies and practices of organisations (Question 5):**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that the policies and practices of organisations in the UAE do not demonstrate their commitment to the advancement of women. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.001$) between the responses of male and female participants, with male participants being more inclined to agree with the statement than female participants. It was interesting, however, that in terms of responses by years in the current position/job, the longer the participant had worked in his or her current position/job, the more they disagreed with the statement. There was no significant

difference in responses between age groups, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, or national/expatriates.

- **Stereotypes about women (Question 6):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that stereotypes of women hinder the advancement of women in organisations in the UAE. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.003$) in the responses of male and female participants, with female participants agreeing with the proposition and males being neutral in their response. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they became neutral to the statement. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of age groups, marital status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriates.

- **The importance of women in senior levels of organisations (Question 7):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that UAE would benefit from having more women represented at the most senior levels in all its organisations. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.001$) in the responses of male and female participants, with female participants agreeing with the proposition and males being neutral in their response. A further difference occurred in terms of responses by age group, with younger (25-34 years) participants agreeing more with the statement than older (35-44 years and 45-64 years) participants. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they agreed with the statement. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.002$) according to years in the organisation, with a greater number of years in the organisation being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current position/ job being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. A further difference occurred between participants who were Emirati nationals and participants who were expatriates, with UAE nationals

tending to agree more with the statement than expatriates. There was no significant difference in responses between marital status, or working sector.

- **The abilities needed to be successful in senior positions in organisations (Question 8):**

Across all participants, there was a slight agreement with the proposition that the abilities one needs to be successful in a senior position in the UAE are different to those required in any other country. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they became neutral to the statement. A further difference occurred between participants who were in the government, semi- government, and private sectors where participants from the semi-government agreed more with the statement. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of gender groups, age groups, marital status, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriates.

- **The differences between expectations of men and women (Question 9):**

Across all participants, there was an agreement with the proposition that the expectations are different for men and women who are at the highest levels in UAE society, even if their roles are comparable. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of gender groups, age groups, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriates.

- **The leadership style of Emirati females (Question 10):**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that in there is a distinctive Emirati female leadership style which is different from the male Emirati leadership style. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they became neutral to the statement. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.002$) according to years in the organisation, the more participants stayed in the organisation, the more neutral they became to the proposition. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current

position/ job being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was no significant difference in responses between gender, age groups, marital status, working sector, or national/expatriates.

- **The effectiveness of Emirati women versus Emirati men (Question 11):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Emirati women are generally less effective leaders than Emirati men. Between male and female participants, however, there was significant disagreement ($p=0.001$), with female participants tending to disagree with the statement, and male participants tending to be neutral. The younger the average age of the participant, the more they disagreed with the statement. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they disagreed to the statement. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current position/ job being associated with a greater degree of agreement with the statement. A further difference occurred between participants who were Emirati nationals and participants who were expatriates, with UAE nationals tending to disagree more with the statement than expatriates. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of marital status, working sector, or years in the organisation.

- **The difficulty of the path to leadership for Emirati women (Question 12):**

Across all participants, there was a slight agreement with the proposition that in general, Emirati women have a more difficult path than Emirati men to the most senior positions in the UAE. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.004$) in the responses of male and female participants, with female participants agreeing with the proposition and males being neutral in their response. There was also a difference according to the marital status where single and married participants agreed more with the statement than divorced/widower participants. There was also a difference according to years in the organisation, the more participants stayed in the organisation, the more neutral they became to the proposition. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current

position/ job being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. A further difference occurred between participants who were Emirati nationals and participants who were expatriates, with UAE nationals tending to agree more with the statement than expatriates. There was no significant difference in responses between age groups, job status, or working sector.

II. Leadership Organisational Barriers

Part B (Questions 13 to 23) of the written questionnaire invited participants to provide their views about potential barriers of an organisational nature to men and women reaching senior positions in organisations in the UAE. The first question in this part invited participants to respond to the general statement that “In the UAE, Emirati women receive less organisational support – defined as help from within the organisation – than Emirati men to help them reach senior positions”. Participants were then asked to respond to ten questions within five categories of organisational barriers as they applied to men and women. Organisational barriers were suggested as being gender discrimination, exclusion from important organisational networks (defined as formal – e.g., workgroups – or informal – e.g., people who get together from the workplace at lunchtime - associations of people within an organisation), lack of cooperation by subordinates, that organisations do not reward men or women for their leadership styles, and extremely high performance expectations.

- **Do Emirati Women Receive Less Organisational Support Overall Than Emirati Men (Question 13):**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that in the UAE, Emirati women receive less organisational support than Emirati men to help them reach senior positions. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.002$) between the responses of male and female participants, with female participants being slightly more inclined to agree with the statement than male participants. A further difference occurred in terms of responses by age group, with younger (25-34 years) participants disagreeing less with the statement than older (35-44 years and 45-64 years) participants. There was also a difference according to the years in which participants had worked in their current position/job. The longer a

participant had worked in his or her current position or job, the more the participant disagreed that in the UAE, Emirate women receive less organisational support than Emirati men to help them reach senior positions. There was no difference in response by marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, and national/expatriate status.

- **The Impact of Gender Discrimination**

- **Men (Question 14)**

Across all participants, there was a disagreement with the proposition that gender discrimination often stops Emirati men from reaching senior positions. Between male and female participants, however, there was significant disagreement ($p=0.001$), with female participants tending to disagree with the statement, and male participants tending to be neutral. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by age. The older the average age of the participant, the more they disagreed with the statement. It was interesting, however, that in terms of responses by years in the current position/job, the longer the participant had worked in his or her current position/job, the *less* they disagreed with the statement and the more they agreed with it. A further difference occurred between participants who were Emirati nationals and participants who were expatriates, with UAE nationals tending to disagree more with the statement than expatriates. There was no significant difference between the participants according to marital status, job status, working sector, or years in the organisation.

- **Women (Question 15)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that gender discrimination often stops Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference in the views of male and female participants, nor were there significant differences between age groups, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **The Impact of Exclusion from Important Organisational Networks**

- **Men (Question 16)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that exclusion from important organisational networks often stops Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.002$) between male and female participants, with female participants tending to disagree with the statement, and male participants tending to be neutral in their view. There was no significant difference in responses between age groups, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 17)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that exclusion from important organisational networks often stops Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference in the responses according to gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **The Impact of Lack of Cooperation by Subordinates**

- **Men (Question 18)**

Across all participants, there was disagreement with the proposition that lack of cooperation by subordinates often stops Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference in responses according to gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 19)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of cooperation by subordinates often stops Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There were no significant differences in responses according to gender, age group,

marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **The Impact of Not Being Rewarded for One's Leadership Style**
 - **Men (Question 20)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that organisations that do not reward them for their leadership style often stops Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.001$) in the responses of male and female participants, with female participants agreeing with the proposition and males being neutral in their response. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.002$) according to the age of participants, with older participants being slightly more likely to disagree with the statement than younger participants. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.001$) according to years in the organisation, with a greater number of years in the organisation being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current position/ job being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of marital status, job status, working sector, or national/expatriates.

- **Women (Question 21)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that organisations that do not reward them for their leadership style often stops Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **The Impact of Extremely High Performance Expectations**
 - **Men (Question 22)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that extremely high performance expectations often stops Emirati men from reaching senior positions.

There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, age group, marital status, job status,

- **Women (Question 23)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that extremely high performance expectations often stops Emirati women from reaching senior positions. Between male and female participants, however, there was significant disagreement ($p=0.001$), with female participants tending to disagree with the statement, and male participants tending to be neutral in their view. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.002$) according to the age of participants, with older participants being slightly more likely to agree with the statement than younger participants. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they neutral to the statement. There was no significant difference in responses between marital status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

III. Leadership Non-Organisational Barriers

Part C (Question 24 to 48) of the written questionnaire invited participants to provide their views about potential barriers of a non-organisational or social nature to men and women reaching senior positions in organisations in the UAE. The first question in this part invited participants to respond to the general statement that "In the UAE, Emirati women receive less social support – defined as, for example, help from family – than Emirati men to help them reach senior positions". Participants were then asked to respond to 24 questions within 12 categories of non-organisational or social barriers as they applied to men and women. Non-organisational barriers were suggested as being lack of necessary abilities, cultural issues, exclusion from important social networks, exclusion from important professional networks, lack of access to leadership/management training, lack of desire to reach senior positions, family commitments, lack of careful career planning, lack of international experience, lack of appropriate mentoring, lack of cooperation from people other than subordinates, and lack of leadership experience.

- **Do Emirati Women Receive Less Social Support Overall Than Emirati Men? (Question 24)**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that in the UAE, Emirati women receive less social support than Emirati men to help them reach senior positions. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.001$) between the responses of male and female participants, with female participants being more inclined to agree with the statement than male participants. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.003$) according to the age of participants, with older participants being slightly more likely to disagree with the statement than younger participants. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.003$) according to years in the organisation, with a greater number of years in the organisation being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was also a difference according to the years in which participants had worked in their current position/job. The longer a participant had worked in his or her current position or job, the more the participant disagreed that in the UAE, Emirati women receive less social support than Emirati men to help them reach senior positions. There was no significant difference in the responses according to marital status, job status, working sector, or national/expatriate status.

- **Lack of Necessary Abilities**
 - **Men (Question 25)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of necessary abilities often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was a difference in responses by job status. Participants who were at entry-levels agreed with the proposition while others who were at senior-levels were neutral to it. There was no significant difference between the participants according to gender, age groups, marital status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 26)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of necessary abilities often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they agreed with the statement. There was also a difference according to the years in which participants had worked in their current position/job. The longer a participant had worked in his or her current position or job, the more the participant agreed with the statement. There was no significant difference in the views of male and female participants, nor were there significant differences between age groups, marital status, working sector, years in the organisation, or national/expatriate status.

- **Cultural Issues**

- **Men (Question 27)**

Across all participants, there was disagreement with the proposition that cultural issues often stop Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.004$) between the responses of male and female participants, with female participants being more inclined to agree with the statement than male participants. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they disagreed to the statement. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current position/ job being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was no significant difference in responses between age group, marital status, working sector, years in the organisation, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 28)**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that cultural issues often stop Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.001$) between the responses of male and female participants, with female participants being more inclined to agree with the statement than male participants. The older the average age of the participant,

the more they disagreed with the statement. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.001$) according to years in the organisation, with a greater number of years in the organisation being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current position/ job being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of marital status, job status, working sector, or national/expatriate status.

- **Social Networks**

- **Men (Question 29)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that exclusion from important social networks often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they disagreed with the statement. There was no significant difference in the views of male and female participants, nor were there significant differences between gender, age group, marital status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 30)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that exclusion from important social networks often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.002$) according to years in the organisation, the more participants stayed in the organisation, the more they disagreed with the proposition. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current position/ job being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There were no significant differences in responses according to gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, or national/expatriate status.

- **Professional Networks**
 - **Men (Question 31)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Exclusion from important professional networks often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they disagreed with the statement. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of gender, age group, marital status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in current position/job, or national/expatriates.

- **Women (Question 32)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Exclusion from important professional networks often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was also a difference according to the marital status where single and married participants agreed more with the statement than divorced/widower participants. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.001$) according to years in the organisation, with a greater number of years in the organisation being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current position/ job being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was no significant difference in the views of male and female participants, nor were there significant differences between gender, age group, working sector, or national/expatriate status.

- **Lack of Access to Leadership/Management Training**
 - **Men (Question 33)**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that lack of access to leadership/management training often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was a difference in responses by age. The older the average age of the participant, the more they disagreed with the statement. It was interesting, however, that in terms of responses by years in the current

position/job, the longer the participant had worked in his or her current position/job, the more they disagreed with the statement. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 34)**

Across all participants, there was an agreement with the proposition that lack of access to leadership/management training often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. Between male and female participants, however, there was significant disagreement ($p=0.002$), with female participants tending to agree with the statement more than male participants. There was no significant difference in responses between marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Lack of Desire to Reach Senior Positions**

- **Men (Question 35)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Lack of desire to reach senior positions often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.001$) according to years in the organisation, with a greater number of years in the organisation being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. It was interesting, however, that in terms of responses by years in the current position/job, the longer the participant had worked in his or her current position/job, the more they disagreed with the statement and the more they agreed with it. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 36)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Lack of desire to reach senior positions often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was a difference in responses by age. The older the average age of the participant, the more they disagreed with the statement. There was no significant

difference in responses between gender, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Family Commitments**
 - **Men (Question 37)**

Across all participants, there was disagreement with the proposition that family commitments often stop Emirati men from reaching senior positions. In terms of responses by years in the current position/job, the longer the participant had worked in his or her current position/job, the more they agreed with the statement. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 38)**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that family commitments often stop Emirati women from reaching senior positions. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they neutral to the statement. It was interesting, however, that in terms of responses by years in the current position/job, the longer the participant had worked in his or her current position/job, the more they disagreed with the statement. There was no significant difference in responses between gender, age, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, or national/expatriate status.

- **Lack of Careful Career Planning**
 - **Men (Question 39)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of careful career planning often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 40)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of careful career planning often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was a difference in responses by years in the current position/job, with a greater number of years in the current position/ job being associated with a greater degree of agreement with the statement. There was no significant difference in responses between gender, age, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, or national/expatriate status.

- **Lack of International Experience**

- **Men (Question 41)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of international experience often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 42)**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that lack of international experience often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference in responses between gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Lack of Appropriate Mentoring**

- **Men (Question 43)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of appropriate mentoring often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 44)**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that lack of appropriate mentoring often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference in responses between gender, age, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Lack of Cooperation**

- **Men (Question 45)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of cooperation by people other than subordinates often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 46)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of cooperation by people other than subordinates often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference in responses between gender, age, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Lack of Leadership Experience**

- **Men (Question 47)**

Across all participants, there was a slight agreement with the proposition that lack of leadership experience often prevents Emirati men from reaching senior positions. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Women (Question 48)**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that lack of leadership experience often prevents Emirati women from reaching senior positions. There was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they agreed with the statement. There was no significant difference in responses between gender, age, marital status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

IV. Organisation Characteristics

Part D (Questions 49 to 58) of the written questionnaire invited participants to provide their views about general leadership issues. The statements aim to get participants' views on different general issues related to the research, such as the importance of education, mentoring programs, career tracking programme, etc.

- **Organisations where staff perform tasks according to the needs of the organisation not according to their formal job title (Question 49):**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that Emirati woman are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations where staff perform tasks according to the needs of the organisation not according to their formal job title. Between male and female participants, however, there was significant disagreement ($p=0.002$), with male participants tending to disagree with the statement more than female participants. There was no significant difference in responses according to age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Organisations where promotion decisions are made more on factors such as commitment to the organisation than on expertise (Question 50):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Emirati women are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations where promotion decisions are made more on factors such as commitment to the organisation than on

expertise. Between male and female participants, however, there was significant disagreement ($p=0.002$), with male participants tending to disagree with the statement more than female participants. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by age. The older the average age of the participant, the more they disagreed with the statement. There was also a difference according to the marital status where divorced/widower disagreed with the statement more than single and married participants. A further difference occurred between participants who were in the government, semi-government, and private sectors where participants from the private sector disagreed more with the statement. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.004$) according to years in the organisation, with a greater number of years in the organisation being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was no significant difference in responses between job status, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Organisations where the organisation is not 'gender-segregated' (Question 51):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Emirati women are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations where the organisation is not 'gender-segregated'. There was no significant difference in the views of male and female participants, nor were there significant differences between age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Organisations where the leadership style is consultative rather than authoritarian (Question 52):**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that Emirati women are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations where the leadership style is consultative rather than authoritarian. There was, however, a significant difference ($p=0.002$) between the responses of male and female participants, with male participants being slightly more inclined to disagree with the statement more than female participants. Similarly, there was a difference in responses by age. The older the average age of the participant, the more they disagreed

with the statement. There was also a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they agreed with the statement. There was also a significant difference ($p=0.003$) according to years in the organisation, with a greater number of years in the organisation being associated with a greater degree of disagreement with the statement. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of marital status, working sector, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Organisations where decision-making is decentralised rather than concentrated at the 'top' of the organisation (Question 53):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Emirati women are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations where decision-making is decentralised rather than concentrated at the 'top' of the organisation. There was a difference in responses by job status. The more participants progressed in their career, the more they agreed with the statement. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of gender, age group, marital status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Organisations with a mainly cooperative rather than mainly competitive culture (Question 54):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Emirati women are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations with a mainly cooperative rather than mainly competitive culture. Between male and female participants, however, there was significant disagreement ($p=0.004$), with female participants tending to disagree with the statement more than male participants. There was no significant difference in responses between age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Organisations where formal status differences between people are not strictly observed (Question 55):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Emirati women are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations where formal status differences between people are not strictly observed. There was a significant difference ($p=0.004$) according to years in the organisation, with a greater number of years in the organisation being associated with a greater degree of agreement with the statement. There was no significant difference in the views of male and female participants, nor were there significant differences between age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Organisations where people can decide how they work according to what is most suited to their personalities or lifestyle commitments than in organisations where everyone is expected to work the same way regardless of their personalities or lifestyle commitments (Question 56):**

Across all participants, there was a neutral response to the proposition that Emirati women are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations where people can decide how they work according to what is most suited to their personalities or lifestyle commitments than in organisations where everyone is expected to work the same way regardless of their personalities or lifestyle commitments. There was no significant difference in responses according to gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, years in the current position/job, or national/expatriate status.

- **Organisations with a culture in which people are comfortable expressing their emotions or feelings than in organisations in which people are discouraged from expressing their emotions or feelings (Question 57):**

Across all participants, there was a slight agreement with the proposition that Emirati women are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations with a culture in which

people are comfortable expressing their emotions or feelings than in organisations in which people are discouraged from expressing their emotions or feelings. A difference occurred between participants who were Emirati nationals and participants who were expatriates, with UAE nationals tending to agree more with the statement than expatriates. There was no significant difference between participants' responses in terms of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, or years in the current position/job.

- **Organisations in which personal life is considered to be as important as professional life (Question 58):**

Across all participants, there was neither agreement nor disagreement with the proposition that Emirati women are more likely to reach senior positions in organisations in which personal life is considered to be as important as professional life. A difference occurred between participants who were Emirati nationals and participants who were expatriates, with UAE nationals tending to agree more with the statement than expatriates. There was no significant difference between responses on the basis of gender, age group, marital status, job status, working sector, years in the organisation, or years in the current position/job.

6.2.2 INTERVIEWS

Six face-to-face interviews were conducted with Emirati nationals. The characteristics of the interviewees were as follows:

- The first interviewee was a female in the 25-34 age group, single, working in middle management in the government sector, and with between 2 and 7 years in the current organisation and the current job;
- The second interviewee was a male in the 25-34 age group, single, working in middle management in the government sector, with between 8 and 13 years in the current organisation, and between 2-7 years in the current position/job;
- The third interviewee was a male in the 25-34 age group, single, working in a non-management position in the government sector, and with between 2 and 7 years in the current organisation and the current job;

- The fourth interviewee was a female in the 45-64 age group, married, working in senior management in the government sector, with between 8 and 13 years in the current organisation and more than 20 years in the current position/job;
- The fifth interviewee was a male in the 25-34 age group, single, working in a non-management position in the government sector, and with between 2 and 7 years in the current organisation and current position/job; and
- The sixth interviewee was a female in the 25-34 age group, single, working in a non-management position in the semi-government sector, and with less than 2 years in the current organisation and current position/job.

Therefore there was a balanced representation in the people interviewed in terms of gender, with an equal number of male and females interviewed. Five of the six interviewees were aged between 25 and 34 years, meaning that the views provided are skewed heavily in terms of the generation or youth of participants. However, despite their youth, participants had a range of years of experience, providing balance to the views sampled.

1. Descriptions of leadership, including personal characteristics

The two female interviewees who were in leadership positions described their leadership characteristics in terms of setting goals and working hard. Pride was identified as an important motivator for becoming a successful leader, as was the desire to help others (“guide them in the right direction”). Vision and motivation (for both oneself and others) were mentioned as being important, as well as a belief in oneself, being receptive to criticism and learning from others but still maintaining self-confidence, and supporting and developing people. The female interviewee who was not in a leadership position believed that it was important for leaders to guide or develop others, to possess both technical and general knowledge, to understand the needs of others and gain their trust and support. Frank and fair feedback was valued, as was possession of a vision and a willingness to take risk.

Male interviewees mentioned the importance of “looking always for change”, demonstrating initiative, encouraging and motivating others, having a vision made clear to others, possessing self-awareness, working hard to develop one’s own skills, capabilities and competencies, being a good role model for others, knowing the right

person to assign to various jobs, being able to see the “big picture”, and knowing “a little bit of everything”.

II. Differences between male and female leadership competencies and styles

Female interviewees believed that women leaders in the UAE need to possess different leadership competencies to some extent, but not to any great extent. Where there were differences, it was suggested that women need to be more confident than men in order to overcome greater challenges and because they generally receive less support, and they should be careful not to be unduly influenced by negative criticism that might detract from pursuit of a vision. Women were suggested to show greater “sensitivity and empathy”, be more likely to be “kind”, and to be more likely than men to be active listeners. One interviewee mentioned the role of greater emotionality of women and the advantages and disadvantages that this might present. Overall, however, as one interviewee put it, “by the end of the day they both are human and they have the same capabilities.”

Male interviewees saw the situation in much the same way, with the possible exception that women may need to work harder to prove themselves in order to change perceptions. One male participant also observed a difference in that “men tend to act in a patriarchal manner towards their staff, while women tend to form groups”. This participant also made the observation that in his opinion some women may find leadership challenging because “some women seem to put femininity above leadership, and get offended when people treat them as a boss rather than as a female.” Another male interviewee thought that women were weaker at implementation than men. This same interviewee did not believe that women were necessarily more sensitive than men, and that personality did not depend on gender. Another suggested that in his view women tended to be better organised than men, and, for cultural or reasons of tradition, might be more cautious or “shy”.

III. Barriers to female leadership

All interviewees believed that women faced barriers to leadership. Things mentioned in this respect included hindering stereotypes, the role of culture and traditions (e.g., the perception that women cannot hold high positions or that a woman’s place is in the

home), and difficulties in gaining the trust of male colleagues, difficulties in gaining the support of family (e.g., to accept certain types of job or to travel abroad). Religion itself was not regarded as a genuine source of barriers to women leaders.

IV. Career-advancing strategies for women leaders

Female interviewees in leadership positions offered some insights into things they had done to advance their careers. One such interviewee, a researcher, nominated wide reading and learning. The other female leader mentioned obtaining the advice of others, especially experts, fighting for her rights, learning from her mistakes, recognising the importance of setting goals and forming a vision and working hard for both, building trust amongst followers (her “soldiers”), and pursuing education. The female interviewee from a non-leadership position mentioned listening to others and learning from them. Male participants mentioned education, work experience, having overseas experience, having good mentors, self-development, benchmarking performance, and gaining the support of others. The phenomenon of women ‘acting like men’ to reach leadership was observed as a strategy that some women employ, but was not regarded favourably.

V. Expectations of and challenges for male versus female leaders

All three female interviewees considered that female leaders have different expectations in the sense that they are not expected to want to attain senior positions to the same extent as men – as one interviewee put the matter succinctly, “there is still a belief that leadership is owned by men.” Implicitly, also, it seemed that women are expected to continue to meet their family obligations in addition to their career obligations, and to be prepared to work to overcome perceptions that women cannot or do not have the time to lead, meaning that they effectively had greater expectations placed upon them as people when compared with men. Interestingly, none of the participants (male or female) appeared to suggest that the obligations of women to balance career and family life were anything but the responsibility of women themselves to manage. Female interviewees seemed keen to rise to the challenge, while one male interviewee, observing that “sadly women have to work harder than men to reach the same position”, seemed to see the situation as ultimately positive because he felt that women who did

reach the most senior positions were, in his experience, often better qualified than their male counterparts.

Discrepancies between the workloads of men and women were observed by many interviewees, with the comment made by one being indicative:

... the traditional view is that a woman's prime place is at home, followed by work. Hence everything needs to work by this rule, which makes the working life for women harder than men. Men on the other hand are expected to work, and thus face less hurdles than women in this regard. Women might need to study harder and longer to get the same job or might need more time to get promoted to a senior level compared to her male counterparts. In short the working career for a woman is more challenging than for a man.

Speaking generally of expectations of leaders in the UAE, only one female interviewee (from a non-leadership position) provided insight in this respect, suggesting leaders should be “very supportive”, provide people with guidance, “encourage them motivate them, listen to them, and let them feel that their ideas and opinions are valuable”. They should be a role model, encourage others to share their visions and goals, and should also “accept challenges and take risks”. Male interviewees made similar observations, although one interviewee seemed to feel that women might have more difficulties making decisions or “ordering” others (which, implicitly, he felt was expected of leaders), although given the comments of all participants about the importance of encouraging others to follow, this would not seem to be of any great importance if it were true.

VI. The role of education

There was a range of views about the role of formal education in leadership. The female participant who was a researcher and leader noted the obvious role of her education in her career, in the sense that it put her “on the beginning of the road” in her career, but said no more about education. Similarly, the female interviewee from a non-leadership background regarded education as something that provided people with “basic skills”. The other female leader had much to say about education. In her view, today, but not in the past, education plays an important role “in the leadership journey” for both men and

women. She saw the need for greater leadership education in the UAE, with an emphasis on learning such things as “how to deal with different styles of people”, “how to look at things from different perspectives”, and “how to look at things abstractly.” She felt that formal education did not always prepare people for the workplace, especially as formal education was highly cooperative, and the workplace much less so. The non-leader female interviewee also expressed the view that formal education could be improved to help people “practice some of the aspects of leadership.”

Male interviewees expressed a range of views, but broadly considered education to be a necessary (cf. one interviewee who observed that there were many strong leaders without formal education) but not sufficient factor in leadership, as was the view of female interviewees. One interviewee also suggested the need for more leadership education or training, and it was also agreed that formal education in institutions did not always impart these sorts of skills.

VII. The role of (government) policies and legislation

UAE government policies and legislation were perceived as being supportive of the career advancement of Emirati women, and special mention was made of the fact that there were no formal biases or discriminatory provisions in terms of recruitment, employment, and privileges for men and women in the workforce. Positive mention was made of UAE government initiatives like having nurseries in government organisations. Still, it was suggested that there was still room for advancement, so that every woman was given “full support that can help her be an active player in the society without unfairly overloading her.”

VIII. The role of relationships

Both female and male interviewees considered that relationships with others were very important in helping them advance and develop professionally. These included relationships with family members, friends, and work colleagues. Relationships were perceived to be sources of encouragement and support, advice, and motivation. Female interviewees seemed to place slightly more emphasis on family relationships than work relationships when discussing the role of relationships in helping in career advancement.

IX. The role of organisations

Interviewees offered a range of suggestions about what role they would like organisations in the UAE to play in the area of leadership. One female leader appeared to endorse a flattening of organisational structures, with leadership being seen as something that involves everyone. The female interviewee from a non-leadership position considered that organisations should “always provide equal opportunities for men and women in terms of leadership roles”, and should make leadership training available throughout the organisation, and not just to people already in senior positions. A male interviewee made the observation that “leaders need to be given the tools to lead, and potential needs to be spotted early and utilised”. Another saw a role for top management in organisations in changing the culture within to be one supportive of women reaching senior positions.

Generally, organisations were believed to have strong potential to help increase the number of Emirati women reaching the most senior positions. Apart from working to change cultures, other suggestions included ensuring that women were given full authority when in senior positions, as well as encouraging women and providing them with opportunities.

X. The role of mentoring and coaching

Mentoring and coaching were believed to have very good potential role in influencing the advancement of Emirati women (and indeed all people) in organisations in the UAE.

External rather than internal mentoring was seen to be preferable (although, in one case, it was suggested that internal was preferred to external for junior staff), because this would give people greater freedom in what they could discuss, be likely to lead to fairer treatment, and also enable an ‘outsider’s perspective’.

XI. How Emirati women can help each other

Female interviewees believed that Emirati women could do much to support each other by acting as mentors, learning from each other, forming official and unofficial networks, and making recommendations for change to government. A similar view was expressed by male interviewees, including the observation that “women leaders should hold the hands of young Emirati women who have just started the journey.”

6.3 FINDINGS AGAINST RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

6.3.1 SUMMARY

This research has presented the findings of a written survey instrument comprising 58 questions across a range of issues, and administered to a sample of 115 people in the UAE from across section of UAE society. It has also presented the findings of six face-to-face interviews conducted by the researcher with three female Emiratis and three male Emiratis. The following section presents an overview of the findings against the research objectives of this research, and this section is followed by a concluding section on the way forward for the UAE and its women, with specific recommendations arising from the research for the advancement of women into the most senior positions in UAE organisations.

6.3.2 FINDINGS AGAINST RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1. Research objective #1 – to define and validate a model of behavioural competencies that facilitates women's ability to be successful in leadership roles*

This research shows that education is an important factor for both men and women in the UAE to reach the most senior levels in organisations in the UAE. While it may not always be perceived as a strict pre-requisite for leadership, it is definitely perceived as being valuable. Through education, students are exposed to different types of information and knowledge which prepares them for their journey through their career. However, as important as is formal education in the form of, for example, professional qualifications, just as important is education specifically directed at teaching leadership skills.

Education is an important factor for reaching the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE, and aspiring women leaders should avail themselves of the many opportunities for leadership training available to them. This will help women to learn valuable leadership skills such as how to deal with different styles of people, and how to look at things from different perspectives.

Women themselves can increase their chances of succeeding as leaders if they seek out the advice of others, especially experts, 'fight' for their rights, learn from their mistakes, recognise the importance of setting goals and forming a vision, work hard to attain their goals and realise their vision, and develop trust amongst followers.

Aspiring women leaders need to be aware that in some places, they may encounter barriers to their attaining senior positions, predominantly in the form of assumptions about leadership being primarily the domain of men, or assumptions that women's family obligations necessarily prevent them from being able to assume positions of leadership. These sorts of attitudes are most likely falling by the wayside, especially as a younger generation of Emiratis rise through organisations and society and take with them less prejudiced views about women into their working and private lives. They can help shift attitudes further by demonstrating their abilities and having the confidence to pursue their careers.

The 'strategy' of women attempting to 'act like men' in order to reach or succeed in positions of leadership is not supported by this research, neither by male nor female participants.

II. Research objective #2 – to assess the competency similarities and differences between gender groups

Overall, but especially amongst younger people in the UAE, Emirati women are not viewed as being any more or less competent leaders than Emirati men. A suggestion from the interviews is that it may be the case that women do have different leadership styles than men, with a tendency perhaps towards being more consultative than men (who may be more authoritarian or "patriarchal"), and in some cases, women may be more reserved as leaders, although this was not the finding from the written questionnaire, in which participants overall perceived no difference in the leadership styles of Emirati women and Emirati men.

A special competency likely to be required for women leaders in the UAE is for them to have the strength to avoid succumbing to potential negative attitudes of others where

this would detract from pursuit of a vision. They may even need to be prepared to work harder than their male counterparts to 'prove' themselves in some cases.

III. Research Objective #3 – to explore the expectations of male and female leaders and Research Objective #4 – to study the situational similarities and differences between gender groups with regard to the obstacles and challenges they have encountered in their leadership roles

There is no question that men and women leaders in the UAE have different expectations of them in positions of leadership, and in the case of women, these can present special obstacles and challenges in some cases. Women, if not men, believe that the path to positions of leadership is more difficult for them than it is for men. This research helps explain why this is so, but also suggests ways to change such experiences.

IV. Research Objective #5 – to identify the barriers that make it more difficult for Emirati women than men to be successful in leadership

Things which might have been thought (or suggested by the literature) to be *organisational* barriers to women reaching positions of leadership in the UAE but which were *not* considered to be important by participants in the research were the factors of lack of organisational support, overt gender discrimination, exclusion from important organisational networks, lack of cooperation by subordinates, not being rewarded for one's leadership style, and extremely high performance expectations.

Non-organisational barriers were found to be of greater relevance in explaining why more women do not progress to positions of leadership in the UAE. It was found, however, that women in the UAE *do* possess the necessary abilities to attain the most senior positions, that exclusion from important social or professional networks is not a factor, that they are not impeded by lack of access to management/leadership training, nor a lack of desire to reach senior positions, nor a lack of careful career planning or international or leadership experience, nor by a lack of appropriate mentoring or cooperation from people other than subordinates (e.g., family members).

Nevertheless, from the interviews (although not from the written questionnaire results), it was clear that research participants felt that stereotypes about women can hamper

the progression of women into positions of leadership. In some cases, there is fear and distrust of women leaders and a perception that leadership is more properly the domain of a man rather than a woman. In some cases, there is a belief (held by both men and women) that for a woman to maintain a position of leadership she must necessarily surrender her femininity. Women are also likely to be expected to keep up with their obligations as wives and mothers and as the person responsible for the running of the household, meaning that, overall, women shoulder greater responsibilities than men when they hold positions of leadership. While this undoubtedly has some positive benefits, such as tending to see the most talented and determined women succeed, there is no doubt that this is something of a barrier. People interviewed for this research remarked positively about UAE government support for women to help them meet their obligations, such as the practice of many UAE government employers in providing onsite nurseries for women employees. Such organisational support is recommended for other organisations wishing to encourage more women to seek senior positions, and other initiatives of this kind would be very welcome; difficulties in maintaining work-life balance are a significant impediment to more women attaining positions of leadership – women do not shy away from these challenges, but deserve assistance not just from their families, but from society as well.

Emirati women are fortunate to live in a country in which laws, policies and other official regulations regarding employment and other matters are wholly non-discriminatory towards women, and this factor was appreciated by participants in the research. Government support is strong, not just in areas such as the provision of nurseries in government organisations, but also in areas such as the provision of generous maternity leave allowances and support for women's associations. These policies are welcomed, and it is hoped that the trend towards helping women shoulder their great responsibilities will continue, with regular reviewing of policies and legislation with a view to ensuring that they continue to support, and certainly do not hinder, women's advancement.

Culture must, however, be contended with, and it is important to emphasise that it *is* a matter of culture, and not of religion; Islam gives women equal rights to men. The culture in the UAE is changing, especially amongst younger Emiratis, who favour the

advancement of women to more senior positions. They are increasingly accepting of and indeed enthusiastic towards the idea of women in leadership. Traditional attitudes that a woman's primary place is at home persist, but these attitudes too are changing. Some cultural impediments to women attaining leadership positions are more intractable, such as limitations on women's ability to travel abroad, and participate in meetings and gatherings in some cases. Some jobs are regarded with disfavour amongst families as suitable occupations for women, although this is an area in which there is considerable change, with greater acceptance of women pursuing careers in occupations previously thought strictly the province of men.

V. Research objective # 6 – to develop a competency model that is appropriate for the UAE's culture

From the information provided by the interviews, it might be said that a competency model for leaders in the UAE is as follows:

- Having pride in oneself and one's work;
- Working hard and setting goals;
- Having a vision, being motivated to achieve that vision and motivating others to share it;
- Having a desire to help others and guide them in the right direction;
- Having self-confidence but also self-awareness;
- Being receptive to criticism and learning from others but not losing self-confidence in the process;
- Being able and willing to understand, support, and develop followers;
- Being willing to take risks;
- (To a lesser extent) demonstrating initiative; and
- (To a lesser extent) knowing a "little bit of everything".

Perhaps the most important attribute of leadership in the UAE, however, which was mentioned by most interviewees, is that leadership in the UAE is very much the ability to gain the reasoned and genuine cooperation and support of followers in the attainment of a vision, rather than a coercive or authoritarian style of management.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

7.1 THE WAY FORWARD – RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Women in the UAE possess equivalent rights and opportunities as men. Not only this, but they are being actively encouraged at the highest levels to participate more fully in the development of their country's politics, economy, education and society. Extensive support is provided by the government of the UAE in terms of educational opportunities and support for working women, such as the provision of nurseries in government workplaces, and generous maternity allowances. The UAE is also home to a thriving women's leadership movement, which has the full support and active encouragement of the government, with many inspiring women leaders being ready and willing to share their experiences and insights with younger generations of Emirati women.

The results of these policies and social movements have been substantial. The representation of Emirati women in the workforce of the UAE has increased significantly. Emirati women now work across all sectors and most occupations in the economy and society of the UAE. Women in the UAE are increasingly perceiving the status and other benefits associated with participating more fully in the political, economic, educational, and other dimensions of their society. They are embracing the need for change, and are keen to make a strong contribution in their respective fields as their male counterparts.

Islam is not at all an impediment to the progression of Emirati women, but certain cultural traditions and assumptions about what it is proper for women to do in their professional lives remain a significant factor in Emirati society, although younger generations are demonstrating an increasing willingness to engage in debate about these assumptions, and gain inspiration and motivation from the examples of high profile, successful, and visionary Emirati women who have paved the way for their younger colleagues.

Cultural traditions in the UAE have tended to place restrictions upon women's conduct, including expectations about the sorts of occupations deemed suitable for women to hold, and about women's freedom of movement and association with other people. There is unquestionably going to be concern in some parts about whether the pace of change is too fast, or even if the change is desirable. The dramatic transformation of the economy of the UAE and the extraordinary educational attainments of its people, including its women, however, demonstrate that the country is likely to be able to meet the challenges before it. Culture mediates outcomes more than official policies and desires, and culture should be treated respectfully with a view to arriving at creative solutions to problems that accommodate the needs of society and ensure that people continue to enjoy the benefits of strong and supportive families and economic prosperity.

Contrary to the findings of some other research studies, effective leadership in the UAE, as identified in this research, is no longer regarded as being just about strong, 'patriarchal' styles of leadership, or even necessarily transformational or charismatic styles of leadership, although the critical role of visioning is most certainly indicated. The participants in this research regarded leadership as being equally closely aligned with models of 'servant' leadership, with good leaders being regarded as those who do not just accomplish the important feat of enjoining followers to share in their vision and seek to help them realise it, but who also possess strong self-awareness, listen to others, and have a commitment to the welfare of those who follow them. Emirati women seem eminently placed to take their place in such leadership roles, and with growing confidence and development of a wider range of leadership competencies, there is no doubt that they will.

Emirati women still, of course, face many challenges to assuming their place alongside men in the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE. Like women in many countries, they are finding that with changing expectations their responsibilities are growing, and to help them meet these responsibilities, assistance is required to speed the current trends and help bring about more

substantial changes. The UAE has provided its women with full support to be well educated and enter the workplace. However, there is still a scarcity of Emirati women occupying the positions with the highest level of seniority in organisations since they appear to face challenges when they seek promotion to executive roles. This may be due to different factors including culture, tradition, gender issues and stereotypes.

In the context of this research, the most significant barriers to the greater representation of Emirati in positions of leadership appear to relate to surviving role expectations that position leadership as being associated with men, and not women. Emirati women in leadership positions encounter different issues and expectations than those faced by their male counterparts and some of those expectations may relate specifically to gender discrimination. This is not necessarily in the form of overt prejudice or hostility towards women who aspire to be leaders, but rather in a more subtle form of barrier which is nevertheless significant, and which nevertheless must be effectively challenged by women themselves by continuing to prove their worth, and by continuing to seek out opportunities to learn and to become good leaders.

The research aimed to identify the behavioural competencies that facilitate the ability of Emirati women to be successful in leadership positions and explore any differences found with those demonstrated by men in these positions. It also aimed to provide meaningful recommendations for women, organisations, and other groups to work to help increase the representation of women in senior positions in the UAE. Necessarily, given the scope of this research, and the very wide range of views solicited, the findings are quite general. Nevertheless, they provide an excellent foundation for further scholarship, and help to point the way forward.

This research has suggested several ways in which the advancement of women to the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE might be supported. No one area stands out as being of any greater or lesser significance; ultimately, everyone in UAE society has a role to play, including women themselves, organisations, the government, mentors, and everyone else.

7.1.1 THE ROLE OF EMIRATI WOMEN IN SUPPORTING OTHER WOMEN

Emirati women themselves have an important role to play in helping other women attain positions of leadership. Women should not only expect the support of others, they should be prepared to support others too. They should be willing to learn from the success stories of women in leadership positions, and then impart what they have learned to others. Women who are currently in positions of leadership can and should play an important role in encouraging and supporting young Emirati women at the beginning of their careers, providing them with opportunities to challenge themselves and develop as effective leaders. Outstanding work in this respect is already being done by organisations and initiatives such as the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the UAE General Women's Union, and the Dubai Women's Establishment. The leadership example and encouragement provided by such women leaders as H.H. Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak, wife of the late President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, and H.H. Sheikha Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, wife of H.H. Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Presidential Affairs. So too are the examples of women such as Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi, the UAE Minister of Foreign Trade, Mariam Mohammed Khalfan Al Roumi, the UAE Minister of Social Affairs, Dr. Maitha Salem Al Shamsi, the UAE Minister of State, and Reem Ibrahim Al Hashimi, also the UAE Minister of State, as well as the nine female members of the Federal National Council, and the female judge, Khuloud Ahmed Juoan Al-Dhaheri.

Emirati women at all stages of their careers and education, and across all sectors of work can follow the example set by these women leaders and themselves work hard to support and encourage other women to endeavour to achieve the highest positions in organisations in the UAE. They can support each other informally, and formally, for example, by agreeing to mentor and coach other women in their leadership journeys.

7.1.2 THE ROLE OF ORGANISATIONS IN SUPPORTING WOMEN

Organisations also have a significant role to play in ensuring that more women attain positions of leadership in the UAE. They should fully support the advancement of women, being more open and receptive to the idea of women in leadership, and should actively work to show trust in and appreciation for the leadership contributions of women. They can also assist women leaders by giving them full authority in their positions, in addition to expecting them to possess vision and a concern for the welfare of others in their stewardship. A strong relationship between women and top organisational decision-makers is recommended so that there is greater awareness of the strengths of women employees and their potential for leadership positions. Culture can be very effectively shaped by organisations, and a good starting point is for organisations in the UAE to examine their practices to ensure that there is no discrimination between men and women, and that the abilities of women are not underestimated.

Some organisational characteristics were found by this research to impact strongly on how comfortable women find their work, and this is surely a very important consideration for organisations that wish to ensure that women are able to advance to positions of leadership without impediment. Organisations that are conducive to the greater success of women in attaining senior positions are those in which people are comfortable expressing their emotions or feelings rather than those which discourage such expression. Organisations which actively support women through the provision of family friendly workplaces, as do government organisations which provide onsite nurseries, should be encouraged to consult widely with women employees and managers to identify areas in which they can assist women better balance their work and family obligations.

7.1.3 THE ROLE OF THE UAE GOVERNMENT IN SUPPORTING WOMEN

The UAE government has been extremely supportive of the advancement of women in all areas of Emirati society, and can continue to lend such support

through positive practices that help women meet their responsibilities, and also through ongoing encouragement of contributions of ideas about how better to encourage and support women leaders. It has proved to be open and receptive to ideas about how to do this, and women should enthusiastically accept the responsibility to contribute to the body of ideas in this respect.

7.1.4 THE ROLE OF MENTORING IN SUPPORTING WOMEN

Mentoring is mentioned as a special area for recommendations because responsibility for mentoring is shared by many people who are likely to need to become involved in mentoring. This research has found (from the interviews, although not from the written questionnaire) that mentoring is an important factor for people wishing to reach the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE. So too are career tracking programmes that provide special training, experience, and skills for people wishing to reach the most senior positions in organisations in the UAE. The latter can help meet any deficits in formal education which may not focus sufficiently on training people in leadership skills. Women themselves can mentor other women, either formally or informally. Organisations can provide mentoring through official mentoring or coaching programmes, even allowing for cultural considerations in the UAE which might sometimes make it difficult for women to mentor men or vice versa.

7.1.5 THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP EDUCATION / TRAINING IN SUPPORTING WOMEN

As noted in the previous chapter, a competency model for leaders in the UAE is suggested to be:

- Having pride in oneself and one's work;
- Working hard and setting goals;
- Having a vision, being motivated to achieve that vision and motivating others to share it;
- Having a desire to help others and guide them in the right direction;

- Having self-confidence but also self-awareness;
- Being receptive to criticism and learning from others but not losing self-confidence in the process;
- Being able and willing to understand, support, and develop followers;
- Being willing to take risks;
- (To a lesser extent) demonstrating initiative; and
- (To a lesser extent) knowing a “little bit of everything”.

In addition to what is perhaps the most important attribute of leadership in the UAE, the ability to gain the reasoned and genuine cooperation and support of followers in the attainment of a vision, rather than a coercive or authoritarian style of management. This research indicates that these competencies *can*, at least to an extent, be taught through leadership skills programmes, and it is hoped that organisations throughout the UAE help encourage women to take part in such programmes. As noted earlier in this Dissertation, excellent initiatives in this respect can be noted in the case of the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority and the Dubai Leaders Program run by Dubai World.

7.2 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This research has been very wide-ranging in an attempt to understand the situation regarding Emirati women and the impediments to and supports for to them in their leadership journeys. It represents broad views across men and women, nationals and non-nationals, government and non-government sectors, generations, and occupations, among other dimensions of difference. In doing so, it seeks to extend and generalise from similar research conducted in other countries, and in some sectors of the UAE. It is hoped that this research will inspire others to examine the issues in far greater depth, focusing perhaps on individual sectors of the UAE economy and society, and exploring in more detail some of the findings of this research. This study has found that there are many encouraging indications that women in the UAE will continue to aspire to and

reach the most senior positions. With their continued determination, and with the support and encouragement of their sisters, their families, and their organisations, they can surely be expected to meet the challenges before them.

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APPENDICES

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| Appendix 1 | Written Questionnaire |
| Appendix 2 | Interview Questions |
| Appendix 3 | Pilot Study |
| Appendix 4 | Analysed Data |