

2022

## The Role of Women in Public Administration in Saint Lucia

Elizabeth Elicia Bailey  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Elizabeth Elicia Bailey

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,  
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Walden University  
2022

Abstract

The Role of Women in Public Administration in Saint Lucia

by

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MSc, University of East London, 2001

BSc, University of the West Indies, 1996

Proposal Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

Walden University

February 2022

## Abstract

Women continue to face stereotypes and barriers with their advancement to leadership positions. Nonetheless, there is an increasing number of females in leadership roles partly due to programs and policies for the advancement of women, causing several women to aspire to and take up top leadership positions in the public sector. In Saint Lucia, women hold about 70% of the senior management positions that were once dominated primarily by men. However, little is known about the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. This qualitative study aimed to understand the perceptions of male and female leaders relating to the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. The theoretical framework for this generic qualitative study was the gendered organization theory. Data were collected from five male and seven female public service leaders selected via purposeful sampling to gather descriptive data using semistructured interviews. The data were coded manually and categorized using thematic analysis. The results identified five broad roles of women in public administration in Saint Lucia: social development, leadership, change management, collaboration, and meeting the needs of the citizenry. The positive social change implication is in promoting understanding of the ability of women to perform significant roles in public administration, providing evidence to support the wider acceptance of female leaders, creating an enabling environment to empower women aspiring to leadership, and enhancing their independence and ability to provide for their family. The study should attract future research as comparative studies at another location or the further assessment of gendered roles and how they impact public administration.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the female leaders in the Saint Lucia public service and to all women in Public Administration around the world, specifically, those in the Caribbean for their strength, dedication, and contribution to national development. I would also like to dedicate this research to my family and particularly my two sons Sydney and Seth Bailey who served as motivators, my dad, Herilton Celestin, who taught me to never give up, and my mom, Marcellina Dilaire, the strongest woman I know, for her support throughout this journey.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Public sector organizations are reflective of the society in which they operate. Female employees in the public service have struggled for years to identify their role in public administration. Globally women face several challenges in the public service due to cultural stereotypes, barriers, and gender-based discrimination in the workplace. As a result, women generally struggle with advancement to leadership positions and senior positions in the workplace. Society has assigned roles based on gender, resulting in women taking up social, caregiving, and nurturing roles, usually in subordinate positions, while men are assigned dominant roles in technical, leadership, and management positions (Acker, 1990; Shivers, 1995; Smith, 2015). However, some women have broken social norms and taken up positions in fields where men usually dominate, proving that women can perform different roles at various levels in public administration. Therefore, the public service has a crucial role in ensuring gender equity in the workplace, leading society by allowing women equal opportunities and support to advance in public administration and increase productivity.

Women initially struggled to enter the workplace, access opportunities to work in organizations, and earn a living by working in the public sector (Kanter, 1977; Nasser, 2018). Eventually, women were allowed to enter the public service, but this was at the cost of compromising work-life balance and facing gender inequality, as gender equality and neutrality were non-existent, leading to the public service as largely gendered organizations (Acker, 1990). Therefore, women faced various forms of discrimination,

driving them to either act as the male counterparts to advance in the organizations and take up some of the stereotypically masculine roles, such as leadership roles, or remain in subordinate roles, a phenomenon which Acker referred to as the *social man*. Even when advancing to leadership roles, women faced discrimination that carried negative consequences and deterred public administration progress (Hoyt & Murphy, 2015; Yaghi, 2018).

Women face several forms of discrimination in the public service. However, some women continue to overcome barriers and advance to leadership roles and other more prominent public administration roles with great success (D'Agostino, 2017). Hence, women serve in various public service capacities, including in both positions designated by society as masculine and feminine roles. The public service also began to offer employment to men in stereotypically feminine roles, which is an indication that gender neutrality is slowly creeping into the public service. These changing roles and new developments in public administrations are indications that women have shattered the glass ceiling and overcome some forms of discrimination (see D'Agostino, 2017; Nasser, 2018).

In this study, I examined the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia based on male and female public service leaders' perceptions. The aim was to understand using a feminist organizational theory lens how leaders in the Saint Lucia public service view women's roles in public administration based on their experience as long-standing employees in the public service with the experience of working with female supervisors. Identifying women's roles in public administration could provide



insights into the areas into which aspiring female public service leaders can advance and help build their confidence and provide support knowing that other females have succeeded in these fields. The study's data provided evidence to promote gender equality and positive social change, especially where women hold positions in stereotypically masculine areas, encouraging more women to gain access to policy formulation and decision-making roles. In such cases, allowing for more opportunities to address women's issues and may lead to women's independence through economic and social benefits from employment in senior positions offering the financial freedom to care for and provide for their families.

This chapter introduces the study, including the research topic, and conceptualizes the critical issues addressed therein. After the introduction is the background to the study in which I briefly describe selected literature relating to women in public administration and leadership in the public service. The background also builds the context of the study's scope. I also describe the research problem, relevance, and significance to public administration of the study. Finally, I introduce the theoretical framework, key terms, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations of the study.

### **Background**

Gender inequalities, barriers, stereotypes, and discrimination have dominated research relating to women and leadership in the public service. Some research also examined approaches used to advance women in public administration. The bulk of the literature reviewed in this study is from 2015 to 2020 and includes the seminal literature from the early years of feminist thinking from the 1920s onwards to lay the research

foundation. I searched keywords such as *women's role in public administration, women and leadership, the feminization of the workplace, feminist and leadership, gender and leadership, gendering organization, and women in public administration*. Articles were retrieved from various databases in the Walden University Library, including Thoreau multi-database, Sage Journal, Public Policy Subject database, and Science Direct to support the problem statement. I also highlighted some literature on women's success in leadership in public administration and programs for women's advancement was also highlighted.

There was very little literature on women's roles in public administration; however, there were several on gender inequality. Some researchers on gender inequality included Acker (1990), who examined organizational structures from a feminist view and argued that organizational structures are not gender-neutral but somewhat hierarchical and male dominant. Thus, organizations are gendered entities by nature, with the jobs, concepts, structure, wages, and the workers' image being masculine. Males usually occupied all the top positions in the organization, and the women employed in those organizations were forced to act as social men (Acker, 1990). Acker (1992) developed the gendering organization theory to critique the studies about women and work, including the inequalities women face in organizations and society in general providing insight into the relationship between gender, leadership, and the organization. Acker (1990) recognized the importance of gender equality and the role of the organization in removing barriers, women's disadvantages, exclusion, and stereotypes and encouraging gender-neutrality. Additionally, Hoyt and Murphy (2015) examined the impact of gender-

based stereotypes on women in leadership and explored an approach to overcome these barriers and advance women to leadership positions. They found a strategy to advance women in leadership by proposing a model or strategy to overcome stereotypes through leadership development, education, and other activities.

Sam (2015) examined the correlation between a combination of men and women in government and economic development with gender-neutral services and the changing role of men and women. Sam's (2015) research findings suggested that programs for gender equality at the local, regional, and international levels led to women's advancement in the Caribbean. Also, female leaders appeared to empower other women in the workplace and society, and in some Caribbean countries have led to young males' marginalization, with women more likely to be administrators than political leaders (Sam, 2015). Sam's research, therefore, provided context for women in leadership in the Saint Lucia setting.

The researchers on initiatives for the development of women in public administration included Schachter (2017), who examined the role of gender in delivering leadership training for female public sector administrators and suggested that attention to gender in leadership training leads to better performance. Hence, leadership training should focus on gender equity and equality to achieve better performance.

On the other hand, D'Agostino (2017) examined whether real progress toward gender equality and social justice can be achieved by understanding the difference women make in public administration via a narrative inquiry by women currently in public service leadership positions. The study revealed that the narrative inquiry allowed

women in leadership to voice their progress in public administration, thus highlighting their success and eliminating the perception as a set of challenges and obstacles to women's leadership.

Other research focused on women's representation in the organization; for example, Johnston and Houston (2018) addressed the linkages between representative bureaucracy and active and passive representation by examining gender-based violence arrests along under the administration of female police leadership. They found that a passive representation of women in senior leadership positions does not imply active representation. Female police leaders did not actively represent female victims of gender-based violence. They also found a strong link between culture and behavior, as the culture determined a female leader's influence. Also, in masculine cultures, women in leadership had little influence on the organization's culture. Therefore, in masculine organizations, women in leadership are not able to significantly influence the organizational culture.

Researchers such as Nasser (2018) also examined the effectiveness of gender-based interventions. Nasser conducted a study to examine trends and the impact of policies for gender equality in the public service and on gender gaps in the Arab States. The research findings indicate that women's participation in the Arab States is dependent on social, cultural, and economic factors. Nasser reported several obstacles to women's advancement in public administration; however, partnerships and synergies at the regional and international levels facilitate women's progress in leadership. Och and Hasunuma (2019) also studied the impact of gender-based interventions by looking at a

political party's feminization in Japan. They identified five conditions for the feminization process, including pressure for the inclusion of women, gender gap (women preference for a particular organization or political party), descriptive representation (strategies to increase the number of women), substantive representation (feminist policies that break traditional policies), and increase in feminist claim-making by the organization. The research indicated the presence of feminization in the political party; however, it was mostly symbolic, serving as an instrumental tool to achieve more significant policy goals such as economic growth, increasing national birth rates, and improving Japan's reputation abroad. Thus, feminization drivers were linked to economic concerns and issues relating to Japan's international reputation (Och & Hasunuma, 2019), such as overcoming obstacles, stereotypes, and barriers to women and not just their advancement. Japan's feminization programs, therefore, focused on the economic advancement of women and facilitated the understanding of the various roles that women can undertake to foster growth and organizational and national development.

Additionally, Vargas (2019) examined the characteristics of influential female leaders and suggested different strategies for advancing women leaders to senior leadership positions and improving their public sector performance. Also, Smith and Suby-Long (2019) conducted a study on how women leaders can benefit from sharing their purpose and leadership narratives. They found leaders can benefit in three ways: (a) by identifying times when their actions and decisions were purposeful, (b) articulating their leadership philosophy, and (c) leadership authenticity identification (Smith, & Suby-

Long, 2019). Smith and Suby-Long also suggested that leaders should use these methods to make current and future leadership/career decisions.

The articles presented above help develop the context for my study on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. I gathered data from male and female leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia to capture their perceptions of women's roles in their public service. The theoretical framework provided a lens through which the study was analyzed. The selected literature helped provide the research background, including the major themes, which I explore further in the literature review. The themes included historical perspectives of women and organizations, patriarchy, gendered roles, challenges such as the stereotypes and barriers women face with their advancement to leadership positions, gender progress, and advancement such as gendering programs. I also examined the factors that created an enabling environment and how this helped women advance to leadership roles and identified their public administration roles.

### **Problem Statement**

There are stereotypes that favor men for top leadership positions and barriers to the advancement to leadership positions for women. These stereotypes and barriers continue to affect women once in leadership roles (Elmuti et al., 2009; Hoyt & Murphy, 2015; Nasser, 2018; Schachter, 2017; Williams, 2014). In the Caribbean, as in other parts of the world, there have been programs and policies for women's advancement that has resulted in several women aspiring to and taking up top leadership positions in the public sector (Sam, 2015). Where males once occupied all of the top management and the political positions and dominated the leadership in the public service of Saint Lucia,

women now hold about 70% of the senior management (leadership) positions in the public service (Office of the Cabinet Secretary, 2019). This makes the Saint Lucia public service a unique place to study the role of women in public administration.

However, there appears to be a lack of understanding of women's role in the public sector workplace in Saint Lucia. In this study, I hoped to bring to the forefront the perceptions of women in public leadership positions and the role women play in public administration in Saint Lucia. Also, I considered the perceptions of male leaders on the role of women in public administration to understand women's contribution to leadership fully. D'Agostino (2017) noted that the literature on women in public administration focused on the obstacles they face and how to overcome them. D'Agostino emphasized the limited information and knowledge on alternative research approaches in gender equality and social justice that focus on women's progress and success. Also, Yaghi (2018) recommended the need for further research on women's leadership, emphasizing organizational, cultural, economic, political, psychological, and social factors as these factors help shape the role of women in leadership in the workplace. Therefore, in this study I attempted to focus on women's progress and success in public administration in Saint Lucia, thus, helping to understand the difference they make, how they overcame obstacles faced in the organization, and how that helped shape their workplace roles, particularly in an organization that was once male-dominated with systems and processes designed by males.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the perception of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. I targeted a small group of male and female leaders in the public service and used semistructured interviews to capture their perceptions of women's public administration roles. Factors such as training, education, role models, national policies, and other organizational and social factors may have played a role in women's advancement in their leadership roles (D'Agostino, 2017; Hoyt & Murphy, 2015; Sam, 2015; Schachter, 2017; Yaghi, 2018). I also explored what personal characteristics they believe may have led to their advancement as public service leaders and how it has contributed to women's role in public administration.

### **Research Question**

RQ: How do male and female leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia perceive the role of women in public administration?

### **Theoretical Framework for the Study**

#### **Theoretical Foundation**

I used the gendered organizational theory as the theoretical framework for the study. Acker's (1990) gendered organizational theory is a feminist organizational theory in which Acker critiqued the persistently male-dominated organization. Acker attempted to incorporate gender into the organizational theory to understand better why organizations function the way they do. Acker (1990) also reviewed the studies about women and work, including the inequalities women face in organizations and society in



general, such as differentiated roles, wage gaps, and segregation. Therefore, the gendering organizational theory is used to understand the impact of gender on organizations, emphasizing gendered roles and how organizations assigned roles to individuals in the workplace. This study was focused specifically on the assignment of roles based on gender in public administration.

Acker (1992) defined gender as the difference society produces between men and women, which involves empowering men and discrimination against women. By defining the word "gender," the theorist outlined to the organization and society the importance of gender equality and the role of the organization in removing barriers, women's disadvantages, exclusion, and stereotypes, and being gender neutral. This is insightful for understanding the relationship between gender, leadership, and the organization. Acker continued working on the feminist organization theory for over 30 years. During that time, certain aspects were expanded and clarified, including class and race inequality regimes within organizations, including intersectionality (Acker, 2006, 2009, 2012). Acker (2009) posited that over time, the masculine organizational structure continuously provided certain advantages to the male leaders and forced women to take a subordinate role. Acker purported that it may be necessary for government legislature to change to transform the organizations' goals and cultures, allow more women to take up top leadership positions, and foster organizational change to a more gender-neutral setting (Acker, 2012). Therefore, the gendered organization theory provided an ideal theoretical framework to understand the role of women in public administration from the perception

of the public service leaders. The literature review in Chapter 2 expanded on the gendered organization theory, bringing it into contemporary settings.

I considered and applied the gendering organizational theory as a framework to understand the role of women in public administration and examined issues relating to inequity in leadership in the public service and the advancement and suppression of women in leadership positions. Shafritz et al. (2016) indicated that organizational theory has one primary purpose: to share and consolidate information about organizations and the approaches that a researcher can use to investigate and understand them. Therefore, I used the feminist organizational theory lens to conduct the study, to collect data to determine whether the leadership approaches used by women reflect that of their former male role models and predecessors or whether a so-called feminist leadership approach has emerged, define this leadership approach and how it is different from the previous male role models, and show how it may have influenced the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. Therefore, the framework helped me better understand the role of women in public administration using interviews to gather data regarding perceptions of leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia.

Feminist thinking and its integration into public life is nothing new. Mary Parker Follett (1926) reflected early feminist writing on integration and democracy by pushing for freedom, equality, and equitable relationships in organizations and communities, rather than the existing dominance and subordination model. She conducted seminal research on organizational theory by promoting management and organizational concepts through women's knowledge and ability to direct the social world (Follett, 1926). Follett's

work has been vital in laying the foundation for organizational theories in public administration, and it provided the foundation for Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organization. Follett's work had a feminist orientation as she advocated women's rights, women's equality, and equity in relationships rather than dominance or subordination (Morton & Lindquist (1997). Thus, a combination of feminist organizational theorists' work helped develop the theoretical foundation for this study and provide a lens through which to analyze the data.

### **Nature of the Study**

This research consisted of a qualitative study using a generic approach. This study used a descriptive approach that allows participants to provide in-depth information based on their understanding of their experience and knowledge of the public service, which is in their natural setting (see Patton, 2015). I investigated the research problem using data from open-ended semistructured interviews with 12 public service leaders related to their perceptions of the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia until I achieved data saturation. This data helped provide a better understanding of the role women play in the public service using a sample to ensure data saturation and yield reliable results.

I used a qualitative approach in which female leaders in the public service provided data based on their perceptions of women's role in public administration, which should convey their success and progress. The narrative approach was used as an alternative method in the research, which highlighted women's progress and what led to their success as leaders (D'Agostino, 2017). The generic qualitative approach is another

method to research women in public administration and identify their roles. Secondly, information was gathered from male public service leaders on women's role in the public administration based on their experience working with females in the public service to understand better women's perceived role by a diverse group and obtain accurate results. I compared the data gathered from women with that gathered from men to examine similarities and differences in their perceptions and determine women's fundamental role in public administration in Saint Lucia.

I analyzed the data using manual coding and thematic analysis. First, the interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. I then coded the transcripts initially using in-vivo coding and later thematic codes to highlight similarities in the perceptions among females and between female and male leaders. The differences were also noted.

### **Definitions**

*Equality:* A concept central to feminism, where both sexes should have political, economic, personal, and social impartiality. It is the equal treatment of people and represents fairness in the organization or society.

*Feminism:* The belief that men and women should be treated equally; it is also the study of social, economic, and political gender equality (Barlow & Smith, 2019). A feminist advocate for women's rights and for women to be granted the same privileges or treatments (Koobak, 2018). Feminism has evolved, and there are various types of feminism today, including liberal, white, western, European, American, and so on. However, generally, feminism represents attempts to eliminate inequality and injustice in

women's lives, using social and political ideologies to promote and advocate gender equality (Hirudayaraj & Shield, 2019).

*Feminist*: A person promoting feminism or the theorizing of feminism to understand the characteristics of gender-based inequality and strive for gender equality (Koobak, 2018). Therefore, feminist research aims to understand gender inequalities in organizations and society (Hirudayaraj & Shield, 2019).

*Feminization*: A gendering process in which organizations set out and implement programs or processes to increase women's numbers in the workplace (Och & Hasunuma, 2019). Some organizations use gender quotas or amend or develop policies to embrace more women at work.

*Gender*: The difference society produces between men and women, which involves empowering men and discrimination against women (Acker, 1992).

*A gendered organization*: An organization in which male dominance exists. The roles are gender-specific, with women occupying the subordinate positions and men the positions on power and higher pay (Acker, 1990).

*The glass ceiling*: A gender-based barrier that leads to the under-representation of women in critical roles in organizations and society (Acker, 2009).

*The glass cliff*: A term used to describe a form of gender-based discrimination in which women are assigned leadership roles in challenging circumstances with a high risk of failure (Smith, 2015; Sabharwal, 2013, Ryan & Haslam, 2005, 2007).

*The glass escalator:* A metaphor used to describe the establishment of hidden advantages for men in so-called female professions (Ryan & Haslam, 2005; William, 1992).

*A glass fence:* A term used to describe gender-based discrimination, which prevents women from taking more active roles outside the home because there is the belief that the women's place is in the home, caring, nurturing, and domestic roles (Kim, 2013).

*Glass prison:* A metaphor used to describe gender-based discrimination, which restrains women and uses stereotypical assumptions about women's abilities to perform and their capabilities (Yaghi, 2018), thus limiting women through continuous discrimination and entrapping them in an invisible box or the transparent edge of a cliff with little or no means of attaining their goals.

*A glass slipper:* A metaphor used to describe a situation where organizations assign traits and competencies to specific jobs to make them suitable for a specific group of people (Ashcraft, 2013). Hence, glass slippers can foster gender discrimination by creating gendered roles in organizations.

*The glass wall:* A metaphor that describes organizations' barriers to prevent women from moving to a position with the possibility for upward mobility or promotion (Sneed, 2007). Guy & Newton (2004) described glass walls as a situation whereby the women in the organization are placed in so-called feminine positions.

*Inequality regime:* A metaphor used to describe the obstacles and barriers to women's advancement at all levels of the organizational hierarchy due to their class,

gender, and race (Acker, 2009). Acker (2006) also defined it as “interconnected practices, processes, actions, and meanings that result in and uphold class, gender, and racial inequalities within specific organizations” (p. 443).

*Intersectionality*: A way to conceptualize inequality in the organization to include gender-based inequalities and class and race (Acker, 2012). Intersectionality is, therefore, a situation where the gender process interacts with other types of inequalities (Acker, 2012).

*Public service*: The central government agencies usually responsible for the administration of public service delivery to the citizenry on behalf of the state government (Nasser, 2018). It includes all government agencies such as civil service, the judiciary, executive, and protective services such as law enforcement agencies. Therefore, the public service is responsible for public administration.

### **Assumptions**

To ensure clarity and transparency in the study, I indicate the phenomenon's assumptions, selection of participants, research design, and interview questions. One assumption was that leaders in the public service with relevant experience were willing to participate in this research. According to Patton (2015), participants should be open and accessible for a researcher to tap into their knowledge and experience. The second assumption was that the participants were able to provide various answers as they understood the interview questions and were open to giving honest responses. The third assumption was the participants understood that their participation was based on their leadership role in the public service. The fourth assumption was based on the gender of

the participants; as leaders where the organizations are located, experiencing the gendering of the organization provided a large amount of data relevant to answering the research question. To ensure the above assumptions were met, I masked each participant's identity and maintained confidentiality throughout the study. Finally, I assumed that gender inequalities and inequality regimes exist in the Saint Lucia public service and the public service is a gendered organization with gendered roles and some forms of discrimination.

These assumptions made it relevant to conduct the study using the gendered organization theory and participants from the public service in Saint Lucia. The public service was classified as a gendered organization with some of the characteristics of the theory. Assumptions help to develop research context in qualitative research and indicate how the findings emerge naturally from the study environment (Patton, 2015). Thus, the assumptions I identified were essential to understanding how the study was conducted and the relevance of the data collected from the natural setting to the research findings.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

The study was focused on Saint Lucia public service leaders' perceptions of the role of women in public administration. Globally, there are a limited number of women advancing to leadership roles compared to men, partly due to discrimination, barriers, stereotypes, and other factors that hinder women's progress in organizations, including the public sector (Nasser, 2018; Schachter 2017). Therefore, the role of women in public administration appears to be unclear. In Saint Lucia, several women in the public service have advanced to top management and leadership positions in the public service. Hence,



the study gathered data from the public service leaders to determine the role of women leaders in public administration in the context of Saint Lucia.

This qualitative study's scope included a limited number of leaders from the public service, both men and women, who were selected via purposeful sampling to participate in the study based on specific criteria. Rubin & Rubin (2012) indicated that with purposeful sampling, the researcher develops criteria which they use to select participants. This criterion was based on what I considered relevant for an individual to participate in the study, such as a leader in the public service with at least 10 years of working experience, which includes working with a female supervisor, and the leader can be male or female. However, the target was an equal number of participants from each sex who can speak on issues relating to the role of women in public administration.

### **Limitations**

Qualitative research using interviews is prone to research bias as it is based on the perceptions of participants. Also, possible exposure of data or disclosure of participants' information may cause unintentional harm to the participants. I did everything I could to ensure participants were de-identified and masked. Secondly, it was challenging to establish a clear separation of my various roles in doing the study. These roles include my role as a researcher/interview, a student, a public service employee, and a female public service leader. I had to ensure that my perceptions do not influence my decisions and create bias or distort information. Thirdly, a purposeful or judgmental sampling method can create sampling bias and a lack of equity for participants' selection. Additionally, it can result in an untrue representation of the population, thus skewing the results or

resulting in invalidity and reliability issues. Hence, I followed the Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines in conducting the study to ensure ethical research and incorporate measures to ensure reliability and validity.

Also, I tried to ensure the elimination of researcher bias during the various components of the study (Saldaña, 2016); by disclosing that I work with the public service for over 25 years with the later years being in a leadership position, therefore the participants for the interviews volunteered to participate and did not receive any form of funding. Likewise, using purposeful sampling to select participants, not selecting anyone that I currently supervise or have supervised to participate in the study so that participants were not within the scope of my influence. This was a qualitative study; consequently, there were limitations regarding duplication in the natural setting, making it challenging to generalize the findings; specifically, because the study was conducted within a specific group of leaders in a geographical location. Hence, I provided details of the research process so that anyone can duplicate the study using another group of participants. I also kept a journal, did voice recordings, kept interview transcripts, and field notes were taken during the research process (data collection) to track my ideas, beliefs, and thoughts (see Saldaña, 2016). Thus, helping me provide an accurate account of the research process.

The qualitative research design had additional limitations regarding trustworthiness. O'Sullivan et al. (2017) indicated that the use of different data sources can lead to the use of different data collection methods and may suffer from unevenness without a competent research team to process the data. Additionally, each method required time to design, pretest, testing which required much effort, skills, knowledge,

and time, making the qualitative studies a bit impractical to some, particularly those in public administration with limited time. The use of one research method helped reduce that limitation. The study also had the risk of not yielding data to answer the research question. The researcher's characteristics can influence their research design, data collection, and interpretation, thus leading to subjectivity and reducing the data's validity. Also, the researcher's level of interaction with the participant can influence the quality of data collected. As the researcher, I kept accurate data records; hence, it is vital to have excellent communication, listening, interpretation, description, and writing skills to improve data reliability and accuracy. Finally, when using qualitative design, the researcher has to use sound research practices and set boundaries to limit the study's scope, making it difficult to replicate with such limitations (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). Despite the limitation, qualitative researchers can use various strategies such as journaling, verbatim interview transcripts, field notes, and cross-checking to increase the study's trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is discussed more in-depth in chapter 3.

### **Significance**

The research findings may help people understand the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. While previous studies have been done on engendering government and corporate systems in the Caribbean, specific attention to Saint Lucia has not been studied. Each of the islands in the Caribbean has a different culture. Saint Lucia has a French and British background, with citizens primarily Afro-Caribbean and with a small group of Asian descent, creating a mixed culture. Sam (2015) wrote that several Caribbean countries (including Saint Lucia) had implemented programs and policies for

women's advancement, which has caused several women to aspire to and take up top management positions. This study was unique because it addressed the role of women in public administration based on the perceptions of female public service leaders in Saint Lucia and men, as their perceptions can be compared to that of women to validate the findings and reduce research bias. The study provided additional data and contributed to the existing literature on women in leadership in the public service by highlighting their successes and progress in the workplace. The research also provided information that will serve to educate people in leadership and human resource management on the role of women in public administration. With such knowledge comes the power for people to make changes in the workplace and influence society's change to empower women, thus encouraging greater gender equality.

Globally, there has been pressure by international organizations to engage women and for their inclusion in decision making, for example, through programs such as gender mainstream and feminization of the workplace. Och & Hasunuma (2019) identified pressure for women's inclusion, women's preference for a particular organization, descriptive representation, substantive representation, and increase in feminist claim-making by the organization as five conditions necessary for the feminization process of the conservative political party in Japan. The researchers indicated more women in the Japanese political party they studied, which had a feminization agenda. Although it was symbolic and used to achieve more critical policy goals, it brought some level of women empowerment. Given that Saint Lucia appeared to have experienced a gendering process

in the public service with an increasing number of women in public administration, the study will also gather information on female leaders' profiles and qualifications.

Additionally, it provided information on how the public service policies help shape the role of women in public administration and the public service. Thus, created greater awareness of women's changing roles, their ability to hold leadership positions, and provided insights on how they broke through the glass ceiling and stereotypes and advance to top leadership positions in the public service. Therefore, the study should help bring about the greater acceptance of women in leadership and empower other women aspiring to senior leadership positions. Women leaders are expected to represent women's interests and their involvement in policy formulation and as legislators should result in greater representation for women (Mansbridge, 1999). Thus, the study should create positive social change by increasing the number of women in leadership positions in the public sector and greater gender diversity as more women should be able to participate in decision-making. In a male-dominated organization, communication may be impaired by distrust and conflicting interests. In such organizations, women leaders can represent women's interests by improving communication and negotiation quality (Mansbridge, 1999). Therefore, the research may also encourage women to voice their opinion, enabling women's issues to be addressed, bringing about the greater acceptance of women as public sector leaders, and defining their role in public administration.

### **Summary**

Chapter 1 outlines the problem statement, purpose, background and highlights the research methodology, which is a generic qualitative study, the study significance, and

the research question, which indicates the type of data I planned to gather from the study. Chapter 1 further addresses the research assumptions, scope, delimitations, limitations, and significance of the study. The study addressed the role of women in public administration in the context of the under-representation of women in leadership and gender discrimination, using the feminist lens of the gendered organization theory to analyze the data.

In Chapter 2, I provide a review of the literature and the theoretical foundation of the study and explore the gap in the literature regarding the lack of understanding of the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia and its importance in identifying the contribution of women in improving performance and bring about economic, social and political benefits to the public service.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

Some stereotypes favor males for top leadership positions and create barriers faced by female leaders with their advancement to leadership positions. Women in leadership roles continue to experience these stereotypes and obstacles (Elmuti et al., 2009; Hoyt, & Murphy, 2015; Nasser, 2018; Schachter, 2017; Williams, 2014). International interventions, programs, and policies led to women's advancement in the Caribbean and resulted in several women aspiring to and taking up top leadership positions in the public sector (Sam, 2015). In the public service of Saint Lucia, where males once occupied all of the top management and the political positions and dominated the leadership, women now hold about 70% of the senior management (leadership) positions (Office of the Cabinet Secretary, 2019). The Saint Lucia public service was, therefore, a unique place to study women's role in public administration.

However, a research gap existed as there was a lack of understanding of the role women have in the public sector workplace in Saint Lucia. In this study I aimed to bring to the forefront the perceptions of men and women in public leadership positions on the role women play in public administration in Saint Lucia to fully understand the contribution of women in leadership from the perspective of both men and women. D'Agostino (2017) noted that the literature on women in public administration focused on the obstacles they face and how to overcome them. D'Agostino (2017) emphasized the limited information and knowledge on alternative research approaches in gender equality and social justice that focus on women's progress and success. Also, Yaghi (2018)

recommended the need for further research on women's leadership, emphasizing organizational, cultural, economic, political, psychological, and social factors, as these factors help shape the role of women in leadership in the workplace. Therefore, with this study I attempted to focus on women's progress and success in public administration in Saint Lucia to understand their roles in the workplace. I examined the difference women make, how they overcame obstacles faced in the organization, and how that helped shape their roles in the workplace.

### **Purpose**

My aim with this qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of male and female public service on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. I sought to understand the role of women in public administration using a small group of male and female leaders in the public service and semistructured interviews. Several social factors may have played a role in women's advancement in their leadership roles (D'Agostino, 2017; Hoyt & Murphy, 2015; Sam, 2015; Schachter, 2017; Yaghi, 2018). These factors included training, education, role models, national policies, and others, which I used to explore what personal characteristics they believe may have led to their advancement as public service leaders and how it has contributed to the role of women in public administration.

In Chapter 2 I discuss the literature search strategy, describe the theoretical foundation, the gendering organization theory, and review 52 sources on women and leadership in public administration or the public service using the major emerging themes. I discuss themes such as the traditional perspective of gender, how gender has



evolved, gender and organizations, international influence on gender and organizations, and gender and public administration, including leadership styles. In this chapter, I also identify the gap in the literature on women in leadership in public administration leading to conducting this research to fill the gap by gathering data from selected male and female leaders in the public service. I also attempted to collect data on the specific factors that influenced the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

I searched for scholarly literature with a focus on women and leadership in public administration. I used keywords to search, including words like *women in public administration, female/women leaders and public administration/government/public sector, gendering/gendered public administration, inequality systems in public administration, and 21st century public administration*. The search included peer-reviewed journals and seminal works; I used several databases from the Walden University library to search for the literature. The databases used were EBSCO host service, Thoreau Multidatabases, SAGE Journals, Public Policy and Administration, Business Source Premier, Political Science Complete, Business and Management, Psych INFO, Science Direct, and Educational Administration.

I also searched for literature to support my selected theoretical framework, gendered organization theory. This search included peer-reviewed journals as well as seminal work on the theory using the databases mentioned above. The keywords in this search were *gendered organization theory, feminist organizational theory, feminism in public administration, inequality regimes, intersectionality, and social feminism*.

## **Theoretical Foundation**

### **Gendered Organization Theory**

I used the gendered organization theory as the framework for the research. The gendered organizational theory is a feminist organizational theory that is used to understand the impact of gender on organizations (Acker, 1990). Acker (1990) built upon the work of Mary Parker Follett (1926), who reflected early feminist writing in her work on integration and democracy by pushing for freedom, equality, and equitable relationships in organizations and communities. Acker, like Follett, observed the existing male dominance and female subordination. Follett conducted seminal research on organizational theory by promoting management and organizational concepts through women's knowledge and ability to direct the social world (Morton & Lindquist (1997). Follett's work was vital in laying the foundation for organization theories in public administration. Follett's work had a feminist orientation as she advocated women's rights, women's equality, and equity in relationships rather than dominance or subordination (Morton & Lindquist (1997). Traditionally, public administration appears to be plagued with gender inequality as it is dominated by males in leadership positions with women in subordinate roles.

Follett (1926) developed the foundation for Acker's (1990) theory of gendered organization, as Acker incorporated gender into the organizational theory to better understand why organizations function the way they do. Like Follett, Acker critiqued the persistently male-dominated organization and reviewed the studies about women and work, including the inequalities women face in organizations and society. Acker posited

that organizations are not gender neutral as there are four gendering processes reflective of the society and gender perceptions that are being simulated within the organization. These processes help create the ideal worker Acker describes as a man; thus, masculinity dominates organizational processes, and women are segregated and marginalized. These processes include (a) the gendered division of work or gender-based roles, (b) income and status inequality between men and women, and (c) cultural images on gender created and circulated. Finally, gender identity is part of the organizational process (Acker, 1992). Acker (1990), therefore, conceptualized the theory as part of a feminine thrust to make organizations more democratic and achieve goals for the improvement of society. The gendered organization theory's main aim is that of gender neutrality and equality in organizations.

Acker's theory appears to be based on similar assumptions of the predecessors in research on gender and organization. Researchers such as Kanter (1977) identified dual structures of bureaucracy and patriarchy in organizations. The two structures work together to bring about the discrimination of women in the organization. Additionally, Kanter indicated that gender in the organization is based on structural processes rather than women's characteristics. Kanter observed that women occupy the low-level positions in large organizations and men are at the top of the hierarchy, signifying that there are organizational roles with images of the characteristics of the individuals that should occupy these roles. Thus, males fit the image of the roles of leadership and positions of power and authority, while women are believed to be suitable for the subordinate roles. The gendered organization theory was built on Kanter's work to theorize gender and the

organization and developed a feminist organizational theory based on similar assumptions as Kanter.

Acker continued to research the gendered organization and in 1992 critiqued the work of feminist researchers on gender/women and work including Acker's own work on the gendered organization theory. In the critique, Acker attempted to address the organizational theory to explain the persistent male dominance at work. Acker also defined gender in an attempt to highlight its significance to the organization and society. The critique pointed to gendered processes as activities individuals engage in and how they feel about them. Gendered processes create advantages and disadvantages based on sex, with males reaping the benefits of power, dominance, and other advantages, while women face challenges such as subordination, barriers, and stereotypes (Acker, 1992). Acker saw the gendered processes as an integral part of other social processes, such as class and race, and outlined four elements of the gendered organization theory. Acker reiterated that there are four gendered processes in such organizations: (a) gender divisions (gender roles); (b) symbols, images, and other components to justify gender division; (c) individual interactions that foster male dominance and female subordination; and (d) an organizational culture that defines and demands gender-appropriate behavior and attitudes in the organization. These processes appear to work collaboratively to replicate and strengthen the various components of the gendered organization. Acker (1992, 2009), therefore, helped enhance the understanding of the gendered organization theory. The additional work presented by Acker provided clarity and gave a better understanding of earlier work.

Acker built upon the feminist organization theory and included various components over time, including class and race in inequality regimes within organizations and intersectionality. These components updated, expanded, and clarified certain aspects of the theory as demonstrated below. Acker (2006, 2009) posited that over time, the masculine organizational structure continuously provided certain advantages to the male leaders and forced women to take up a subordinate role. Acker purported that it may be necessary for government legislature to change to foster the change in the organizations' goals and cultures to allow more women to take up top leadership positions and facilitate organizational change to a more gender-neutral setting (Acker, 2012). Acker also posited that though organizations have changed over time, inequality regimes still exist. The gendering process increased the number of women on the job and leadership positions; however, theorizing gender is now more complex due to intersectionality. Hence, inequality based on gender, race, and class is present in organizations. Over time, Acker shifted her focus from structural and cultural analysis to individuals' experiences as females. Therefore, the gendered organization theory provides an ideal theoretical framework to understand the role of women in public administration from the perception of the public service leaders. Given that this study is being conducted in the public service, it is vital to introduce a feminist perspective of public administration as part of the theoretical framework.

### **Feminist Perspective of Public Administration**

The feminist perspective of public administration supports the use of Ackers theory in this research as it uses the existing organizational structure to determine the

roles of a public administrator. The feminist perspective in public administration theory, consisting of several models, including the traditional feminist theory, the Model of the Ideal Public Servant, Administrative Discretion, and the Administrative State (Shafritz & Hyde, 2017). One of the models mentioned under the feminist perspective, closely related to the gendered organization theory, is the Administrative Discretion. Administrative discretion viewed public administration as a form of governance in which those who governed had the power to develop a system to implement vague legislation, mandates, conceptualize the nature of public interests and take decisions that can impact the lives of the people positively or negatively (Shafritz & Hyde, 2017). Therefore, administrative discretion formed part of governance and provided administrators or public service leaders with bureaucratic authority to manage the public service. Also, it embraced the fragmented government systems to bring about positive opportunities; provided administrators with ownership to govern; was guided by agency-specific norms such as regulations, policies, laws, the Constitution, commitment to understanding public interests, and agency culture (Shafritz & Hyde, 2017). Where gendered organizations exist, as may be the case with the public service, this may negatively impact gender equality and foster male dominance. Likewise, the opposite is also true; as with gender equality, the ideal situation may be facilitated, possibly resulting in further gender equality. Similarly, liberal feminism and social feminist theory also support Acker's gendered organization theory and will be discussed next to show their similarities.

## **Liberal Feminism**

The liberal feminist theory supported the work of Acker as it theorized the discrimination against women. According to Kutanis and Bayraktaroglu (2020), Fischer et al. (1993) indicated that liberal feminist theory and social feminist theory help organize the discussion on feminism in research and offer two avenues for future research namely liberal feminism and radical feminist theory. Liberal feminist theory shares some similarities with Acker's gendered organization theory as it speaks to discrimination against women that puts them at a disadvantage relative to men. These disadvantages include systemic and social factors that prevent access to the training and resources needed for their advance in organizations and society and take up vital positions required to gain experience to advance to leadership in the workplace (Kutanis & Bayraktaroglu, 2020). Thus, it is evident from past research that women may have experienced obstacles to their advancement into leadership positions.

Liberal feminism covered several perspectives, some of which are conflicting. Liberal feminists promoted individual rights to develop women's full potential. They are associated with the early work on feminism or the first wave of feminism which promoted social reform and encouraged gender equality to enjoy the same privileges as men (Kutanis & Bayraktaroglu, 2020). The feminist theory was therefore established by liberal feminism, which posited that men and women share similar world views and conditions for knowledge. Thus, feminist research aimed at removing stereotypes, obstacles, and barriers against women to enable both sexes to reach their full potential, in

society, in organizations, and elsewhere including in public administration, and aimed for gender equality.

### **Social Feminist Theory**

Likewise, the social feminist theory was based on some of the same principles as Acker's gendered organization theory. It maintained that in society that are social structures such as work, family, and organizations are working against the socialization, freedom, and advancement of women. According to the social feminist theory, men and women socialize differently due to their beliefs, gender stereotypes, culture, and other social factors (Kutani & Bayraktaroglu, 2020). These factors, therefore, influenced the social engagements of men and women, resulting in differences in the perception of men and women who have had similar experiences. Hence, in this research, it is crucial to capture both men's and women's views to get an accurate picture of the perceived role of women in public administration; consequently, men and women were the research participants.

### **Previous Applications of the Gendered Organization Theory**

Researchers used diverse approaches to provide complementary views of the gendered organization. Some of the major studies that used the gendering organization theory include, first, the advancement of women in organizations through gender quotas (Traish, 2020), second, the relevance of gendered organization theory for investigating women in politics or leadership in the public sector organization (Crawford & Pini, 2011). Third, revealing inequities in organizational systems or processes could hinder women's advancement (Hart, 2016). Fourth, assessing feminization of organizations (Och



& Hasunuma, 2018), fifth, evaluating human resource development and leadership development programs for women in leadership (Mastracci and Arreola, 2016); sixth, women's participation in public administration (Nasser, 2018), and finally, determining whether gendered images serve as obstacles to the international collaborative engagement of women (Zippel, 2018), among other issues. These studies were selected to highlight the main issues researchers addressed using gendered organization theory in recent times.

Gendered organization theory has been used to advance women based on quota systems, assess organizations' feminization, evaluate human resource development, and leadership development training programs for women in leadership. Also, researchers used it to examine stereotypes, barriers, and discrimination (including glass cliffs, glass fences, and glass ceilings women face in the public sector organization (Zippel, 2018; Acker, 2009). The following paragraphs discuss some of these studies.

Researchers used the gendered organization theory to demonstrate how human resource management practices can reproduce gendered norms. Mastracci and Arreola (2016) posited statistics alone are not an accurate indicator of workplace equality, as the number of women in senior management is insufficient to reveal whether an organization is gender-neutral or an indicator of equality in the organization. This is because norms, roles, expectations, processes, systems, policies, and other factors are also indicators. Thus, managers cannot determine workplace equity based on the only gender composition of employees (Mastracci & Arreola, 2016). According to Mastracci & Arreola (2016), gendered organization theory used stereotypes on males and female workers to predict customs and practices. Also, they indicated that human resources

management practices continuously produce gender norms and prevent workers from attaining work/life balance. Hence, public administrators can only achieve gender equality if gendered organizations' underlying causes are addressed (Mastracci & Arreola, 2016). Public administrators or public service leaders would need to remove the gendered organization's four elements to achieve gender equality in the public sector.

Researchers used the gendered images component of the gendered organization theory to show how images support culture in some organizations. For example, Zippel (2018) applied Acker's theory to show that imagery endorses a culture of gender stereotypes in a United States public university. In her study, she found several processes worked together to form a gendered organization of global science and academia. Zippel's study focused on an organization that places little value on international research collaboration among faculty. She found that gendered images serve as obstacles to the global collaborative engagement of women. She used the term glass fences to refer to the barriers faced by women with regard to international collaborative engagement. Zippel (2018) stated that the organization was continuously recreating gendered inequalities among academics while at the same time fostering inequalities based on wages between the U.S. and other countries signified symbolic gendered images and values that influenced international collaborations. This research, therefore, tested some of the assumptions of the gendered organization theory and used a qualitative approach to examine how gender image influences collaboration and found that it works as a barrier, "a glass fence."

Other researchers test the relevance of the theory in their study. For example, Crawford and Pani (2011) examined gendered organization theory's applicability for investigating questions on women in politics (jobs traditionally designated as men's jobs) in Australia. The researchers aimed to contribute to the knowledge on gender by investigating the Australian parliament after a decade of significant increases in the number of female parliamentarians. The researchers conducted a qualitative study using interviews of male and female Australian parliamentarians to gather data on gender and organization, particularly in a gendered organization. Crawford and Pani examined the organization using Acker's (1990) four key dimensions of the gendered organization: the gendered division of labor, gendered images, symbols and ideologies, gendered interactions, and gendered identities. They found that some slight shifts occurred in Australia's gendering of political space; however, the gendered processes existed (Crawford & Pani, 2011). Therefore, this research indicates that the gendered organization theory is still relevant, and some of the main characteristics exist in public administration.

Another researcher used the gendered organization theory to research women in public administration. Hart (2016), in his study on women in public administration, noted that despite the social and economic advances of women in academe over the past twenty years, there was the persistent underrepresentation of women in leadership and academic, administrative positions at colleges and universities. She, therefore, conducted a case study using 25 faculty members from a research university and used Acker's (1990, 2012) gendered organizations theory to reveal inequities in organizational systems or processes

that could hinder the advancement of midcareer women from various faculties. Hart's study revealed three conclusions inhibiting institutional processes of faculty: (i) access to and integration into career networks; (ii) distribution of labor in the department and institution; and (iii) promotion and leadership. The findings show that institutional practices that either facilitated or limited opportunities shaped participants' academic careers. Participants identified several barriers with very little support for career advancement. The three themes revealed in the finding represented the most common practices identified by participants as factors that shaped their academic pathways: networks, departmental division of labor, and promotion and leadership experiences (Hart, 2016). Hence, the career advancement of women in public administration acts as a motivator, and organizations need to remove barriers to mid-career women to facilitate and increase the representation of women as leaders in public administration.

Research supported the claim that gendered organizations reproduce male dominance through practices, processes, and policies. It is pretty challenging to address gender inequities, barriers to career advancement, and disadvantages faced by the midcareer women in the study (Acker, 2012; Benschop & Dooerwaard, 2012, Hart, 2016). Additionally, Hart's research suggested that very few women will hold leadership positions or aspire to hold these positions. Hence, it is vital to work together to eliminate gender barriers and stereotypes through research, theory-building practices, and policies (Hart, 2016). Such actions have the potential to redefine the "ideal worker as one who can be any gender" (Hart, 2016, p 630). Again, this research used a qualitative approach and the gendered organizational theory and supported its relevance. The studies discussed

above are some of the researches which used the gendered organization theory. My search revealed that there are studies both past and recently that used or are using this theory. Some researchers used one or more of the gendered organization theory elements identified by Acker 1992, others using all four, and others using the theory's assumptions, which indicates its practicality and relevance in organizational, gender, and public administration studies.

### **The Rationale for Selecting the Gendered Organization Theory**

There are several reasons for selecting the gendering organization theory, some of which are discussed below. According to the gendering organization theory, gender equality is essential, and the role of the organization is to remove barriers, women's disadvantages, exclusion, and stereotypes, and be gender-neutral (Acker. 1992). Therefore, the theory is a valuable framework for understanding the relationship between gender, leadership, and the organization, including the role of women in public administration. Public Administration is characterized by a hierarchical structure, with a chain of command and processes considered masculine within public sector organizations. Thus, the public service in Saint Lucia, a public sector organization, shares similar characteristics and may be regarded as a gendered organization.

Another reason for selecting Acker's gendered organization theory is that it described the organization as not gender-neutral but instead characterized by masculinity and male dominance, gendered processes, divisions, symbols, images, etc. This description seemed to fit the organizations I studied perfectly, as a public service where males once dominated and gender-related challenges appear to be present. Acker saw the

organization as a reflection of society as what was obtained in social norms, and individuals practiced values, customs, perceptions, and beliefs therein. Acker used a qualitative study, a phenomenological approach in which she engaged participants based on their lived experiences to collect data via interviews to deduct the theory. Similarly, a qualitative approach was conducted in this research using interviews to gather data on participants' perceptions of gendered processes in the organization and how it influenced the role of women in public administration, while these processes were being replicated, reemerged, reinforced, and reformed within the public service.

In addition, the feminist organization theory lens of the gendered organization was critical to analyze the public service and examine whether gender neutrality exists, the effectiveness of the organization gendering programs and policies, and how it has influenced the role of women in public administration. Finally, the study is aligned with the theoretical framework. The four components of the gendered organization theory helped answer the research question through a generic qualitative design. Also, the participants shared their perceptions based on their experiences as employees of a gendered organization. Crawford and Pani, (2011), found dimensions of the gendered organization in public administration in Australia. Given that Saint Lucia shares a common history with Australia as both were former British colonies with similar public service institutions, it is likely that the same characteristics are present in the Saint Lucia public service. The theoretical framework, therefore, helped provide context and a lens through which to conduct the study.

### **How the Research Questions Relate to, Challenge, or Build Upon Existing Theory**

The study aimed to understand the role of women in public administration. I hoped to answer the question: what is the role of women in public administration, using interviews of male and female public service leaders to gather their perceptions based on their experience in the workplace. The research question helped expand existing literature on women in public administration by examining women's role in the Saint Lucia public service and exposed the challenges described by the gendered organization theory. According to Acker's gendered organization theory, women face gender-based roles, income and status inequality between gender, symbols, images, and other components to justify gender division, including creating and circulating cultural ideas on gender. Thus, the organizational culture defines and demands gender-appropriate behavior and attitudes. Finally, gender identity is part of the administrative processes with individual interactions that foster male dominance and female subordination. These processes appear to work collaboratively to replicate and strengthen the gendered organization's various components (Acker, 1992). Therefore, a gendered organization would operate using these processes to ensure the organization was meeting its goals.

The study provided information on the relevance of the theory in public administration and the Saint Lucian public service context by confirming or refuting the idea of the public service as a gendered organization and identified the presence of the four gendered processes. The study also revealed the existence of government legislature formulated to foster the change in the organization's goals and culture, encouraging more women to take up top leadership positions and a more gender-neutral organization

setting. It also added to the literature by identifying factors that led to women's advancement to leadership roles in the organization and ultimately understanding women's role in public administration. Finally, the study provided information on the role of women in public administration in the Saint Lucia public service and provide prospects for further research. The study results may then be compared to the role of women in public administration in other geographical locations as part of future research on women and public administration either as a comparative study or to understand how women's roles differ from place to place.

### **Literature Review on the Key Concepts**

The literature review examined various aspects of women in public administration to understand the role of women in public administration. I began by looking at the historical perspective and moving along to gender progression, gender, and the organization, including stereotypes, barriers, gender, and international agencies, gender and public administration, and gendered leadership styles.

### **Historical Perspective of Women in Public Administration (Gendered Roles)**

Gendered roles have been assigned from historical times, where society assigned females' natural place to be at home with domestic, caregiving, and nurturing roles. On the other hand, men were seen as the breadwinners, income earners, holding technical, management, leadership, and public positions. The early work on women and organizations by Kanter and Follett established a foundation for Acker on which to build. Their work highlighted the patriarchal or masculine organization and the underrepresentation of women in the workforce. Acker (1990) indicated that most work



organizations were initially dominated by men, with large organizations having all-male management teams. Men also have power at the national and global levels and dominate the gendered organization. Acker (1990) identified four ways gender substructures are embedded in organizations, namely, through gendered organizational structuring; the creation of symbols, ideas, and values; interactions between men and women; and modeling of the ideal worker. She also identified inequality regimes and intersectionality within organizations as a form of discrimination against women. Historically, gendered substructures formed the structure of public sector organizations, which were hierarchical and male-dominated with very few women. Thus, at that time, women wanted to gain employment in those organizations, and the organization focused on gradually increasing the number of women in the workplace.

Women's roles in public administration have evolved over the years. At first, women wanted to find a place in public administration, and the ability to work in the public service was their main focus. Historically, women wanted the right to employment, access jobs in public administration, and contribute to the public sector organizations while earning a living (Clark, 2000). Therefore, they were willing to perform subordinate roles as support staff to the male leaders and earn much lower pay than their male counterparts. They operated within the lower ranks of the public service with little to no power, while men held all the prominent positions, dominant and influential roles in public administration. Men were leading the organization, made the decisions, developed the hierarchical structures, systems, and processes, establish gendered organizational images, relationships, and culture to foster their dominance in

public administration (Acker, 2012; Elfadhila & Kurniawan, 2020). During that process, men created obstacles and barriers that limit women's progress, as they mainly saw women as having a nurturing role, raising family, caring for the elderly, and domestic duties.

The historical public sector institution created barriers for women to maintain the status quo. Therefore, they did not provide the training needed for career planning and development, advancements to leadership positions, and dominant roles (Elfadhila & Kurniawan, 2020; Hart, 2016). These organizations used strategies, such as the gendered organization processes, glass fences, and glass ceilings to undermine women and their confidence to perform at the higher levels, even when they were able to advance to top management or senior leadership positions in public administration (Acker, 2012; Elfadhila & Kurniawan, 2020). These women's barriers and experiences help them determine and define their public administration roles using social, political, cultural, and economic characteristics. Therefore, while men were trying to maintain the status quo, some women overcame obstacles and barriers and advanced to leadership roles with masculine, hierarchical, and male-dominated public organizations.

In historical times, despite the barriers, some women were able to break through the obstacles and occupy more dominant roles in public administration. Clark's study provides an example of women's ability to rise above the barriers in Europe. Clark (2000) researched the rise of women in public administration in Europe, specifically, France over an extended period beginning from 1830 to the first half of the twentieth century. Clark's study provided evidence of women's barriers to employment and advancement in

public administration, thus providing a historical perspective of women in public administration in Europe. Clark indicated that women held positions in the so-called female professions like nursing and teaching. Women were not employed in the arts, engineering, medicine, science, and law. Historically, the role of women in public administration in Europe was similar to other parts of the world, with very few women in public administration and those employed therein were in caregiving and nurturing roles, such as substitute mothers in social institutions (Clark, 2000). However, women began to occupy more prominent positions like inspectors of schools and prisons in the nineteenth century. During World War I, French males went to war, leaving women to occupy some male-dominated public administration positions (Clark, 2000). Clark believed that this was the case in public administration across the world during that period. She posited that the era saw the approval of women's suffrage in 1919 and women's rights, thus allowing qualified women to compete for careers in public administration and elsewhere. Hence, Clark indicated that women occupied entry-level posts as clerks, typists, bookkeepers, and chief editorial clerks in the French civil service's very hierarchical structure, which males mainly occupied. However, there were restrictions placed on female civil servants entering specific careers and promoting higher administrative functions (Clark, 2000). Women were able to follow society's expectation of them in their roles in public administration and, upon their acceptance in the organization, attempted to remove the barriers, with some advancing to higher leadership positions

Most women occupied positions as expected or defined as female positions by society and public sector organizations. Clark (2000) indicated that some ambitious

women found positions in ministries that did not practice social housekeeping or feminized public service to counteract the barriers imposed. These included "soft ministries" like health, public works, education, and labor, not the traditional male post in the interior, justice, and finance. Therefore, women could enter and remain in the civil service, and over time, the numbers of women increased, with some women advancing to more senior roles (Clark, 2000). Thus, women were able to find ways to advance in the public sector organization. Over time the numbers of women increased as they were able to find a role in public administration, despite the myriad of challenges they faced. Therefore, Clark's work provided evidence of women's success in public administration from the historical period and indicated the beginning of a change in women's role in public administration, leading women to a transition period.

### **Women Progression and Transition**

Organizations realized that various changes were necessary to make progress and bring about the greater acceptance of women. Some organizations used policies, and state governments used legislation and gender mainstreaming programs to foster the desired change. Some public sector organizations where management implemented gendering programs provided the right conditions for women to excel, indicating that women can outperform men in public administration under the right conditions. Stivers (2002) provided an example of this as she researched to understand the historical perspective of gender in public administration by examining how men and women dealt with corrupt city governments. The study provided evidence to show that women were more successful than men in expanding the work and scope of government. Stivers indicated

that though they operated in an organization with gendered roles when given the same assignments and the autonomy to bring about urban reform, men and women approached it differently. Men used scientific and business practices, while women tested new services and got governments to adopt them to improve the lives of the poor urban residents (Shivers, 2002). This research provides evidence of the ability of women to perform at a high level in organizations. Thus, women have proven that they can be as capable as their male counterparts and, in some instances, more successful than men in meeting the government's objectives.

Other sources demonstrated that with gender progress, women are capable of performing well in public administration. For example, Sabharwal et al. (n.d.) contended women have proven their ability to perform in public administration despite the barriers and stereotypes; however, few women advance to leadership roles. Future public administrators can increase their visibility in the field as diversity is needed in public administration, but they also need to develop the key gender competency and networking skills necessary for successful leadership (Sabharwal, et al., n.d.). Therefore, as more women lead, they can share their experiences, stories and, best practices with others, give suggestions, formulate policies to change the barriers and problems that contribute to the glass ceiling and glass cliff in public and nonprofit sectors (Sabharwal, et al., n.d.). Thus, it is crucial to increase the number of women in leadership in public administration, not only for gender diversity and improved performance but to transform public administration and increase citizen satisfaction and upgrade public service delivery.

Women in public administration who accept citizen satisfaction and improved service delivery as their main role may be motivated to transform the public service.

### **Gender and Organizations (Enablers, Challenges, and Limitations)**

Organizations are believed to be patriarchal and male dominant, where men and women-built systems and processes hold subordinate positions. Therefore, organizations are designed for men to succeed and for women to fail. Research has shown that both women and men succeed in leadership positions in nonprofit, public, and private organizations; however, some men and women leaders sometimes fail to achieve (Yaghi, 2018). Several factors contribute to leaders' failure in public administration, but women face gender stereotypes, social, political, and economic factors. Some women have advanced to top leadership positions, although they face several barriers, discrimination, and stereotypes that make it very difficult for their advancement. Some of these barriers have been identified as various terms such as glass ceilings, glass cliffs, glass prisons, glass slippers, glass walls, and glass fences (Acker, 2009; Ashcraft, 2013; Yaghi, 2018).

#### ***Barriers and Stereotypes-Glass Ceiling, Glass Cliffs, Glass Slippers, and Glass Prisons***

Discrimination in organizations comes in various forms. Some researchers identified the presence of glass ceilings, glass walls, glass cliffs, glass fences, glass slippers, and glass prisons as different forms of discrimination against women in the workplace (Acker, 1992, 2009; Ashcraft, 2013, Yaghi, 2018). Discrimination and barriers, therefore, exist in different forms in public sector organizations. Acker (2009) studied the glass ceiling and inequality regimes to understand and create a strategy to analyze persistent inequalities in organizations and discovered that they involve

organizational processes that create patterns of gender, race, and class discriminations, which serve as barriers to the advancement of women. Thus, organizations create patterns of discrimination that act as barriers to the advancement of women and create barriers based on race and class.

Discrimination comes in different forms, and various authors used different terminologies to refer to these barriers in the gendered or male-dominated organization. The public service and local government institutions can be considered gendered organizations. Their female employees were subject to varying forms of discrimination in their workplace, similar to those described below. First, Acker (2009) used the term glass ceiling to describe gender-based barriers that lead to the under-representation of women in critical roles in organizations and the society at large; thus, gender-based roles exist, with women occupying the lower roles in the hierarchical organization structure. Second, Yaghi (2018) used glass cliffs to describe barriers created by men to prevent women in leadership from succeeding or doing their job more effectively. For example, they employed women to head complex, challenging circumstances or impossible positions or not provide female leaders with the resources needed to perform. Smith (2015) also supports this view, as her research revealed that women get appointed into specific types of organizations; also, where there is a crisis, women are usually assigned to lead. Thus, glass cliffs imply that where organizational conditions are riskier, more women are appointed as leaders. Therefore, in public or private organizations with higher risk, there is higher women representation in leadership.

Other terms used to represent discrimination against women include glass slippers, glass walls, and glass fences. Organizations engage in the recruitment and selection, and promotion of employees that can discriminate against specific individuals; this can create barriers for women, as roles can become gendered through sex discrimination. Ashcraft (2013) described a form of discrimination, called "glass slippers," where organizations assign traits and competencies to specific jobs to make them suitable for a particular group of people. Hence, glass slippers can foster gender discrimination by creating gendered roles in public administration as similar processes have been found and are present in the public service in various countries. Gendered public organizations, therefore, engage in discriminatory processes that foster male dominance and hinder the advancement of women in public administration. On the other hand, a glass wall is a phenomenon used to describe barriers created by organizations to prevent a woman from moving to a position with the possibility for upward mobility or promotion; or preventing women from doing a different job by sticking to the gendered roles or jobs designated as women role (Nasser, 2018). Finally, Kim (2013) used the term glass fence to refer to discrimination in which women are assigned roles at home and kept from taking active roles in the workplace because the men's designated space in the workplace, while women's place is at home. Therefore, the word glass refers to discrimination created by men within the organization to limit women's progress and advancement. Through discrimination, men maintained the status quo and slowed down women's progress in public administration; therefore, weakening their confidence and depriving them of making more meaningful contributions to society.



Other forms of discrimination in public administration include inequality regimes and intersectionality. Acker (2012) stated that the inequality regimes have various components that vary from one organization to another. These inequality regimes include bases of inequality (race, class, and gender). Second, the degree of inequality, based on the steepness of hierarchy, degree of segregation, size of wage difference, the severity of power and authority. Third, the creative worker, organizing job and hierarchies, recruitment/ hiring /promotions, wage settings/supervision, and informal interaction. Fourth, impediments to organizational change, including the legitimacy of inequalities and the mechanism of control and compliance that preserves inequalities. The different organizational contexts may influence these patterns across organizations, with some common factors; however, beliefs, images, and stereotypes based on gender, class, and race, shape actions, policies, and practices in inequality regimes (Acker, 2009). Therefore, all organizations contain some degree of inequality; inequalities exist between the various hierarchical organization positions, between men and women, among men, and among women at different organizations' levels. In the public service, these inequality regimes most like exist as it appears to be a hierarchical organization with several layers, and differences between individuals with varying wages and positions exist thorough out.

Other writers examined the glass ceiling concept and discrimination against women that can affect the psychological, reducing their confidence and willingness to advance in the organization. Yaghi (2018) researched the glass ceiling and glass prison concepts and suggested recent studies on women and leadership in public administration

reveal that women fail in leadership because men usually make it difficult to succeed by placing them in risky positions with high probability for failure, that is the glass cliffs. Glass cliffs can be considered a form of injustice against women in leadership, caused by male decision-makers who deliberately make it difficult, and risky for women to succeed. These forms of discrimination can negatively impact women both socially and psychologically by destroying their self-confidence and causing them to lose interest in senior leadership positions or dominant roles. Research has proven that women can play an essential role in public administration (Majapelo & Musandiwa, 2020). Public organizations need to assist women in advancing to leadership positions and making their contribution to public administration.

Finally, there are forms of discrimination against women created by female leaders or other women within the gendered organization. According to the literature, this situation is caused by at least two phenomena, namely, the ideal worker who is fostering masculine behavior and processes in the organization creating the expectation that women should act like a masculine to be successful (Acker, 2012; Derks et al., 2016). Second, the queen bee phenomenon, in which women leaders in male-dominated organizations distance themselves from their female subordinates, therefore, legitimizing gender inequality (Derks et al., 2016). Hence, in gendered public sector organizations, male domination brings out the worst in women in leadership positions, as they are forced to act like their male counterparts to prove that they belong. Derks et al. (2016) drew two conclusions; first, queen bee behavior responded to the discrimination and social identity threat women face in male-dominated organizations. Second, queen bee

behavior formed part of a general self-group distancing response found in other marginalized groups. Therefore, the queen bee phenomenon was not a typically feminine response but rather an effect of gender discrimination experienced by women in male-dominated workplaces. Consequently, some female leaders in public administration discriminated against other women and add to the challenges women faced in public administration, with detrimental consequences for women leaders, junior women, the public sector organizations, and society (Derks et al., 2016). Therefore, it is crucial for organizations, particularly public sector organizations, to implement measures to create an enabling environment for women's progress in public administration and reduce or stop this form of discrimination.

### ***Overcoming Barriers and Creating an Enabling Environment***

Despite barriers, stereotypes, and discrimination, women overcome obstacles and succeed. Some public sector organizations introduced programs to reduce and remove stereotypes, and discrimination, against women, has been introduced by some public sector organizations. These included training and development programs, diversity training, leadership development, coaching and mentoring (role models), as well as gender-based policies, legislation, reform programs, and international, regional, and local programs to foster gender equality implemented by the public service and in public administration to assist women in the workplace. For example, Derks et al. (2016) proposed ways to combat the queen bee phenomenon that created an enabling environment for women in public administration. It involved reducing social identity threats by identifying women as individuals rather than as women. Personal identity

caused women to focus on personal values and accomplishments, thus, looking at self-affirmation and reducing the social identity threat. Second, Derk et al. proposed sensitization programs to make women aware of the negative effects of the queen bee phenomenon and other types of gender discrimination in the organization and how it affected women, to reduce discriminatory practices. Therefore, the above recommendations presented a worthwhile strategy for public administration to reduce discrimination in the workplace.

Leadership training and development programs were also used to help women advance to leadership positions and overcome barriers and stereotypes. For example, Selzer et al. (2017) examined the role of women in leadership development as a strategy for preparing and equipping women for leadership positions. The leadership development programs consisted of courses on leadership skills enhancement, gender bias, supporting women's identity at work, coaching and mentorship; and resulted in women empowerment and advancement to leadership roles. However, Selzer et al. (2017) found that effective training is needed on the personal, interpersonal and organizational level as they are interrelated and interdependent. In addition, organizations must engage women along with their various identities in the organization and society. The leadership development programs involving the researchers' level of engagement indicated the type of development programs that can bring about the desired results in women and lead to their advancement to leadership positions.

Researchers have examined the effectiveness of the interventions introduced in public administration to improve the progress women have made so far because, in some

instances, development has been slow and minimal improvement was observed with the advancement of women in public administration. For example, Nasser (2018) examined the trends and the impact of policies for gender equality in the public service and on gender gaps in the Arab States and found that women's participation in the Arab States depended on social, cultural, and economic factors. Nasser reported that through partnerships and synergies at the regional and international levels, which facilitated women's progress in leadership, those agencies successfully eliminated several obstacles to the advancement of women in public administration. Thus, the study provides evidence of successful strategies used to advance women in public administration.

Other strategies were used to empower women and to reduce gender inequality in public administration. Two of the strategies included the feminization of the workplace and gender quotas. Och & Hasunuma (2019) studied the impact of a political party's feminization in Japan and identified five conditions needed to undergo the feminization process. The five conditions included pressure for the inclusion of women, gender gap (women preference for a particular organization or political party), descriptive representation (strategies to increase the number of women), substantive representation (feminist policies that break traditional policies), and increase in feminist claim-making by the organization. The research indicated success in the political party's feminization; the results were very symbolic, serving as an instrumental tool to achieve greater economic growth policy goals, increasing national birth rates, and improving Japan's reputation abroad. Thus, feminization was linked to the advancement of women in public administration, overcoming obstacles, stereotypes, and barriers to women and economic

concerns and issues relating to Japan's international reputation (Och & Hasunuma, 2019). Therefore, the feminization programs focused on women's economic advancement and facilitated the understanding of the various roles that women can undertake to foster growth in public administration and organizational and national development.

Other writers have examined the strategies used by women who have been successful in advancing to leadership roles in public administration and, in some instances, made suggestions for a benchmark and quotas for female leaders in public administration. Organizations use gender quotas to equalize gender representation in the workplace. Sisjord et al., (2017) examined gender quotas in sports governance in Norway and found that the government established law and states rules to encourage gender equality however, though two-thirds of the organizations complied with those laws and rules, it was not widely known by the general workforce. The gender quota rule is aimed at gender equality in the workplace. The effects in the workplace have been a slight increase in women in influential leadership roles, but men still dominate in sports governance in Norway (Sisjord et al., 2017). Therefore, gender quotas have the potential to increase the number of females in specific roles and positions of power. Consequently, it is suggested as a strategy for advancing women leaders to senior leadership positions, empowering women, and eventually improving their performance in the public sector. A second strategy is described by Smith and Suby-Long (2019), who studied how women leaders can benefit from sharing their purpose and leadership narratives, and found leaders can benefit in three ways; by identifying times when their actions and decisions were purposeful; articulating their leadership philosophy, and leadership authenticity

identification. Smith and Suby-Long also suggested that leaders should use these methods to make current and future leadership or career decisions. These narratives can strengthen women's leadership skills and empower other women aspiring to advance to public administration leadership positions. D'Agostino (2017) also supported the use of narratives by female leaders to share their success so that others can learn from it. Therefore, these strategies can help more women advance to leadership roles in public administration.

### **Gender and International Agencies—Advancing Gender Equality**

The international community and international organizations play a critical role in advancing gender equality and women's advancement. The United Nations and several of its affiliates have the mandate to create an enabling environment for the advancement of women in public administration and gender equality at the organizational, local, and state government, national, regional, and global levels. Many women are employed in the public service in several countries, but very few are in the positions of greatest influence or found uniformly across all sectors (United Nations, 2017, United Nations Development Program, 2014). Whereas women representation in public administration may be high in many countries, their participation has to be highly variable, ranging from more than 70 percent in some countries (e.g., Ukraine with 75 percent) to as low as 12 percent in others (e.g., India) (UNDP, 2014).

Additionally, most countries lag behind the 30 percent minimum target of women in decision-making positions established by the United Nations (UNDP, 2014). The statistics for women in public administration have been low for several years, prompting

agencies like UNDP to engage in gender mainstreaming to remedy the problem and help influence the role of women in public administration. UNDP developed gender mainstreaming as the global strategy for promoting gender equality. UNDP programs aim at reducing inequality, and these initiatives continue across various countries to increase gender equality globally. U.N. Women is another organization with a gender equality mandate that focuses on gender mainstreaming have to achieve global gender equality and empower women and girls. Gender mainstreaming is carried out through inter-governmental agreements, as a global gender equality strategy (U.N. Women 2018, 2014; United Nations 2017, 2012; United Nations Development Group, 2018). Each U.N. member state who is a party to the gender mainstreaming agreement must implement and report yearly progress. The United Nations Economic and Social Council (1997) defined gender mainstreaming focuses as a process in which countries assess the implication for men and women of any planned action, by the state including legislation, policies, or programs as part of the gender equality mandate, with the ultimate goal of gender equality. Therefore, member states addressed men and women's concerns and experiences as part of implementing, monitoring, and evaluating policies and programs. Thus, encouraging gender equality while eliminating discriminatory practices, laws, and norms that limit women's and girls' opportunities, voices, and choices and create barriers that stop them from achieving their full potential (U.N., Women, 2020). Therefore, gender mainstreaming is a strategy designed to transform society by eliminating discrimination against women and fostering gender equality for all citizens. Gender mainstreaming is also fostering a transformational change in public administration by removing barriers



and allowing women to occupy positions and take up roles in public administration, which was predominately held by men. Thus, gender mainstreaming helps to shatter the glass ceilings in public administration and allows women to venture to places, positions, and roles where they have never been before.

The International Labor Organization (ILO) is another organization that developed gender equality programs that have influenced policies in public administration to support the advancement of women. Through the Gender Bureau, the ILO has developed an action plan to advance gender equity, gender equality, gender mainstreaming, women's empowerment, equal opportunities, men, and masculinities in the workplace (ILO, n.d.). As part of its gender equality program, ILO developed a Gender in Decent Work Agenda that has encouraged the development of Decent Work for Women's policies, further fostering women's empowerment. The ILO research on reducing the deficit on decent work shows that organizations that apply equal opportunity policies appear a bit more productive. Also, their family-friendly policies resulted in economic gains for women in the workplace (Reducing the decent work deficit, 2001, pp.20—21). Hence, the ILO gender programs have gone a long way in advancing women's progress in the workplace and public administration, mainly through creating departments of gender in central government agencies and gender mainstreaming programs to implement the action plans. The ILO plays a crucial role in women's advancement in the workplace, therefore helping women identify their role in public administration.

Like other regions in the world, the Caribbean region has engaged in gender mainstreaming programs to bring about gender equality and the advancement of women and girls. These programs form part of the implementation strategies for attaining the millennium development goals (MDGs) and the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Sam (2015) examined the correlation between men and women in government and economic development with gender-neutral services and the changing role of men and women in the Caribbean. Sam's research was also partly an assessment of gendering programs undertaken by Caribbean governments, including Saint Lucia. The findings revealed a correlation between the composition of men and women and local government programs' success.

Additionally, women inspired other women, as female leaders in the local government positively affected other women; generally, women's presence in leadership empowered other women (Sam, 2015). Sam found those role models, whether male or female, promoted women's empowerment and supported the acceptance of the social redefinition of employed males, gender equality, and reshaped the expectation of men and women in leadership roles, governance, and other male-dominated roles. Therefore, Sam's research provided evidence that the gender mainstreaming programs in the Caribbean region positively affected women in leadership roles and empowered women to take up employment in technical and other functions where males once dominated. Thus, the programs and policies implemented by the Caribbean as part of the United Nations SDG goal 5 (gender equality and empowerment) enabled a change in the traditionally gendered roles. This allowed for positive social change and caused more

women to take up leadership positions and dominant roles in society, albeit to a lesser extent in the political field.

As a United Nation member state, Saint Lucia is a party to the gender mainstreaming agreement, and SDG's commenced implementation through the legislative review to amend all discriminatory laws and policies and encourage gender equality. Saint Lucia has engaged several civil servants and public officers in gender mainstreaming capacity development programs, including gender budgeting, gender-friendly office spaces, and staff policy review (Saint Lucia VNR Report, 2019). The Division of Gender Relations of the Ministry of Education, Innovation, Gender Relations, and Sustainable Development has a mandate to create an enabling environment to address the gender imbalance in Saint Lucia. The Saint Lucia VNR Report highlighted that the division began its mission through policies, programs, and other initiatives promoting equity and social justice. Hence, their strategies included developing and implementing a program to increase capacity and awareness on gender issues. Second, the development and implementation of a comprehensive national response to gender-based violence. Third, the promotion of the use of gender statistics/data to inform programs and project development and, finally, supporting gender discrimination and inequity programs of other agencies/institutions (Saint Lucia VNR Report, 2019).

Through programs established by international agencies and incorporated into the Saint Lucia public service, it could advance women's progress in public administration. Saint Lucia has made significant strides in the field of education of women and girls, with over 90 percent of females in Saint Lucia attaining primary education and over 75 percent

attaining secondary education, similar to their male counterparts with 80 percent in both primary and secondary education (Saint Lucia VNR Report, 2019). The VNR report also indicated that females made up more than 80 percent of tertiary education students. Women's educational attainment is also reflected in their share of the workforce, with women occupying a high number of senior positions in both the public and private sectors. Also, several women held jobs in Cabinet in the past, with as many as four female Ministers currently out of fifteen ministers. Senior positions such as the Head of State, speaker of the House of Parliament, Attorney General, Leader of the Opposition, and President of the Senate have also been held by women in Saint Lucia, which indicates significant progress of women in public administration. Additionally, for the past four to five years, more women have held Permanent Secretary's position than their male counterparts, with about half of those holding the position of Deputy Permanent Secretary in the public service being females (Cabinet Office, 2019). Hence, the gender mainstreaming programs in Saint Lucia appeared to be highly successful at empowering women and girls in Saint Lucia and led women to take up senior-level positions not only in public service but also in private institutions. The progress made by several women in the public service in Saint Lucia is indicative that with the proper education, support, and enabling environment, women can excel in various roles in the workplace and specifically in public administration. Therefore, international organizations and programs have helped Saint Lucia empower women in identifying and taking up significant positions in public administration and society.

Several authors recognized the vital role of international agencies and organizations in fostering gender equality and women's advancement in public administration. Nasser (2018) observed several obstacles to women's progress in public administration; however, international organizations' role was vital in the formation of partnerships and synergies at the regional and international levels to facilitate women's progress in leadership. Similarly, Sam (2015) reported that programs for gender equality at the local, regional, and international levels led to the advancement of women in the Caribbean (including Saint Lucia). Also, female leaders appear to empower other women in the workplace and society. In some Caribbean countries, it has led to young males' marginalization, with women more likely to be administrators than political leaders (Sam, 2015). Sam's research, therefore, provides another example of the importance of the role of international and regional organizations in the advancement of women in public administration in the Caribbean region, and Saint Lucia formed part of the study. Hence, developing context relevant to the research question helps determine the women's role in public administration in the Caribbean region.

### **Gender and Public Administration**

Gender in public administration has evolved. The public sector organizations once believed to be predominantly patriarchal are slowly changing from gendered organizations to hybrid and, in some instances, gender-neutral organizations, with several variations along the spectrum. A few public administration scholars envisaged an end to patriarchal public administration and social prohibitions within which women strive for recognition and face several barriers to their advancement to top management positions

(Hitchinson, 2006). The public administration scholars with a focus on gender and women in public administration used two main lenses, personnel management, and second-generation bias lens, which stressed the lived experiences of women in their roles as public administrators and gender neutrality in a masculine setting; and focused on understanding the work-life and social interaction of participants (Schachter, 2017). Hence, over time, more men and women are carrying out the same roles in public administration, which indicates slow and steady progress towards gender neutrality in public administration. Also, women have been able to identify, access, and perform in roles where they were prohibited to work.

Women in public administration were once treated as second-class citizens, but this is no longer the case in some parts of the world as women are now just as equal as men and can perform the jobs that were once considered men jobs, so women and men should be treated equally. Women play an essential role in the development and should be allowed to prove themselves by working alongside their male counterparts in organizations and development projects or programs. Women are central to all aspects of societal development and need to assume the right roles in the workplace; society can achieve gender parity by removing barriers and stereotypes (Elfadhila & Kurniawan, 2020). With the progress of women becoming more and more apparent, men now realize that women are equal partners, and it is vital to urge them to work together to develop their communities and achieve organizational goals. However, several challenges hinder gender equality in society and public administration and slow down women's progress, despite having many more women in leadership roles and public administration.

### ***The Role of Women in Public Administration***

Role allocation is a general organization practice, as organizations hire individuals based on their perceived suitability for specific jobs. In the public service, there are job specifications and requirements matched to individuals' knowledge, skills, and ability and other attributes such as demographic information, age, race, and sex, which are often used to discriminate against people. Ashcraft (2013) used the term "glass slipper" to describe the process by which traits and competencies are assigned to a specific task. These traits and competencies are used to determine individuals' suitability for particular roles and inform job descriptions. Therefore, organizations may use job descriptions to discriminate against individuals during the recruitment and selection process.

The literature has shown that women play various roles in public administration. Women occupy positions at multiple levels in the organization, from entry-level clerical and junior roles to middle-level and senior management. These roles include caring and nurturing roles, key positions in management and leadership where women take part in decision making, and can influence policies that favor women and development. A key role of women in public administration is negotiation to ensure equal opportunity for all. For example, women's negotiation focuses on developing mutually beneficial and multi-party negotiation, supporting positive organizational change over an extended period, thus increasing productivity and organizational efficiencies (Bowles et al., 2019). Bowles et al. (2019) concluded that women in leadership used various negotiation strategies to help reduce resistance to their leadership claims and, in the process, helped to bring

mutual benefits to the organization. Thus, women claimed that the public service needs to invest in their leadership potential and expand their authority in public administration (Bowles et al., 2019). D'Agostino et al. (2020) also share the same sentiment, as they purported public administrators need to negotiate for the scarce organizational resources, and generally, women tend to be poor negotiators due to male dominance and discrimination. Hence, women need to be effective negotiators to access the resources necessary to succeed as future public administrators. Therefore, the public service needs to help women develop their negotiation skills through human resource development programs to lead and manage public governance, communicate and interact productively with the changing workforce and citizenry (D'Agostino et al., 2020). Such training will help develop women's potential and strengthen their negotiation skills and increase productivity.

One of the roles of women is to foster representative bureaucracy, which closely relates to their role as negotiators. Researchers in public administration developed the theory of representative bureaucracy to describe their experience with governance in the public sector (Choi et al., 2018; Johnston & Houston, 2018; Meier & Funk, 2017). Several of these studies focused on assessing whether passive representation leads to active representation (Choi et al., 2018; Johnston & Houston, 2018; Meier & Funk, 2017). Choi et al. (2018) and Johnston & Houston (2018) indicated that passive representation is where the composition of bureaucrats reflects the demographic characteristics of the population they serve, while active representation is where minority bureaucrats choose to implement policies in favor of the demographic groups they



represent. However, some recent scholars have also shown that representative bureaucracy positively impacts public organizations' overall performance, rather than simply helping the minority group (Choi et al., 2018). Therefore, women in public organizations helped other women; they make a positive contribution to the public service.

Another role of women in public administration was sharing knowledge and experience, including work-life balance, participating in improving work processes, and encouraging greater job satisfaction. D'Agostino (2017) purported that public administration researchers are responsible for helping others understand the difference women make in public administration based on the experience of women facing and overcoming challenges and barriers, which makes the findings more genuine. Women often shared their experiences with researchers and others. By sharing their stories, women in public administration provided information on their roles, how they dealt with barriers, overcame obstacles, and succeed in various roles in public administration. Therefore, one of the roles of women in public administration is to share knowledge and experiences and, in the process, help build the confidence of other women aspiring to advance into leadership and decision-making roles or to so-called male-dominated roles. Thus, another role of women in public administration is to support each other and encourage others to take up employment in unchartered positions, or where few women have been employed in the past.

Finally, the literature indicated that women have the role of capacity building and formulating and supporting strategies to advance women and gender equality in public

administration. Through training and developing others in public administration, women help build capacity, confidence, develop skills, and improve public administration productivity. D'Agostino (2017) indicated that training women could stimulate change in the prevailing public administration culture and institutional norms. The training was, therefore, used as a strategy to advance women and gender equality in public administration and should be encouraged to allow women to realize their full potential in whatever roles they choose in public administration.

**Women in Leadership.** Research has shown that female and male administrators use different leadership or management approaches. Some characteristics of female public service leaders represented the feminist ideals of more democratic, more collaborative, less bureaucratic, flatter, or less hierarchical organizations (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Shafritz & Hyde, 2017). Hence, these characteristics were essential in understanding female administrative governance. In addition, like Acker, feminism rejected dominance but supported the view of power in public sector governance; supported leaders as facilitators and not commanders; embraced authority as accountable experts and legitimacy as accountability and collaboration with the general public (Shafitz & Hyde, 2017). Additionally, Shafitz and Hyde indicated the feminist view of administrative discretion fosters cooperation and participation as protection against bureaucracy in the public service rather than a source of inefficiency. Female leaders in the public service demonstrated several of the characteristics mentioned above as features of feminist administrative governance; thus, this should be considered a feminist

perspective to public administration. Women leaders tended to be more democratic and collaborative.

Empirical studies supported the stereotypes associated with the men and women leadership approach; however, the approach may differ in some instances. Generally, women exceeded men on the individualized consideration scale while men exceeded women in active management by exception and laissez-faire leadership; more women tend to be democratic leaders than men (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Eagly et al. (2003) conducted a meta-analysis of leadership characteristics relating to transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leading. They found women more likely to have the features associated with transformational leadership, while men demonstrated transactional and laissez-faire leadership. Burke and Collins (2001) found that women reported more use of interactive leadership styles. From these studies, it appears that the majority of leadership styles matched the expected gender; however, some women may use transactional, and some men may use transformational leadership styles, which is opposite to what is generally expected.

Other studies in the public sector also found significant differences in male and female leadership styles. For example, Fox and Schuhmann's (1999) found that female managers were more likely to use citizen input. Also, DeHart-Davis et al. (2006) studied redistributive agencies, a traditionally female-friendly field, and discovered that women managers reported higher levels of attraction to policymaking (which the authors initially considered an agentic, male interest) and compassion (a trait generally regarded as female). Hamidullah et al. (2015), in another study of senior government managers,

found that women were more likely to use multiple decision-making values. Therefore, the literature on gender and leadership suggested that gender-based leadership styles do exist, but they appear to be different from popular stereotypes.

In summary, some of the female leadership styles and traits of public service employees identified by the literature include transformational, democratic, value-based, participative, representative, interactive, compassionate (emotional intelligence), policymaker, redistributive, collaborative, caring, and nurturing. This does not mean those female leaders do not use other leadership styles or traits, but those are the dominant ones recognized in the literature. Hence, based on women's leadership styles, researchers deduced that the roles of women in public administration would be to foster collaboration, representation, and participation of others in the decision-making process, which is aligned to the attributes of transformational and democratic leadership styles.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The study's focus was to understand the perceptions of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia and the various factors that help shape that role. The literature review covered literature from across several geographical locations to examine the trends in public administration globally. I took this approach due to a shortage of relevant literature on the Saint Lucia public service and the Caribbean on the whole. I thought it would be prudent to examine literature from the commonwealth countries that shared a common history and public administrative structure with Saint Lucia as former British colonies. However, the literature would not be complete without literature from the United States of America and

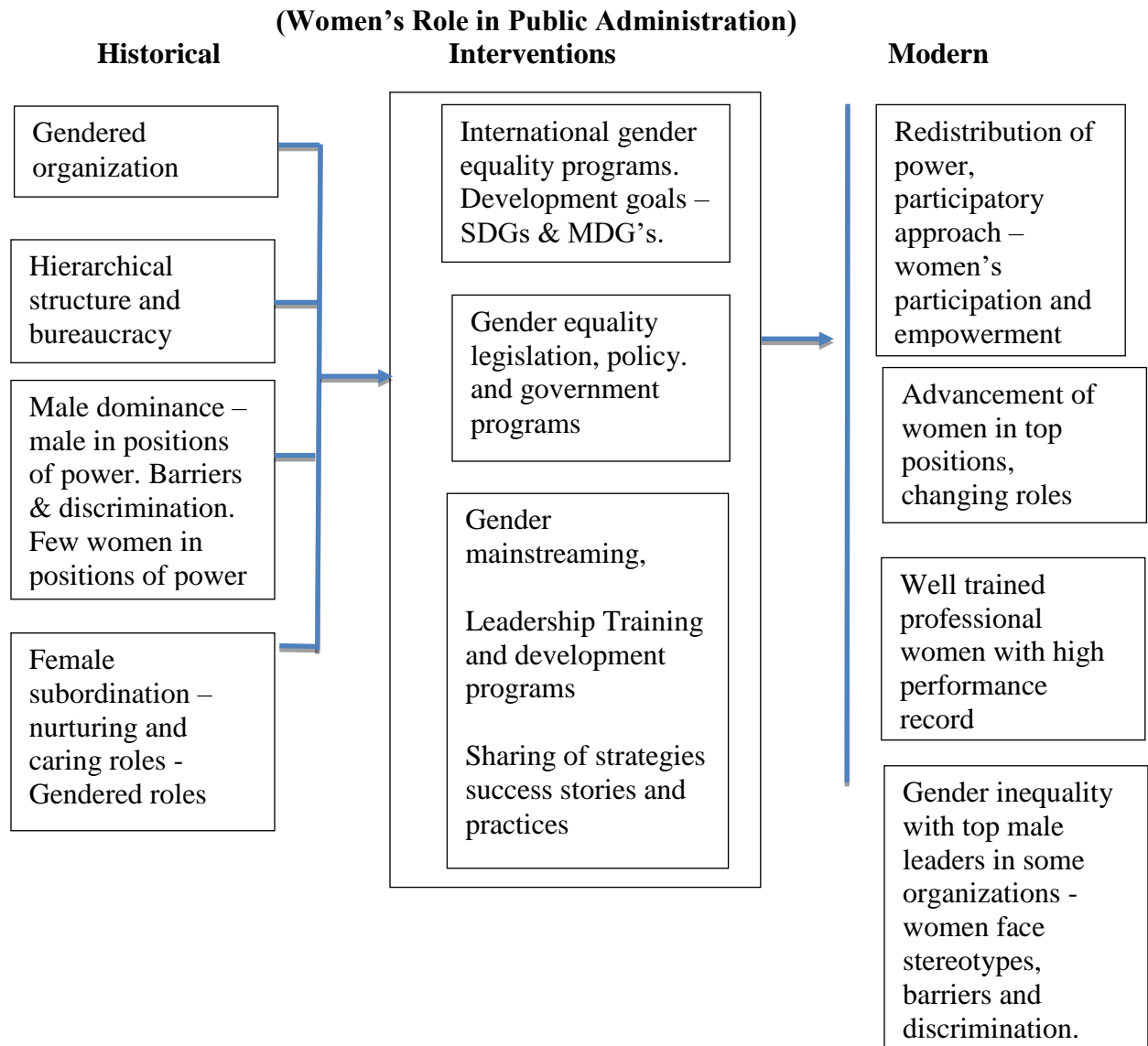
Europe, given that we operate in a global community with interventions and influence from international organizations. Hence, we share some similarities in our public administration and gender equality interventions, including some literature from the U.S. and Europe, and other regions.

Figure 1 summarizes the literature included in this review and can be proposed as a public administration model for Saint Lucia. The model shows the trend in public administration albeit, a slow movement from the historical to the modern public service. The historical literature shows the gendered organization, with its hierarchical structure, high levels of bureaucracy, gendered roles, male dominance with positions of power, women subordination with very few women in positions of power, and mainly holding caring and nurturing roles (Amis et al., 2020; Meier & Funk, 2017). The historical public organization and administration experienced several interventions from the international community and regionally, with the influence of globalization, which resulted in a change in the traditional organization to the modern organization (Sam, 2015; Vargas, 2017). The literature also indicated that women in leadership positions acting as queen bees contribute to the discrimination that subordinate women experience in the public administration and determine the actual role women should hold in public administration. In the modern organization, participatory governance is present with power redistribution, where both women and men are allowed to advance to top management positions. Women are just as qualified and professional as men, with a few being better qualified than their male counterparts as they strive to prepare for top leadership positions, represent other women, and foster gender diversity (Mojapelo & Musandiwa,

2020; Stiver, 2002). Hence, women are performing well and sometimes outperform male leaders.

**Figure 1**

*Public Administration: Historical to Modern Organizations*



Finally, the model shows the modern organization, with some modern organizations' males continue to dominate and hold leadership roles. Therefore, gender

inequality still exists in some public sector organizations with women in subordinate roles, and they face discrimination, stereotypes, and barriers to their advancement to senior positions. Thus, men are working hard and forming networks to ensure male dominance continues in the organization. Therefore, men empower other men and discriminate against women. Most women feel that they are not good enough to take up senior positions and settle for subordinate roles in the organization, with a few advancing to leadership positions due to barriers and stereotypes. The literature can be divided into the historical, transitioning and modern public service agencies, with the responsibility for public administration and governance (as per Figure 1). The study, therefore, examined the Saint Lucia public service using interviews to gather data from a representative group of male and female leaders to determine the role of women in public administration.

### **Gap in Literature**

Women have made some strides with their advancement in public administration by using various strategies, policies, and legislation for gender mainstreaming. However, they face many challenges that make it questionable as to their role in public administration. Acker (1990) produced a theory that is a critique of the persistently male-dominated organizations and attempted to incorporate gender into the organizational theory to understand better why organizations' activities are arranged in the way they do. The theory critiques the studies about women and work, including the inequalities women face in organizations and society in general, such as wage gaps and segregation (Shafritz et al., 2016). The theorist has outlined the importance of gender equality and the

organization's role in removing barriers, women's disadvantages, exclusion, stereotypes, and being gender-neutral. However, the theory does not provide a convincing explanation of why male power continues to dominate in the organization, and advancement barriers for women remain prevalent. There are many critiques of women's inequalities but no theory on gendered power imbalance in the organization (Shafritz et al., 2016). The literature also highlights the various roles that women hold in public administration, globally, some being subordinate roles, others at the leadership level and technical or middle management levels; however, it does not specify the role of women in public administration. Therefore, the study attempted to determine the role of women based on the perception of male and female public service leaders.

Chapter 3 provided an overview of the data collection method, research design, participants selection, instrument, ethical considerations, and trustworthiness. The research design was a qualitative inquiry using a generic or basic qualitative study to discuss the research problem and semi-structured interviews to gather data from selected male and female leaders of the public service in Saint Lucia. The gendered organization theory provided a lens through which to understand male and female public service leaders' perceptions on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. The interviews were conducted using voice-over-Internet Protocol, with telephone interviews as an alternative approach. Generally, chapter 3 addressed the research design and the study methodology using Priori codes from the literature in chapter 2 to inform the research instrument and data collection.



## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of male and female leaders in the public service on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. I used open-ended semistructured interviews to capture the perceptions of a small group of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration. Social factors such as training, education, role models, national policies, and other organizational elements may have played a role in women's advancement in their leadership roles (D'Agostino, 2017; Hoyt & Murphy, 2015; Sam, 2015; Schachter, 2017; Yaghi, 2018) and formed part of the study. I also explored the personal characteristics that may have led to women's advancement as public service leaders and how they contributed to the role of women in public administration.

In Chapter 3, I describe the research design and rationale and the methodology, which was a basic or generic qualitative study in relation to the purpose of the study and the research question. I also explain my role as a researcher, the participants' selection process, sampling procedure, and data collection instruments and procedures. In addition, I describe the strategies for addressing research bias, ethical issues, and trustworthiness, particularly showing the triangulation of sources, research validity, and credibility.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

I used a qualitative research design. Researchers use qualitative research where the study establishes a relationship between the data collected and observations (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). Therefore, I conducted the research using the gendered

organization theory to help me understand the perception of the participants on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia, which is its natural setting. The qualitative research design allowed me to answer the research question and contribute to an understanding of the perceptions of participants on the role of women in public administration as well as the relevance of the gendered organization theory to the public service in Saint Lucia. O'Sullivan et al. (2017) indicated that qualitative studies examine unique characteristics of interest, including individuals, programs, processes, decisions, and so on at some level of depth. Additionally, a qualitative study is a form of descriptive design that uses observational data. As a descriptive design, it is ideal to answer questions that ask how (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). My research question was:

RQ: How do male and female leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia perceive the role of women in public administration?

Hence, it was aligned with the qualitative research design.

Women continue to struggle with various forms of barriers in the workplace, despite several interventions globally to empower women and girls and bring about gender equality. Although women have made some progress and several women now hold senior management positions and appear to have shattered the glass ceiling, in many instances men dominate the organizations and women are in subordinate roles (Acker, 1992, Hart, 2016), making it difficult to define the true roles of women in public administration. Hence, people continue to use the traditional, religious, and culturally based roles that identify women as child bearers, caregivers, and in nurturing and domestic roles, with little to offer the outside world. In this study, therefore, I attempted

to identify the role of women in public administration based on the perceptions of public service leaders in Saint Lucia.

I gathered descriptive data via interviews with leaders on their perceptions and experience in the public service related to the role of women in public administration. O'Sullivan et al. (2017) indicated that qualitative research generally tends to have descriptive data and a large quantity of information. In addition, words, concepts, and themes can be used to develop hypotheses, analyze the data, answer the research question, and draw conclusions. The qualitative study allows a researcher to meet the research objective, which is describing the situation in the research study. Qualitative research is also a theory-based research design that is created by gathering, analyzing, and presenting collected data. Thus, the qualitative research study is an in-depth research design that provided me with insights into the research phenomenon by answering the research question.

The rationale for selecting a generic study related to its strengths as a qualitative research design. The strengths helped justify why I selected this design while the limitation provided an idea of the areas I needed to consider to ensure credible and reliable research. According to O'Sullivan et al. (2017), qualitative studies allow for the collection of information from several data sources, such as document analysis, focus groups, and interviews. Thus, researchers can validate the information from different sources of data with greater accuracy, giving a full picture of the setting and providing a means by which to verify the information and improve research quality (O'Sullivan et al., 2017, Rubin & Rubin, 2012, and Rudestam & Newton, 2015). I used in-depth

semistructured interviews and have included information from government reports and documents in the literature review, which allowed for data triangulation and improved research quality. Secondly, it produced a lot of information that was easy to interpret and understand and in-depth information from a few participants each sharing a unique experience. Therefore, I gathered more in-depth information from fewer participants than I would have with a quantitative study, with each participant sharing a unique experience (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). I targeted both male and female participants for the study, and the in-depth responses yielded the information necessary to answer the research question. Thirdly, the research can collect data on unique features from each participant's environment and at their location, thus obtaining information from the natural setting and providing realistic results. Also, qualitative studies involve direct contact with participants or organizations and have the potential for more accurate information, allowing for great validity and reliability. A qualitative researcher can use various strategies to increase the trustworthiness of the study. Trustworthiness is discussed later in the chapter.

Qualitative research is flexible and makes it easy to adjust as the researcher conducts the study. According to O'Sullivan et al. (2017), qualitative research facilitates the collection of information or data that is difficult or not possible to be quantified. Given that the research is expected to produce descriptive data, mainly from interviews, which may be difficult to quantify and would be presented best qualitatively, the qualitative design was appropriate for the study. Qualitative research also involves extensive fieldwork and gathering data from a natural setting in the field where the

participants operate and report on activities as they happen, justifying the use of the research design. Additionally, the qualitative study allowed me greater flexibility to make changes to the study as it progressed (see O'Sullivan et al., 2017) I therefore made changes to improve reliability and research quality.

Qualitative research has several weaknesses, which must be considered in regard to research quality. O' Sullivan et al. (2017) indicated that the researcher can include measures to improve trustworthiness and address the weaknesses of the qualitative research method. These are measures to increase credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. For example, establishing good rapport can improve content validity and reliability; the better the rapport the more accurate the data (O'Sullivan et al., 2017). Researchers must be able to identify relevant data, make accurate records, draw conclusions from data, and write clearly. Other measures including member checking, audit trail, journaling, and cross-checking increase the credibility, confirmability, and trustworthiness on the whole. A qualitative researcher can use various strategies to increase the trustworthiness of the study (as discussed later in the chapter).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of male and female leaders in the public service on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. The research goal was to understand the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. The interview questions are closely linked to the purpose and problem statement as the questions were based on the perceptions of female leaders in the public service on the research phenomenon to gather data through interviews on the

perceptions of the participants (both male and female). Therefore, the research components were well aligned.

The generic qualitative study was an appropriate method for my research. My targeted participants for the research were employees of the public service with experience with female and male leaders, and the public service was, therefore, an ideal area in which to gather data on the perceptions of the chosen participants. The generic qualitative study using interviews was, therefore, the approach best aligned to answer my research question. It allowed the collection of data on the perceptions of leaders; thus, it had a phenomenological component. The generic qualitative study was selected because it is aligned with the various components of the research and appeared to be able to yield the data needed to answer the research question.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I had several roles as the researcher of this study. Firstly, I was the researcher; secondly, I was an observer. In addition, I am a public service leader in Saint Lucia. Hence, some of the leaders in the public service are friends, and I supervise a few others. I needed to select participants who did not have any professional or personal relationship with me. As a researcher conducting a generic qualitative inquiry, I was the primary instrument for this study (see Rudestam & Newton, 2015). I collected data primarily using interviews and interpreted that information. Karagiozis (2018) also posited qualitative researchers are instruments of their study, hence, as the instrument, I analyzed the descriptive data from the interviews to come up with common themes reflective of interview responses. In addition, I have preferences, knowledge, beliefs, expectations,

and values that determine how I understand and interpret information (see Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Therefore, I used a thematic data analysis, which is an inductive analysis approach to develop themes by comparing responses from various participants' interviews (Creswell & Poth, 2016). I allowed the data to inform the themes of the study rather than use my perceptions in interpreting the data presented by the participants. I also recorded my observations accurately through memos during the data collection process to ensure research credibility. The memos included notes on the body language and reaction of the participants to specific questions to provide information on unspoken data such as uneasiness observed and what it may represent.

In addition, I am an employee of the public service, having been employed for 30 years in various roles and now being in a senior management position. As a public service leader and employee in the public service, I ensured that there was no conflict of interest by excluding all employees with any previous professional or personal relationship or direct connection to me in the organization. This reduced conflict of interest and ensured the reduction or elimination of research bias in the process (Burkholder et al, 2016). So, friends, relatives, subordinates, and former subordinates were not selected as participants. Additionally, all leaders from any of the agencies that fall under my supervision were excluded from the study.

The possibility for research bias also exists as I am a long-serving officer within the public service. The primary goal of the study was to understand the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia from the perspective of male and female public service leaders. I used Acker's (1990) gender organization theory to provide the

theoretical framework of help understanding how the gendered organization replicated, reinforced, and influenced the role of women in public administration in the Saint Lucia public service. I did not prejudice the results of the study by using the pre-identified codes of the gendered organization theory, instead, I will use an inductive analysis to come up with themes from the data on the perceptions of the research participants.

Despite the measures mentioned above it may be difficult to eliminate unconscious bias and allow my preference, knowledge, and experience to support a particular perspective. I used bracketing, which is a deliberate effort to take note of my personal preferences before collecting data (see Burkholder et al., 2016). Creswell & Poth (2016), specified that bracketing can be used to limit research bias, due to beliefs, or assumptions that can sway the finding of a study from the evidence obtained. Therefore, I documented my personal preferences before conducting the interviews to reduce such bias. The aim was to get an accurate account of the data collected during the research to ensure integrity, accuracy, and trustworthiness, hence as a researcher, it is important to reduce or eliminate bias and present the precise findings and interpretation of the study.

Finally, I support feminism and gender equality and I used the gendered organization theory which involves gendered relationships, shared gender symbols and images, gendered processes and gender divisions in organizations, and a culture of gender identity, as the researcher I needed to be objective in my analysis of the study to avoid bias and prejudice to the readers. Therefore, I needed to address research integrity, ethics, and trustworthiness in this study so that I can assure my audience that the research findings are credible. My responsibility was to keep the focus on learning the



perspectives of the participants and not sway one way or another by defending and supporting Acker's (1990) assumption that organizational processes were not gender-neutral.

### **Methodology**

The research methodology was a generic qualitative study. According to Patton (2015), the generic qualitative inquiry involves asking participants open-ended questions and the observation of the issue of interest in its natural setting, to resolve problems, improve programs, and develop policies. This research method can stand on its own to answer a research question without using a theoretical framework, philosophical, epistemological, or ontological tradition (Patton, 2015). However, I used the feminist organizational theory lens to conduct this study, using semi-structured, interviews with open-ended questions to gather in-depth data from male and female public service leaders in Saint Lucia. As senior public officers, these participants had a wealth of knowledge and experience in the public service and provided insight on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. Thus, they provided thick descriptive information necessary to answer the research question (Saldana, 2016). Therefore, the research method was ideal for achieving the study objective.

The data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis so that I could highlight commonalities and differences with the gendered organization theory and the way the participants experienced and saw the world, the public service, and women in public administration. The study aimed to gain insight into the perception of those leaders in identifying the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. The coding began

with pre-coding, followed by first-generation in-vivo coding, then, second generation, concept coding, and I looked for patterns and brought common themes together to generate the final codes (see Rubin & Rubin; 2012; Saldana, 2016). A comparative analysis was done between the interview data from the male and female interviewees and examined variations and common responses for discussions and conclusions.

### **Participants Selection Logic**

The study population consisted of male and female permanent secretaries and deputy permanent secretaries employed with the Government of Saint Lucia. I selected participants who are public service leaders with several years of experience with a story that they are willing to share. Some writers recommended the use of purposive sampling in selecting participants with specific knowledge on the selected subject and can provide the information needed to answer the research question (Annie, 2014; Patton 2015; Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Therefore, I used purposive sampling in selecting participants for the research as it is aligned to my research method; however, this sampling method can result in some degree of bias. Hence, I used inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure consistency and possibly reduce bias in selecting participants for the study (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). To be eligible the candidate had to meet both the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Roulston (2010) indicated that researchers commonly develop a specific rubric to help in the selection of research participants and serve as a criterion. The inclusion and exclusion criteria, therefore, served as a rubric.

The study was designed to help understand and examine the perception of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration in Saint

Lucia. Therefore, the inclusion criteria included first public service leaders both male and female; with at least ten years of work experience in the public service in Saint Lucia. The individual should have been supervised by a female during their public service employment. The exclusion criteria included contractual employees, those employed on projects, who have not been supervised by a female, are not a leader, and have less than ten years of public service work experience. Also, employees employed in any of the agencies in the government department that I supervise were excluded, as well as those who are friends and relatives. All other participants who met both the inclusion and exclusion criteria and were willing to participate and sign the informed consent form were selected for the study.

I identified prospective participants for the study by requesting a list of senior public service leaders, along with their respective ministries or departments, from the Office of the Cabinet Secretary, the titular head of the Saint Lucia public service, with responsibility for the overall supervision of the public service. I contacted the Cabinet Secretary and formally sought his permission to use the permanent secretaries and other senior public service leaders as participants for the research and requested a list of the potential participants and contact information. I also informed him of the benefits of researching to get a better understanding of the role of women in the public service and perhaps come up with recommendations to improve the status of women, also, empowering women in public administration, and sharing information with participants on the results of the study. The study has the potential to make a meaningful contribution to the literature on women in public administration and bring about positive social change

in the public service and society through the acceptance of women in specific roles. The names and contact of the targeted individuals were also available online, so I accessed them via the internet to verify their contact information and compare with the information received through the Cabinet Secretary and requested permission to interview the participants during working hours.

Once permission was granted, participants were invited to participate by an email of the formal invitation and later a follow-up phone call. I also used the Government of Saint Lucia directories both online and hard copy to get information on participants' contact. Rubin & Rubin (2012) indicated that websites can be a good tool to gather information on organization staff and their responsibilities. The ministries website was therefore used to gather contact information for prospective participants. I develop an invitation that was sent via email to recruit participants. The email with the subject, invitation to participate in a study was sent to potential participants, inviting them to participate in the study. Once participants confirmed their participation a follow-up email was sent informing them of the voluntary nature of the research and that they were free to discontinue any time during the research. An informed consent form also accompanied the follow-up email so that each participant could read and sign and return via email.

The number of participants selected for the study provided enough prospects to yield data saturation. According to Baker et al. (2012) saturation level is dependent on the depth and range achieved by understanding the research purpose. The purpose of my research is to understand the perception of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration. Hence, the participants comprised of five male

and seven female public service leaders as experts on public administration, having served for a long time and holding leadership positions, thus having relevant work experience to provide the information and insight needed to answer the research question. Qualitative research can be labor-intensive and time-consuming, hence it is in the best interest of the researcher to capture in-depth and meaningful data from a small group of participants (Mason, 2010; Rudestum & Newton, 2015). Hence, I targeted a sample size of at least ten participants (males and females) and intended to increase the numbers until I achieved data saturation. Qualitative research can achieve saturation with as little as one in-depth and long interview for a study, however, a small sample of at least 10 was more feasible with time constraints and where participants are not readily available. A sample size of a maximum of 20 participants was expected to help me achieve saturation within a reasonable timeframe while allowing me to address reliability and validity issues (Baker et al., 2012), however, data saturation was achieved with seven participants, nonetheless, 12 participants were selected as I agreed and scheduled interviews with the other five participants before I achieved data saturation.

### **Instrumentation**

The research instruments consisted primarily of interviews; therefore, I used one instrument, the semi-structured open-ended interview with the interview guide and protocols (see Appendix C). I developed the instrument for the interviews using key themes from the literature review in chapter 2 and recorded the interviews, and prepare verbatim interview transcripts. The interviews were conducted via the internet with an alternative option of telephone interviews, as due to COVID-19, face-to-face interviews

may not be possible. The group of male and female public service leaders was interviewed with the expectation that they would provide the data to answer the research question.

### ***Basis for Interview Questions***

The interview questions were aligned to the research question as they were developed based on the major themes emerging from the literature review. The interview questions address the 4 components of the gendered organization theory as well as the other themes identified from the literature review which include: gendered divisions/roles, gendered symbols, images and communication, gendered processes and interactions, gendered culture, and structure of work (Acker, 1990, 1992), and additional themes emerging from the literature review in chapter 2, women empowerment and gender equality interventions, women public administration leadership styles, the role of women in public administration (see preliminary coding - Table 1 below). As described in the interview guide and methodology the literature review and gendered organization theory, helped me to develop the interview guide. I used keywords from the sources above to formulate the questions and added probes and follow-up questions to encourage the interviewee to dig deeper and provide in-depth data. For example, using the keyword gendered relationship, the question is what is your experience working with women in the public service? Probe: In your opinion how would you describe the relationship between men and women in the public service? (See Appendix A).

I tried to ensure the content validity of this study by incorporating specific measures. The establishment of clear protocols and procedures, practice interviews to

establish the relevance of interview questions, its alignment to the research, and ease of comprehension by the participants are all measures that are used to ensure content validity in a qualitative study (Brod et al.,2009). First, I developed an interview protocol, including an interview script to guide the interviews. The interview protocols and interview guide were prepared before the interviews, were used to scribe during the interviews, and to develop the interview transcript, field notes, memos, and journaling of the process. Second, I conducted all the interviews, thus, maintaining the same standards with every interviewee. According to Brod et al. (2009), the same interviewer should conduct all interviews to help maintain consistency across interviews and allow for more carryover from one interview to the next and a clearer understanding of the issues described by the interviewees. Interviewees were questioned using questions developed based on the themes mentioned above. Each interviewee was asked the same questions with probes to encourage him or her to dig deeper and give more in-depth responses. The interview consisted of seven questions, with at least one on each of these areas, namely gendered divisions/roles, gendered symbols, images and communication, gendered processes and interactions, gendered culture and structure of work, women empowerment and gender equality interventions, women public administration leadership styles, and the role of women in public administration. Also, the interviews were recorded so the transcript will be generated from the audio recording. Reaching saturation of new information is another way of incorporating content validity into the study. There are no quantitative sample size estimations algorithms in qualitative research, instead, the sample size is determined by the researcher, beginning with a pre-specified sample size

of the target population and conducting interviews until data saturation is achieved (Brod et al., 2009). Hence, a similar approach regarding sample size was adopted in this study, thus there is content validity.

### **Procedures for the Main Studies**

I conducted the interviews using individuals, who responded favorably to the invitation to participate in the study. Before the main interviews, I conducted practice interviews with relatives and friends. These interviews provided me with an opportunity to hone my interviewing skills and to run through the process I planned to use to engage participants during the main study (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). The practice interviews helped me assess the suitability and relevance of the questions and data sufficiency. It also allowed me to make changes to the questions before conducting the actual interviews. During the main study first, I email invitations to participate in the study to permanent secretaries and deputy permanent secretaries. The email asked them to contact the researcher via email or phone to confirm their participation. Second, I made follow-up calls to get their confirmation to participate in the study. I confirmed that the initial email was received, then email parts of the interview guide, including the introduction and some of the questions, along with the informed consent form to the participants. Once the informed consent form was granted, I will schedule the virtual interviews as agreed by the participants.

The interviews were conducted similarly with every participant during the main interview. I recorded the interviews using a digital recorder and audio tapes as backup and developed a transcript, memos, and field notes of my observations during the



interview. Any issues that were not sound were amended to improve the instrument, process, and interview questions. I engaged in member checks of the transcripts to examine how well this process works in building research quality. I placed greater emphasis on research quality with the use of cross-checking, verbatim transcripts, journaling during the research process, use of memos to document observations so that integrity and quality can be built into the study.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

The sampling method I used is purposeful sampling. O'Sullivan et al. (2017) view purposeful sampling as a non-probability method of sampling where the investigator decides who to select for the sample. This process involved a framework or inclusion criteria that determined sample selection and how many interviews were enough to achieve saturation. With a qualitative study, saturation may be achieved with one participant or with several (Baker et al 2012). I, plan to use a generic qualitative approach, with open-ended, semi-structured interviews for data collection, according to Guest et al. (2006) saturation can be achieved with the first twelve interviews, therefore, I planned to use a sample of ten to twenty participants (that is among male and female leaders). Initially, I target 10 participants and stop at 10 once I achieved saturation. I aimed to increase the number of participants until I get to data saturation, possibly using up to 20 individuals, however, 12 participants were selected, although it appeared that saturation was achieved with seven participants.

I collected data from the Saint Lucia public service and engaged in a recruitment drive with male and female leaders in the public service. The process involved writing to

the Cabinet Secretary, who is the head of the public service, and seeking permission to conduct a study using a maximum of 30 public service male and female leaders. In the request, I outlined the purpose of the study, inform of the target population and method of data collection, and the possible benefits to the public service. I also asked whether there are any specific requirements I need to fulfill as an employee-researcher. There being no specific requirements to fulfill, once approval was granted I began the recruitment of the participants. The research participants consisted of males and females in senior management either permanent secretaries or deputy permanent secretaries from the public service. There are 10 female permanent secretaries and seven are males, and twenty deputy permanent secretaries, 11 males and nine females throughout the public service in Saint Lucia, as described by the inclusion criteria for my research. I am a permanent secretary and my department has one deputy permanent secretary, which will be excluded from the study as described by the exclusion criteria. The leaders in the public service also included heads of department, hence, to ensure that the required number of participants volunteer for the study the permanent secretaries, deputy permanent secretaries, and heads of department were invited to participate.

I used internet interviews to collect data. Patton (2015) suggested that generic qualitative methods simply involve skillfully asking people open-ended questions and the observation of the matter being studied in its natural setting to resolve, or improve a problem or formulate policies. Therefore, the open-ended, semi-structured interviews allowed me to capture the in-depth perceptions of the interviewees through their stories, and narratives based on their experience as public service leaders (Patton, 2015). Each

interview was scheduled for ninety minutes, including five minutes for introduction, dealing with informed consent, and debriefing. I emailed the informed consent form along with the confirmation email after the participant agreed to participate in the study. This email informed of the time, mode, duration, main questions introduction of the study, informed consent, and the voluntary nature of their participation in the study. I conducted the interviews virtually at a mutually agreed time and location either from my office or from home. Some interviews were scheduled during working hours, as permission was granted by the Cabinet Secretary to do so, others were done at alternative times and from home.

All interviews were structured similarly, beginning with a brief introduction, outlining the purpose, duration of the interview, making the interview comfortable by inviting them to stop or ask questions at any time during the process and seeking their permission to record their conversations. All participants will be interviewed using the same questions, in the same order, with probes if needed to better understand the questions. I recorded the interviews verbatim using audio recording and transcribe them to provide an accurate account of participants' responses (Opdenakker, 2006). During the interviews, I observed the interviewee's body language and gestures and keep memos of observations. Thus, the observations along with personal perspectives shared via interviews will capture in-depth information from the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The interviews were done using Voice over Internet Protocol, so I was able to observe the interviewees similarly to face-to-face interviews, thus giving the same outcome.

The digital records of the interview were transcribed and transcripts were shared with participants a week later for review with the expectation that it will be amended to accurately reflect the interviewees' perceptions and returned within a week after receipt. Interviewees were debriefed after the interviews, by first thanking them to participate in the study, getting their contact information, and inviting them to ask two questions or to address any matter of concern. I requested that interviewees indicate their interest in receiving a summary of the research findings and explain to the interviewees the process for reviewing the transcripts, informing them that after nine days if no response is received, I will assume that there are no changes and the transcript is accurate and ready for analysis.

### **Data Analysis Plan**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. The data was collected using open-ended semi-structured interviews, which I anticipate would generate rich and in-depth information to answer the research question (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). I had to manage a large quantity of data and used manual coding to do so, beginning with the verbatim transcripts produced from the digital-recorded interviews. Each transcript was transcribed and coded using a priori categories from the gendered organization theory and literature review (see Table 1), as well as initial and in-vivo codes emerging from the data. Once the initial coding was completed, I used second-generation coding to bring similar concepts together, then come up with common themes. As per the interview protocols and interview guide, I asked 7 major interview

questions (See interview guide Appendix A). The data from the interview were used to answer the research question which is how do male and female public service leaders in Saint Lucia perceive the role of women in public administration?

I used thematic qualitative data analysis (QDA) to analyze my data. I also used manual data analysis with assistance from Microsoft Word and Microsoft Excel to organize the data. These programs will help me record my data analysis. I manually coded the interview transcripts and use different colors to differentiate the codes and develop a list of codes. QDA helped me effectively simplify and organize the research data, and make data analysis manageable. I coded materials from all the sources, some of which were Word documents, spreadsheets, and audio recordings for analysis (interview transcripts, audio recordings, memos, reflective journal data, and field notes).

I used in-vivo coding, second and third-generation coding to code the data. According to Saldana (2016), I can code or organize this material into themes using initial in-vivo coding, second-generation concept coding, and third-generation coding to come up with new ideas, themes, questions, or theories that can then be explored using query or visualization. Thus, I did the thematic analysis of the data at very low costs. It was a bit time-consuming but it was available free of charge and is capable of producing high quality and can organize the data in a manner that makes the analysis manageable and affordable.

**Table 1***Preliminary Coding Framework*

<b>Characteristics of the theory are</b>	<b>Codes - male</b>	<b>Codes- female</b>	<b>Data collection protocol</b>
Theory: Gendering organization theory			<b>(question #)</b>
gendered roles	GR – m	GR – f	1, 2, 4, 6, 7
symbols represent gender	Sym – m	Sym – f	1, 2, 4
culture of rules related to gender	Cul – m	Cul – f	1, 4
process to support gender	Pro – m	Pro – f	1, 5, 6
gender relationships	Rel – m	Rel – f	1, 3, 6
<b>Emerging themes</b>			
Women empowerment	Wem – m	Wem – f	1, 2, 5, 6
Women representation/negotiation	Wer – m	Wer – f	1, 6
women public administration leadership styles - participatory approach	Wls –m	Wls – f	1, 6
Role model, mentoring, coaching, Training and nurturing	Rmc – m	Rmc – f	1, 5, 6
gender equity / equality interventions	Gee – m	Gee – f	1, 5, 6, 7
Gender neutrality	Gen – m	Gen – f	1, 5, 6, 7
Other themes emerging from the data	Oth – m	Oth – f	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

*Note.* RQ: How do male and female public service leaders perceive the role of women in PA in SL?

The results of the data were analyzed by a comparison between male and female and among the respondents, in which similarities and patterns were identified and documents were then compared to the interview data to bring about data triangulation, thus increasing trustworthiness. High volumes of data and in-depth information were produced from the interviews which were analyzed, coded, and produced results and findings to compare and substantiate the answers to the interview questions and indirectly contribute to answering the research question.

I noted all discrepancies in data analysis and include them as part of the discussions following the findings. I also used the discrepancies to inform the areas for further research. It was important to highlight and discuss any discrepancies in the results as part of the limitations or weaknesses of the study in the findings sections of chapter 4, this is important for enhancing the credibility of the research. Discrepancies provided important insights to the study and should be included in the results of the study. In this study, data was collected via interviews and possibly document analysis, and I discussed any discrepancies I identify from the data collection strategies.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

I used several strategies to address trustworthiness in the research. The strategies to increase trustworthiness included the triangulation of literature reviews, writing memos to document observations or context of interviews and codes, journaling to record my thoughts and explanation during the research, and coding of themes during the literature review and data analysis. In qualitative inquiry, it is essential to ensure the results of the study are valid and reliable. Trustworthiness is an avenue by which to

incorporate approaches in qualitative research to address credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability (Shenton, 2004). Other strategies I used to improve trustworthiness included efforts to address internal and external validity, reliability, and research objectivity as outlined in the following paragraphs.

### **Credibility**

A study is believed to be credible if the various components are aligned. These components are the theoretical framework, data collection methods, and data analysis. I used the gendered organization theory as the theoretical framework, to attempt to understand the perceptions of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration, based on their experience and knowledge of the Saint Lucia public service. Toma (2011) indicated a study is credible when the data accurately reflect the perceptions of the participants. Thus, it was important to use member check and cross-check to ensure accuracy, as well as to record interviews and use verbatim transcription. Transparent recruiting, along with informed consent and triangulation of methods, also improve the credibility of the research. Developing good quality instruments reflective of key concepts in the research concept is also valuable in ensuring accurate data collection and relevance to the study (Toma, 2011). I will utilize member check, cross-check when preparing the transcript; as well as transparent recruiting which included calling the participants, then emailing the invitation, followed by the confirmation letters and informed consent form preparing for the research and shared information with the participant to ensure they understand the process and what to expect. Triangulation of methods was incorporated through the use of several sources of data



such as verbatim transcripts, recorded interviews, field notes including observations, and audit trail. Finally, peer debriefing and member checking were done to examine the accuracy of the data and to allow me as the researcher to make adjustments to the data, information, or results.

### **Transferability**

I incorporated measures to ensure that the research results are transferable. To achieve transferability, the results of the study must be able to apply to another organization or group within the same organization or in a similar situation (Toma, 2011). Toma (2011) and Patton (2015) also indicated that the research fosters transferability by an in-depth description of the method, discussions on the data and findings, triangulation of sources, and cross-case analysis. In preparing the research, I described the participants, how they were identified and selected for the research. I also described the data collection settings, the details on the recruitment of participants, the data collection method, and the results. The information provided can serve as an indication of transferability or whether the research findings are applicable in another setting (Toma, 2011). With such details, the research can be replicated and is transferable.

### **Dependability**

Qualitative research should have the flexibility to evolve and change during the study. Dependability involves allowing for changes in the research design and the research setting so that adjustments or modifications can be made during the research, reporting the results of the study, and the research methodology so that other researchers

understand the approach used, including, member checking and triangulation of data (Toma, 2011). On the other hand, Patton (2015), described dependability as focusing on the research process and the researcher's role is to document the process so that readers can trace it. Thus, dependability in my study involved careful transcription of the research component, describing the research design, details of data collection procedure, reporting any flaws or weaknesses and missteps of the research, and changes in any procedure through journaling. Dependability is, therefore, factored into the research and included member checking, comparison of interview data for male and female participants, and data triangulation through the use of available government documents and reports.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is the fourth measure I applied to improve the trustworthiness of the data. Confirmability involves linking data, findings, and interpretations imply that another researcher can endorse the data and findings on the research, and involves reducing researcher bias (Patton, 2015; Toma, 2011). Toma further stated that member checking, audit trail, triangulation of methods, description of the role of the researcher, and the use of multiple investigators can reduce the threat to validity and improve confirmability. As I indicated before, I used member checking, audit trail, triangulation of methods as well as a description of my role as the researcher in this study to foster confirmability. The combination of the methods outlined above was used to address the issues associated with trustworthiness in the study and result in a high-quality study.

### **Intra- and Intercoder Reliability**

Inter- and intracoder reliability are two processes used in analyzing written materials and is a measure used in qualitative research to ensure the data analysis yield reliable results. Intercoder reliability comprises the independent coding of materials by two or more researchers using the same instruments and the degree to which they obtain the same results or codes (Bellotto, 2018; Marques & McCall, 2005; O'Sullivan et al., 2017). On the other hand, intracoder reliability involves the researcher's consistency in coding data. Intercoder reliability is not applicable in this study, given that I am the only researcher involved in the coding of the data. Intracoder reliability is relevant and was guaranteed through the use of in-vivo coding which is directly from the data or responses of the participants, as well as verbatim transcripts of digital records from the interviews. In addition, the same approach will be used to code all the data, thus ensuring consistency. Also, I used Microsoft Word and Excel to transcribe, record, and monitor codes, thus, allowing me to examine the codes for consistency and ensuring intracoder reliability.

### **Ethical Procedures**

I addressed the ethical concerns for the study by following the IRB procedures and ethics committee requirements. Research ethics is vital to a successful study and I used the IRB and ethics committees since they regulate "informed consent and assent, research relationships and boundaries, reciprocity, transparency, and confidentiality" (Ravitch & Carl, 2016, p.343). I conducted a qualitative study and Simon (2011) indicated that qualitative research is subjective; with the researcher attempting to

understand the perspective of the participant. It is therefore prone to research bias; hence, validity and reliability issues must be addressed. This qualitative research also faced ethical concerns as the researcher had to avoid or reduce harm to the participants. Maintaining confidentiality and obtaining informed consent to minimize harm when conducting the research is vital. I, therefore, considered and use the IRB guidelines as it relates to reducing the possibility of "harm" caused by the researcher, through researcher bias, or misrepresentation of participants' responses, and publishing of data that can expose participants' personal information.

Secondly, I acquired information on whether the research organizations have specific IRB or research requirements (Walden University, n.d.e), to ensure that I adhered to such requirements. Thirdly, this was an international research; therefore, I completed the IRB application form and submit along with supporting documents in English for consideration and approval (Walden University, n.d.e.). Saint Lucia is an English-speaking country; therefore, language is not a barrier. Fourth, I had several roles, a female public service employee in a leadership role, the researcher (interviewer), and a student; hence, my knowledge, assumptions, beliefs, values, expectations, perceptions, and experiences could influence my interpretation of the data and how I conceptualized the issues. I, therefore, considered these concerns to conduct ethical research. My various roles need not compromise my research quality, I was objective in my approach and let the data from the research inform the results and conclusions. By so doing research bias was reduced and there was no compromise of the research quality.

There are some risks in conducting the study. The main ones include first, the risk of not attaining the required sample size by not getting access to the target number of participants. I prepare a list of more participants than the targeted number so that if some individuals opt not to participate in the study, I have a large enough group from which the desired number can be achieved. Second, the risks of not getting approval (from IRB or the organization) to conduct the study or to use the participants for the research. To diminish that risk, I followed the requirements established by the IRB, completed the requisite forms, and addressed all the ethical issues outlined, to convince and show that all the ethical considerations were addressed, (the final paragraph in this section addresses the main strategies). With regard to the organization, I contacted the Cabinet Secretary and submit the formal requests and all information needed to satisfy their requirement to allow me to conduct the study, including the benefits that can be derived from having the study done in the organization as outlined in the following paragraph. Third, the risks of exposure of data and participants' linkage to the responses. I practiced confidentiality in data collection. Also, the risk of not collecting credible or reliable data. Finally, the possibility of researcher bias and data distortion.

There are several benefits to this research. First, the study will contribute to the literature on women in leadership in public service and public sector organizations. The research gathered information on women leaders in Saint Lucia and provided information on the profiles and qualifications of such leaders. Additionally, it provided information on the role of women in public administration and in public service in Saint Lucia, thus, creating greater awareness on the changing role of women, their ability to hold leadership

positions and, providing insights on how they were able to break through the glass ceiling and stereotypes and advance to top leadership positions in the public service. The study, therefore, provided information or evidence based on the public service work experience and perceptions of public service leaders both male and female on the role of women in public administration. The information from the study can be used to create positive social change as it can support or help create a policy to bring about the greater acceptance of women in leadership and empower other women aspiring to senior leadership positions. An increasing number of women in senior roles in public administration has the potential to bring about gender equality, economic advancement, and financial independence for women and their families. More women in leadership imply increase participation by women in decision making and policy formulation for women concerns, thus, more women's voices are being heard in the organization and the society.

In summary, in addition to the issues discussed above, to ensure an ethical study, I used the IRB guidelines as it relates to research ethics and the possibility of "harm" caused by the researcher so that the systems were in place to reduce or eliminate harm to the participants, and ethical standards were incorporated into the research. I also submitted the proposal detailing the study plan, literature review, and methodology, including ethics and trustworthiness issues to the IRB for approval before commencing data collection (Walden University, Center for Research Quality, n.d.-e). Additionally, I gathered information on whether the research organizations have specific IRB or other

research requirements, to ensure that I adhere to such requirements, and I addressed the following issues to conduct ethical research.

### ***Informed Consent***

Before collecting data, I used consent forms, discuss the research, share information on benefits and possible risks with participants, voluntary participation, and got them to provide consent for the study by sending the informed consent forms to participants via email. Each participant provided consent by responding to the email, and stating “I consent.” I also had a debriefing session with each participant at the end of the interviews.

### ***Confidentiality***

Some of the data will be published and discussed publicly; however, the data will be treated with the highest confidentiality so that there is no way any of the results can be connected directly or indirectly with participants. I masked the names and organization of participants and secured raw data after the research is completed so that it is not possible to tie the data to the participants. I called each female Lucy with a unique number to differentiate one participant from another. Similarly, the males were called Lucius along with the unique number. I used this approach throughout the research, and when disposing of any data. I also plan to save the data on a password-protected personal computer during and after the study.

Research Integrity, Ethics, and Standards: Walden University requires students to maintain integrity, standards, and ethics, including applying to the IRB and reducing bias in conducting the research. There are strict requirements established by the Ethics Board

and the IRB that I adhered to and stipulated in the plan before conducting the study when looking at the research feasibility. Hence, I put all systems in place to ensure that participants suffer no harm as a result of their participation in the research and obtained approval from the IRB, (approval #06-23-21-0655715) before data collection. Additionally, I ensured validity by using the data to conclude using thematic analysis, therefore reducing researcher bias. The plan also incorporated measures identified by (Simon, 2011) to ensure trustworthiness, credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability such as members check, cross-checking, triangulation, data saturation, journaling, and audit trail. These strategies were addressed in the section on trustworthiness.

### **Summary**

This chapter described the qualitative research design and the rationale for choosing this approach. It also, provided information on the generic qualitative research methodology, including the participants' selection process, sampling procedure, and data collection instruments and procedures and data analysis. The chapter highlighted the purpose of the study and the research question and its alignment to the open-ended semi-structured interviews as the primary method of data collection. Additionally, in this chapter, I explained my role as a researcher, emphasized the strategies for addressing research bias, ethical concerns, and trustworthiness particularly, showing the triangulation of sources, research validity, and credibility. The research problem is there is a lack of understanding of the role women have in the public sector workplace in Saint Lucia. By describing and discussing the concerns mentioned above, in this chapter, I



provided a detailed explanation of how I planned to investigate and understand the perception of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. I hoped that the study would generate sufficient data to answer the research question, thereby bringing to the forefront an in-depth understanding of the perceptions of men and women who are in leadership positions in the public service, on the role women play in public administration in Saint Lucia.

In Chapter 4, I provided details of the results and data collection and analysis for the study, including tables and diagrams to represent findings. I also discussed my experience with interviews, data collection, and coding as well as evidence of trustworthiness, and research ethics.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

In this generic qualitative study, I examined the perceptions of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. I targeted a small group of male and female public service leaders and used open-ended, semistructured interviews to capture their perceptions of the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. Several factors have played a role in women's advancement to leadership roles, including role models and organizational and social factors, such as training, education, and national policies (D'Agostino, 2017; Hoyt & Murphy, 2015; Sam, 2015; Schachter, 2017; Yaghi, 2018). I also explored the personal characteristics that led to their advancement as public service leaders and their contribution to women's role in public administration.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to gain insights into the perceptions of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. This study addressed the research problem of women and leadership in public administration to fill in a gap in the literature using the gendering organization theory (Acker, 1990) as a guide to developing the research question and interview questions based on key themes that emerged from the literature review. These themes included gendered roles, women and leadership, gendered relationships, gendered images and symbols, and gendered processes and culture.

In Chapter 4, I describe the setting, present the demographics of the selected participants (the public service leaders), provide details of data collection and analysis,

and offer the study's results, including tables and a diagram to represent findings. I also discuss my experience with data collection and coding and evidence of the trustworthiness of the data and research ethics.

### **Setting**

During the data collection portion of this study, the COVID-19 pandemic in Saint Lucia experienced one of the worst spikes in cases. There were health-related challenges from the community's spread of the virus, resulting in high levels of hospitalization and severe illness and death. Due to COVID-19, response protocols were established to prevent or stop the threat of spreading the virus. The protocols included social distancing, sanitizing (hand, home, and office), wearing of a mask, alternative working arrangements resulting in working from home, greater use of information technology, online meetings, and use of digital and social media to perform work duties. Hence, some participants faced grief and loss of close friends, neighbors, family members, and colleagues while fearing for their own safety and well-being.

All research participants were interviewed virtually, rather than face to face, to limit social contact and the spread of the virus. Therefore, during the interviews, the interviewee and participants would most likely be preoccupied with the health and safety issues and the COVID-19 related circumstances faced by their organizations. They were also concerned with the resulting economic downturn due to border closures and lack of business activities from temporary and permanent closure and stoppage of economic activities. The economic downturn resulted in revenue shortfalls, layoffs, increased

unemployment, and budget cuts, which caused a low implementation rate and low productivity.

Despite the challenges, of the 34 individuals invited to participate, 14 individuals volunteered to participate, with 12 ultimately being interviewed. One volunteer was not interviewed because of unavailability during the data collection period. The other was scheduled to be interviewed and turned out to be an officer whom I had supervised in the past; therefore, he was excluded from the study. The virtual interviews were done following the plan presented in Chapter 3. I conducted the interviews from my home and workplace while participants were interviewed from their workplaces at a time convenient to them either during their lunch hour or after working hours. The interviews ran smoothly and lasted approximately 60 minutes, with the shortest time being 45 and the longest 153 minutes. I established a good rapport with each interviewee, thus allowing them to answer each question thoroughly and produce in-depth data. I then analyzed the information and used it to answer the research question. Therefore, data collection was very successful.

### **Demographics**

The participants' demographics were the first set of data collected from the study, and it indicated the number of years of public service, number of years in post, and current position of the participant. The study included a purposeful sample of 12 participants, five males, and seven female leaders, from the public service in Saint Lucia. They were employed in the public service with education, foreign affairs, sustainable development, physical development, commerce, and finance. The participants were

employed in the public service for a period ranging from 20 to 36 years and in their leadership roles from less than 1 year to 15 years. Table 2 illustrates the demographics of the 12 selected participants in leadership roles in the public service in Saint Lucia. I did not collect data on their race and age because it was not relevant to the study.

**Table 2**

*Demographics of Participants/Leaders*

<b>Gender</b>		<b>Years of service</b>
Male – (n = 5)	1	20 – 24
	1	25 – 29
	2	30 – 34
	1	35 – 40
Female –(n = 7)	1	20 – 24
	1	25 – 29
	2	30 – 34
	3	35 – 40

*Note.* (N = 12).

### **Data Collection**

The study participants were five male and seven female public service leaders from Saint Lucia. I followed the study method as outlined in Chapter 3 and conducted practice interviews using friends and family to hone my interview skills and make me more confident in collecting data. I acquired the approval of the Cabinet Secretary to conduct the study, during which he provided contact information and a list of public service leaders. Also, I obtained information from the Government of Saint Lucia Website. The approval to conduct the research study was obtained from the Walden

University IRB on June 23, 2021 (#06-23-21-0655715), and I began preparing for data collection by collating contact information on all permanent secretaries, deputy permanent secretaries, and heads of departments in the public service in Saint Lucia.

I sent out the study invitation via email to the target population. I made my initial email contact with an interview recruitment letter sent as an invitation to my research study. I sent emails to 34 leaders, three of whom responded immediately and agreed to participate in the study. Later, four more participants responded and agreed to volunteer. I sent a follow-up email to encourage individuals to volunteer for the study. Initially, I received responses from a total of 14 leaders who agreed to participate in the study, and 12 out of the 14 consented via email, participated, and were interviewed. The other two were not interviewed, one due to unavailability and the other did not meet the inclusion/exclusion criteria. The remaining 20 participants did not respond to the invitation.

The recruitment email consisted of the recruitment letter in the form of an invitation to participate in the study, setting, duration, privacy, and a short description of the study and the inclusion/eligibility criteria. After the first three persons indicated an interest in the study, I sent the informed consent form including four sample questions and requested an available date and time to conduct the virtual interview. The responses were relatively slow because of the busy schedules of the target population, so I sent follow-up emails to the public service leaders who failed to respond to my initial invitation to participate in the study and also sent invitations to six additional public service leaders. However, I eventually confirmed the date and time for the interviews and

received informed consent and permission for digital recording from the twelve participants.

I collected qualitative data using in-depth semistructured virtual interviews that took place during the course of 5 weeks between July and August 2021. On average, I conducted two to three interviews per week. All 12 participants were interviewed using the interview guide (see Appendix A). The interviews lasted approximately 60 minutes, and everyone was asked the same questions. The method used yielded a lot of data, and I obtained digital records, transcribed them quickly using digital software, imported them into Word documents, and saved them on a password protected personal computer. Additionally, the virtual interviews provided the option for the use of video, which allowed for face-to-face interaction using voice over Internet Protocol. Therefore, I observed participants' body language during the interviews and recorded observations as field notes and in my journaling and used them to help interpret the data.

As per the interview protocols and interview guide, I asked the participants the interview questions and probes (see Appendix A). I began the interview by thanking the participant, giving a brief description of the study's purpose, reviewing the risks associated with their participation in the study, and confirming their agreement to proceed. All participants agreed to video and audio recordings of the interview. I was able to establish a good rapport with each participant, who shared the stories openly and yielded high quality and quantity of data.

The digital recordings were transcribed after each interview and compared to the digital recordings for accuracy. I achieved data saturation after seven interviews.

However, I conducted five more interviews as I had already scheduled those and wanted to ensure sufficient data saturation. According to Francis et al. (2010), there is no definitive way to show data saturation in studies using interviews; however, saturation is achieved when the researcher stops searching for new codes, and no new data emerges. Upon completing the seventh interview, I noted repeating codes with little new data emerging. Nonetheless, I proceeded with five more interviews hoping that this would be a measure to test data saturation. However, no new codes emerged, confirming that data saturation was achieved. At this stage, I forwarded the transcripts via email for member checking. In that email, I indicated a deadline by which to submit a response, which would mean that I could continue with the data analysis, thereafter. I then proceeded to analyze the data and used it to answer the research question.

### **Data Analysis**

The interviews were the primary data collection method in this study, with digital software used to transcribe the digital data. I listened to the digital record and compared it with the transcripts for accuracy, and exported it to a Word document. I sent the completed transcripts to the respective participant for review, and received amended transcripts from four participants, three asked me to proceed with the transcript without any changes and five did not respond by the stipulated deadline, so I proceeded to data analysis.

First, I analyzed participants' demographic data on the years in service and years in the post to help in data analysis, however, aside from indicating that the participants had served for at least 20 years in the public service, the data did not provide any



meaningful patterns and information relative to years of service and the years in the position. I also included demographic data on gender so that I can differentiate between male and female responses to compare the data and increase triangulation (see Table 2).

The transcripts were used to organize the interview data, using codes and identifying common and emerging themes. The male participants were identified as Lucius 1 to Lucius 5 and the female participants Lucia 1 to Lucia 7. I coded the data using three cycles of coding. The first cycle began initial coding using the initial coding framework in Table 1 as well as in-vivo coding of the data to ensure accuracy. I developed a coding matrix (see Appendix B) to manage the initial codes. The matrix consisted of 60 codes, 27 of which were used for data from both men and women. I used 38 codes to code data from the male and 52 for female participants. Also, in the matrix, I used five codes based on the literature on the gendered organization theory, and five codes based on the literature on women in public administration. Six codes were unique to the male participants and 25 unique to female participants. I used different typefaces to differentiate between preliminary and emerging codes (see Appendix B). The bold typeface was used on codes from the preliminary framework and the regular typeface was used for the new codes emerging from the data.

I engaged in second cycle coding using concept coding to group common terms and use concepts emanating from the literature review and data. The concept codes for males were similar to that of the female, with a few exceptions, for example, one concept was different under the theme of public service delivery, that is, *broaden the scope of women* was used only by the females. Tables 3 and 4 outlined the initial, in-vivo, and

secondary codes used in data analysis for male and female participants as well as the emerging themes. To ensure that the second cycle codes aligned with the data and concepts, I read the transcript several times and re-read the literature review and research methodology. The qualitative research generated high volumes of rich and in-depth information to answer the research question (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The three-cycle coding was an effective way to manage the large quantities of data from the study. It allowed me to manually code verbatim transcripts produced from the recorded interviews and analyze coded transcripts using a priori codes from the literature review, in-vivo codes, and concepts emerging from the data. Thus, I brought similar concepts together to come up with common themes. The thematic analysis was well aligned to the study as it provided a reliable and accurate strategy to answer the research question using the data to inform the response (See Tables 3 & 4).

**Table 3***Emerging Themes for Roles of Women in Public Administration from Male Participants**With Initial and Secondary Codes*

Initial codes	Concept codes	Emerging themes
Gender balance Foster gender equality Promote gender diversity Break barriers	<b>Gender diversity/equity/equality*</b>	Social development
<b>Training and nurturing*</b> <b>Coaching &amp; mentoring*</b> Mediation Build capacity	Staff development	
Increase women inclusion	<b>Women empowerment*</b>	
Good governance Problem-solving Policy implementation Give advice & guidance Set standards for governance	Good governance	Leadership
Leadership Leading by example Be a <b>role model*</b>	Leadership	
Foster change Breaking barriers	Change management	Change management
Team building Build relationships	Collaboration	Collaboration
Public service delivery	Public service delivery	Service delivery
Serve the customer	Customer service	

*Note.* \*indicates initial codes based on the literature review

**Table 4***Emerging Themes for Roles of Women in Public Administration from Female**Participants along with associated Secondary (Concept) and Initial (In-Vivo) Codes*

Initial/In-Vivo codes	Concept codes	Emerging themes
Foster <b>gender equality</b> * Remove gender bias Promote <b>gender neutrality</b> * Promote diversity Break barriers	<b>Gender diversity/equity/equality</b>	Social development
<b>Training &amp; nurturing</b> * Sharing experience <b>Coaching &amp; mentoring</b> * Staff development Build capacity	Staff development	
Increase women inclusion Empower women Support other women	<b>Women empowerment</b>	
Set standards for governance Financial management & budgeting Ensure proper controls Disciplinary action Due diligence Build resilience Problem solving Policy formulation & implementation Find the right people for the job Uphold & enforce policy Stick to what feels right Encourage & motivate Give advice & guidance	Good governance	Leadership
Be a <b>role model</b> * Guide & support staff Inspire & motivate Build confidence Be innovative	Leadership	

Initial/In-Vivo codes	Concept codes	Emerging themes
Fostering change Improve image Make a positive impact Develop culture Build foundation based on values Making a mark Break barriers	Change management	Change management
Build trust Build relationships to get the work done Promote teamwork	Collaboration	Collaboration
Public service delivery Gives a voice to disadvantaged women	Service delivery Broadening the scope of women	Meeting the needs of the citizenry

*Note.* \*indicates initial codes based on the literature review

Using in-vivo coding, along with second and third-generation coding to code the data helped me simplify and understand the information presented. According to Saldaña (2016), data can be organized into themes using in-Vivo coding, concept, and thematic coding to develop new ideas, themes, questions, or theories using query or visualization. Thus, the thematic analysis of the data produced high quality results and organized the data to make the analysis quite manageable (see Tables 3 & 4).

The study results were compared between males and females and among the respondents. Similarities and patterns were identified, and documents were then compared to the interview data to bring about data triangulation, thus increasing trustworthiness. The results and findings were also used to substantiate the answer to the interview questions and indirectly contribute to answering the research question. Table 5 presents the data as direct thematic responses from male and female participants to answer the research question, as well as the data frequency and corresponding interview questions. In the table, similar codes were grouped and concept codes were used to

categorize the data which resulted in 11 sub-themes and three anecdotal themes.

Appendix C showed how different colors were used to differentiate the code. Hence, the data from the interview were used to answer the research question: how do male and female leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia perceive the role of women in public administration? The final step of data analysis was to examine any discrepancies in the data, identify those, and discuss them.

Table 5

*Coding Framework for Role of Women in Public Administration*

Emerging themes	Subthemes	Male frequency	Female frequency
Social development	<b>Women empowerment</b>	27	17
	<b>Women Representation/ Negotiation*</b>	3	7
	Staff development/ Capacity building	10	24
	<b>Gender equity/equality*</b>	14	18
Leadership	Leadership	3	12
	Leadership styles		
	-Participatory		4
	-Transformational	3	2
	-Democratic	1	1
	-Autocratic/ Authoritarian	4	4
	-Traditional	1	
	-Situational		1
	-Laissez Faire		1
	-Servant	1	
	Good governance	7	18
Change management	Change management	5	30
	Make a positive impact		10
Collaboration	Collaboration	6	22
Meeting the needs of the citizenry	Service delivery	4	4
	Customer service	6	3
	Broaden the scope of women		3
Other	No specific/equal roles	10	9
	Female dominant	1	6
	Male	1	6
	Underrepresentation		

*Note. \*initial/preliminary code – bold print*

I used preliminary codes and concept coding in data analysis to develop categories aligned to the theoretical framework, the gendering organization theory. The a priori codes were developed from the literature review based on the various elements of the theory; hence, during the data analysis, the data was organized and coded using those themes (see Table 6). The table presents the data using a combination of preliminary codes from the literature review and the theoretical framework, their frequency in the data, and the corresponding interview question numbers. When a concept did not correspond to the preliminary codes a new code was developed. The most common themes were discrimination, gendered roles, and male dominance for male and female participants. The females had higher frequencies, perhaps because there were more female participants than males or because more females experienced those characteristics in the workplace than males. However, it is essential to note the similarity in the emerging trends of male and female participants, which indicated data triangulation and reliability. At least one participant used every characteristic of the theory, indicating that the organization was once gendered or had the characteristics of the gendered organization.



**Table 6***Characteristics of the Gendered Organization Theory*

Characteristics of the theory emerging from the data	Male frequency	Female frequency
<b>Gendered roles*</b>	16	21
<b>Symbols to represent gender</b>	1	1
<b>Culture of rules related to gender</b>	6	1
<b>Process to support gender</b>	1	1
<b>Gendered relationships</b>	3	3
<i>Power- men powerful, women less power</i>	3	7
<i>Gender inequality</i>	1	1
<i>Male dominance</i>	9	11
<i>Discrimination</i>	22	35

*Note.* \*Text in Bold represent preliminary codes and Italics text in-Vivo codes

Tables 7 and 8 suggest that there was alignment between the data and the theoretical framework. The tables outline the priori codes and concepts from the theoretical framework to determine the alignment of the gendering organization theory to the emergent codes. All, except one (discrimination) of the themes from the Tables, were preliminary codes from the literature on the theory. Thus, there was alignment between the gendering organization theory and data analysis. The alignment of the theory to the data was discussed further in Chapter 5.

**Table 7***Gendered Organization Theory Alignment to the Emergent Themes (Male Leaders)*

<b>Gendered organization theory</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>
Gendered roles	Gendered roles	Male dominates positions of power / technical positions Women acting like men (Administrative men) Assigning gender to specific posts – women in support roles
Gendered relationships	<i>Discrimination*</i>	Glass walls/glass ceiling Queen bee phenomenon Male undermining women in leadership Disrespect of females Lack of support by some women Discrimination in the workplace
	Gendered relations	Poor relations (Male-Female, Female-female) Limited female support Good male-male relations Some good relations (male-female, female-female) Tension/conflict in the workplace
Gendered Images and Symbols	Gendered symbols	Dress codes as gendered symbols Language as gendered communication
Gendered processes and culture	Processes that support gender	Strong organization culture Maintaining the status quo/Union supporting status quo Male-dominated Cabinet Not enough gender consideration in policy formulation The gender dimension of language Male make policies, women implement Male-dominated policies ( in some cases)

*Note.* \*Not a preliminary code

**Table 8***Gendered Organization Theory Alignment to the Emergent Themes (Female Leaders)*

<b>Gendered Organization Theory</b>	<b>Themes</b>	<b>Subthemes</b>
		Male-dominated positions of power / technical positions (historically)
Gendered roles	Gendered roles	Women acting like men (Administrative man) Queen bee phenomenon Assigning gender to specific posts – women in support roles Few females in leadership roles (initially) Stereotypes
Gendered Relationships	<i>Discrimination*</i>	Glass walls/glass ceiling (barriers to advance) Male undermining women in leadership Disrespect of females Lack of support by some women Discrimination against females in the workplace
Gendered processes and culture	Processes that support gender	Some intimidating processes Strong culture Maintaining the status quo/Union supporting status quo Male-dominated Cabinet Men make policies, women implement Political affiliation influences participation

*Note.* \* Not a preliminary code

### **Data Discrepancies**

I assessed the data for discrepancies, noted them during data analysis, and included them in the discussions. I also used the discrepancies to inform the areas for further research. I highlighted and discussed discrepancies in the results in the study limitations in the findings sections of this Chapter, as this is necessary to enhance the credibility of the research. Discrepancies provided essential insights to the study and were included in the results of the study. There were a few discrepancies in this study, some I identified from the data collection strategies. One such discrepancy was, Lucius 1 and Lucia 2 kept on straying from the questions and told stories that were not relevant to the study and highly confidential, so at some points, I stopped recording parts of the interview because I realized they wanted to vent. I, therefore, allowed them to do so, and they became very emotional at times, with some instances when the voice tone changed, and Lucia 2 appeared to be very sad. Nevertheless, once they completed their discussions, I could get them to refocus, ask the question again, remind them of the research question and topic to set the context, and begin recording. Another discrepancy noted was in the data, on gendered images and communication symbols, which Lucius 1 identified as language and dress codes. Additionally, he described language as gendered communication when he said, "language matters; some things are not as neutral as we like to think they are because we use a dominant historical frame." The participant was the only one who identified language and dress codes as gendered images and symbols. The only other times' dress codes were mentioned in the interview was by Lucia 3, who said that women should be "dressing professionally as a leader," and Lucia 5, who

referred to the fact that she "dressed nice and maintained a professional relationship." However, some staff feared her because of her appearance (being tall) and her expectations of high standards in the workplace. This is the only occasion when a participant mentioned fear by subordinates. She was also harassed by some male subordinates who, in her view, "was not aware that such comments and behavior was sexual harassment," so she tried to educate them and got them to stop making such statements. There were similarities in most of the data, with at least three participants sharing the same opinion on the role of women in public administration during the interview. Hence, several of the transcripts had similar codes, which confirmed data saturation.

The final discrepancies included the call for intervention for males or male under-representation in public administration in Saint Lucia, with female dominance across many sectors and in the majority of organizations in the public service. Additionally, Lucia 2, 4, and 7 indicated that women have no specific roles in public administration, yet two identified some roles of women in public administration. I understood their statement to mean that the roles of women and men are no different, or they have the same roles as men in public administration. As was mentioned by one leader Lucius 3, "the role of women in public administration is coming up with ideas to improve public service delivery." While three other men, Lucius 1, 2, and 4, and two women Lucia 2 and 7 identified public service delivery as a role of women. Also, the statement that women have "no specific leadership style" was uttered by some leaders, yet the majority of those who made that statement identified leadership approaches or styles for women. I

interpreted that statement to mean that women use a variety of leadership approaches and no one style can be singled out for them.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

I used several strategies to address trustworthiness in the research. The strategies to increase trustworthiness included approaches to ensure credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability through the triangulation of literature reviews, writing memos to document observations or context of interviews and codes, journaling to record my thoughts and explanation during the research, and coding of themes during the literature review and data analysis. Shenton (2004) stated that trustworthiness is a means by which to address credibility, transferability, confirmability, and dependability in qualitative inquiry. Therefore, it is essential to ensure the results of the study are valid and reliable. Trustworthiness is an avenue by which to incorporate approaches in qualitative research (Shenton, 2004). The measure used to ensure trustworthiness during the study is similar to that stated in Chapter 3.

### **Credibility**

The study's credibility was achieved by ensuring that the various components of the research design were aligned. Thus, the theoretical framework and the literature review were used to develop the instrument, the interview questions, and data coding. Hence, the literature review fed into data collection and analysis, ensuring the alignment of the research components. Another approach I used for the study's credibility was to allow the data to accurately reflect the participants' perceptions (Toma, 2011). Hence, the interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim, then coded and emailed to

participants to check for accuracy of interpretation and perception and make changes to reflect the accuracy of their views. Thus, I used member check and cross-check to ensure accuracy. A third method used to incorporate credibility was transparent recruiting, along with informed consent and data triangulation. As described in Chapter 3, I recruited participants via emailed invitations requesting volunteers to participate in the study. Once the participants volunteered for the study, the informed consent form was emailed to them and more information about the study. Upon consent, the interviews were scheduled and conducted using Voice over Internet Protocol, with digital recordings. Data triangulation methods included using several data sources such as verbatim transcripts, recorded interviews, field notes, including memos, observations, and audit trails. I also retrieved documents such as the public service benchmarks mentioned by about three participants during the interviews to understand better and verify the information they provided.

Another strategy I used to improve research credibility was developing good quality instruments reflective of key research concepts. Toma (2011) posited that a good quality instrument is valuable in ensuring accurate data collection and relevance to the study. Hence, I developed a research instrument reflective of the key concepts from the literature review and which was aligned to the research components. Finally, peer debriefing was done after each interview, and member checking was done to examine the data's accuracy and allow me as the researcher to make adjustments to the data, information, or results. These methods provided evidence of my strategies to ensure the study's credibility, particularly the research data.

**Transferability**

Similarly, to research credibility, I incorporated several measures to ensure that the research results were transferable. Toma (2011) indicated that transferability is when the study results apply to another organization or group within the same organization or in a similar situation in qualitative research. This research can be applied to another public sector organization. I provided full details of the research, participants, interview protocol and questions, sampling strategy, and data analysis to be replicated, indicating transferability. According to Toma (2011) and Patton (2015), research fosters transferability with an in-depth description of the research method, discussions on the data and findings, triangulation of sources, and cross-case analysis. Hence, this study is transferable because I provided an in-depth description of the participants, the way they were identified and the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the research, and the components described above. Also, Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Shenton (2004) referred to external validity as a component of transferability in qualitative study established by detailing participants' selection, sample size, and research setting. Hence, in this study, I described the data collection setting, the details on the recruitment of participants, the data collection method, and the study results. Thus, the information provided indicated evidence of the research transferability.

**Dependability**

This qualitative study maintained dependability through debriefing, member checking, cross-checking, journaling, and data triangulation, as described above. One indication of dependability is the research flexibility: its ability to evolve and change



during the study. Toma (2011) purported that with dependability, the researcher can change the research design, the research setting and adjust or modify the components during the research. Hence, debriefing, member checking, cross-check and triangulation used in the study is evidence of dependability as they allowed for adjustment to be made during the study. Another measure of dependability in the study was the in-depth documentation of the research process described in Chapter 3 and earlier in this Chapter. Dependability focuses on the research process, and the researcher's role is to document that process so that readers can trace it (Patton, 2015). Thus, this study maintained dependability by describing the research components and journaling to record challenges and changes. Hence, there is evidence of dependability in the study, which included member checking, comparison of interview data for male and female participants, and data triangulation through the use of available government documents and reports. In addition, I established clear study protocols, data collection methods, and how data saturation would be achieved. I intended to interview 10 to 20 participants in the study to attempt to arrive at data saturation. Baker et al., (2012) contend that the accepted number of participants to reach data saturation is between eight and twelve. I interviewed twelve participants in the study, which is another indicator of dependability.

### **Confirmability**

I used member checking, audit trail, triangulation of methods, and a description of my role as the research in this study to foster confirmability. Toma (2011) identified all of these methods as strategies for confirmability. Additionally, according to Patton (2015) and Toma (2011), strategies such as reducing researcher bias, linking data,

findings, and interpretations so that another researcher can endorse the data and findings on the research are confirmability. This study was comprehensive and well-documented research. I maintained confidential and accurate data and processes, allowing readers to verify that the information is described as confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used all of those measures in the study, and it is evident that confirmability was incorporated into the research. The strategies described above are measures used to address trustworthiness in the study and resulted in a high-quality study.

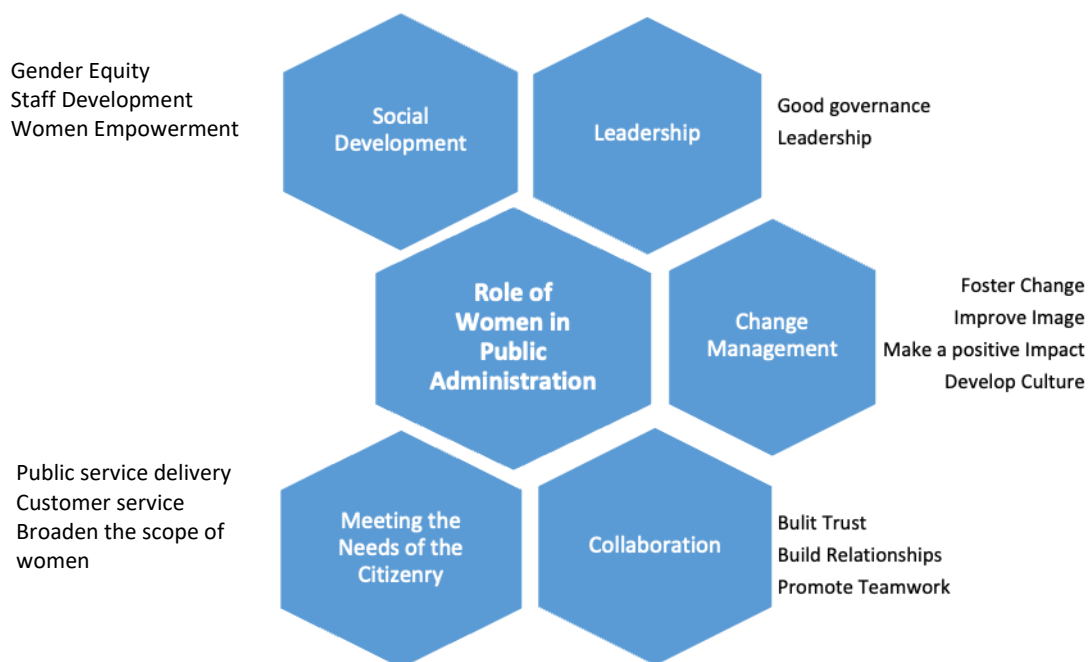
### **Intracoder reliability**

The use of in-Vivo coding helped to foster intercoder reliability in the study. Thus, I coded directly from the data or participants' responses and verbatim transcripts of digital records from the interviews. The same approach was used to code all the data, thus ensuring consistency. In addition, I used Microsoft Word and Excel to transcribe, record, and monitor codes; thus, I examined the codes for consistency and ensured intercoder reliability. This measure provided evidence that intracoder reliability in the study.

## **Results**

The research results were reviewed and examined several times to ensure interview data synthesis. During the data review, thematic analysis was used. The data were coded through a three-cycle coding system, which included in vivo coding during the initial coding cycle, concept coding during the second cycle of coding, and thematic coding based on emerging patterns. Central to the data analysis process was gathering information to answer the research question: How do male and female public service leaders in Saint Lucia perceive the role of women in public administration?

Five themes emerged after coding, categorizing, and developing patterns from the data to answer the research question, these are listed from the largest to smallest frequency, (i) social development, (ii) leadership, (iii) change management/modernization, (iv) collaboration, and (v) meeting the need of the citizenry. Upon further examination of the data, I observed that all of the themes complement each other. For example, change management/modernization and collaboration are needed for social development and leadership and meeting the needs of the citizenry; while collaboration is needed in managing change. Social development was the theme that appeared to be most supported by the data, therefore, it was listed first. Hence, the themes are listed from the one most supported to the one least supported by the data and essentially answer the research question (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2***The Role of Women in Public Administration in Saint Lucia***Theme: Social Development**

The theme of social development is used to describe a combination of roles identified and issues raised by male and female leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia. Social development is about culture and a shift in the way things are done and the acceptable norms of organization and society. The theme of social development includes the codes gender equity/equality ( $f = 32$ ), staff development ( $f = 34$ ), and women empowerment ( $f = 54$ ), and had the highest frequency in the data, that is  $f = 120$ . They had the highest combined frequency for both women and men, with the men having the highest under the subtheme or code of women empowerment. All participants thought that social development is a crucial role of women in public administration.

Social development has several subthemes: (a) gender equity/equality, gender balance/neutrality, (b) staff development (c) women empowerment (see Table 5). Some of the concepts and codes used under that theme include:

- Women empowerment ( $f = 54$  (Men  $f = 30$ ; Women  $f = 24$ ) included the women representation theme and consisted of codes such as empower other women, increase women inclusion, remove gender bias, break barrier (glass ceiling, glass walls), gender mainstreaming, policy formulation (in areas of interest to women), give a voice to disadvantaged women, and give women a voice.
- Staff development ( $f = 34$  (Men  $f = 10$ ; Women  $f = 24$ ) consisted of codes such as nurturing and training, mentoring and coaching, advice and guide, inspire, encourage and motivate, share experiences, and support staff.
- Gender equity/equality ( $f = 32$  (Men  $f = 14$ ; Women  $f = 18$ ) consisted of codes such as gender neutrality, gender balance, encouraging diversity/equality, increasing women inclusion, give a voice to disadvantaged women, foster gender equality, remove gender bias, promote gender neutrality and diversity, give women a voice/gender equality/support other women, influence women matters.

### ***Women Empowerment***

Women empowerment is another subtheme of social development which was common with both men and women. It had a frequency of 30 for men and 24 for women, giving a total frequency of 54, making it the highest in the data set. All participants

suggested that women's empowerment is one of the women's key roles, making it significant. Women empowerment included numerous concepts and codes to represent the data. One such code is breaking barriers as some leaders identified breaking the glass ceilings and other obstacles in the public service as one of the roles of women in public administration. For example, Lucius 3 indicated that "redesigning jobs based on skills requirement rather than specific stereotypes" was a way of promoting gender neutrality and breaking barriers suggested by a female leader. He, therefore, saw breaking barriers and promoting gender neutrality as one of the roles of women in public administration.

Additionally, Lucius 3 saw women "bringing a different perspective to the table" when it came to policy formulation and "giving a voice to women" by allowing them to participate in policy formulation and decision making. Encouraging this form of participation can also be considered as a form of women empowerment. Another aspect of women's empowerment is the inclusion of women. Lucia 4 provided an excellent example of the inclusion of women in the organization when she stated, "everywhere you look when it comes to training, we have women there. Women are willing to train persons, so women are not only interested in getting to the top, but they also assist persons in the bottom." The data also presented information regarding policy formulation (in areas of interest to women), giving a voice to disadvantaged women, and giving women a voice that leads to women empowerment. For example, Lucia 5 purported that "women have been given the ideal platform as policymakers and holders of influential roles to address and bring to the discussion table issues and matters relevant or peculiar to women."

### ***Staff Development***

Staff development involved nurturing, training, mentoring, coaching, motivating, and other activities to encourage human resource development in the organization. Staff development had a frequency of 10 for men and 24 for women, giving a total frequency of 34. All participants identified staff development or at least one of the staff development components as a role of women in public administration. Hence, public service leaders think that staff development is another crucial role of women in public administration. For example, Lucia 2 indicated that "as a leader in the public service, I try to inspire and motivate younger public officers." She also said, "women are more sensitive to worker issues, as women, especially when you are a mother, can relate and nurture." Another example was when Lucius 2 mentioned that "women are more sensitive to individual circumstances; they are better able to listen and can give some guidance," which points to the nurturing role of women and staff development. Lucius 4 also indicated that "women play a nurturing role, which results in the whole objective of service delivery," linking staff development to service delivery. In addition, Lucia 4 posited that "women always grab the opportunity to train and be trained." Inspiring, training, motivating, and nurturing are all part of staff development. Hence the data pointed to staff development as a critical role of women in public administration.

### ***Gender Equity/Equality***

Gender equity/equality are activities to embrace all individuals in the workplace and can be summarized as fostering diversity at work. Both male and female leaders agreed that this is an essential role of women in public administration. The frequency for

men was 14 while for women was 18, giving a total of 32. Several participants commented on gender equity/equality. For example, the male leader Lucius 1 expressed that "our females in the service have the same level of certification as the men. They did not need to do an active quota; it became a natural consequence." He also spoke of interventions by the international community "to encourage gender parity in education and some male-dominated positions to encourage greater recruitment of women in those professions." The participant thought that "females continue to advocate for equality in the region and organizations become more female dominant." Lucius 3 and Lucia 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7 expressed a similar opinion. 4 out of the 5 male participants and all-female participants believed that gender equality/ equity/balance or fostering diversity was a women's role in public administration. Some examples from the female participants include Lucia 1, who indicated that "there are a high number of women in the public service engaging in peer mentoring and coaching resulting in the diversity of roles and careers of women." She also indicated that she "prefers to work with women because they are more professional than men. Lucia 3 stated, "women perform various roles including supporting each other, representing the interest of others, and bring balance to the workplace." Lucia 5 expressed that "women encourage policies that promote gender equality;" and Lucia 6 indicating that women's role is "removing gender bias." With all the women and most of the men interviewed expressing similar opinions fostering gender equity was viewed as one of the women's roles in public administration under the social development theme.



### **Theme: Leadership**

The second theme emerging from the data as a role of women in public administration is leadership. Both male and female participants had the same sets of codes from the data, with the coding frequency being higher for women in every subtheme. The theme of leadership includes the codes of leadership ( $f = 42$ ) and good governance ( $f = 26$ ). Some of the concepts and codes used under that theme include:

- Leadership ( $f = 42$  (Men  $f = 16$ ; Women  $f = 26$ ) consisted of codes such as leave a legacy, make a mark, good governance, leading others, leading by example, role model, nurturing and training, mentoring and coaching, advice and guide, inspire, encourage and motivate, share experiences, support staff and leadership styles.
- Good governance ( $f = 26$  (Men  $f = 7$ ; Women  $f = 19$ ) consisted of codes such as encourage diversity, set standards for governance, problem-solving, due diligence, build resilience, build trust, ensure proper controls, set values, develop culture, doing things right, promote values- integrity, fairness, teamwork, transparency, use public service tools to guide decisions, resource/financial management.

### ***Leadership***

The participants identified leadership as a crucial role of women in public administration. It was mentioned in the data 16 times by male participants and 26 times male participants, with a total frequency of 42. There are over 12 codes representing

leadership in the data, including nurturing and training, which were also mentioned as part of staff development under social development. Thus, representing interlinkages between the three broad themes. The theme focused on the leadership aspirations, competencies, and the various approaches or styles of leadership such as transformational, situational, autocratic/authoritarian, democratic, participatory, servant, and *laisse faire*. Lucius 5 was one of the male participants who spoke of the role of leadership, and he states, "women generally practice a more transformational leadership style." Lucia 1 and 4 and Lucius 5 also shared that view. Other leaders such as Lucia 1, 2, 6, and 7 and Lucius 1 thought there was "no specific leadership style" for females. Another leader, Lucius 4, indicated that "women may use different leadership styles," meaning more than one leadership style. Some leaders believe that women may gravitate towards a particular leadership approach. Others did not agree but indicated that different approaches are used by women, including democratic, participatory, situation, autocratic/authoritarian, and *laisse faire*. Other significant codes under leadership relate to leadership vision or aspiration, including leaving a legacy, making a mark, good governance, leading others, leading by example, and role models. For example, Lucia 1 indicated leadership is also a responsibility, and as female leaders, we have to start making that mark especially in the public service, we have a responsibility to do so." Therefore, the participants present in-depth data relating to women and leadership, making leadership a key role of women in public administration.

### ***Good Governance***

Several public service leaders highlighted good governance as a role of women in public administration. There are over 12 codes used to represent good governance in the data, as mentioned above. The male participants mentioned seven times in the data that women's role is to engage in good governance. For example, Lucius 5 indicated that "the role of women in public administration is good governance, being a good governor, leading by example, being a model for others to follow." Hence, this statement covers both leadership and good governance as roles of women in public administration. In the data, women had a frequency of 19 for good governance. Lucia 1 stated that "women have to set standards for governance" in the public service. She also expressed that "there is a role for women in public administration, and I think it has to do with governance." Lucia 4 indicated that women should "uphold and enforce policy," also "engage in financial management," "promote values," and "use public service tools to guide decisions." Additionally, Lucia 7 indicated that women should engage in "problem-solving," all of which I considered as part of good governance. Hence, good governance is identified as a prominent role of women in public administration.

### **Theme: Change Management**

Change management was also identified as a theme for the role of women in public administration from the study. The theme of change management includes the codes of foster change ( $f = 35$ ) and making a positive impact ( $f = 10$ ). It had data with frequencies of 17 for males and 28 for female participants making it quite popular with a total frequency of 45. The data consisted of codes such as foster change, enhance/enforce

policy, strategic management, break barriers, policy formulation, and implementation, all categorized as change management.

Lucius 3 provided evidence to support change management as a role of women in public administration when he stated someone suggested "the use of benchmarks rather than stereotypes." As a leader, you have to recognize the need for change, foster and manage the change. Hence, he recognized that using the benchmark would benefit the public service and agreed to make that change. Hence, the benchmark is used throughout the public service for the appointment and promotion of staff. I retrieved a copy of the benchmark to substantiate that it was a tool used by the public service.

Change management ( $f = 45$  (Men  $f = 17$ ; Women  $f = 28$ ) consisted of several codes. Some of the concepts and codes used under that theme and their frequency include:

- Foster change ( $f = 35$  (Men  $f = 17$ ; Women  $f = 18$ ) – improve image, develop a culture, build foundation based on values, enhance/enforce policy, strategic management break barriers.
- Make a positive impact/make a mark ( $f = 10$  (Men  $f = 0$ ; Women  $f = 10$ ) - leave a legacy, make a mark, and make a positive impact.

### **Theme: Collaboration**

Collaboration involves a participatory approach in which people build relationships and cooperation to achieve specific goals. The theme of collaboration includes the codes of teamwork ( $f = 19$ ) and building relationships ( $f = 9$ ). Issues relating to collaboration were used 6 times by men and 22 times by women in the study,

amounting to 28 times. 7 codes represent collaboration, including teamwork, increase women's inclusion, build relationships, promoting respect, and developing good relationships.

Collaboration ( $f = 28$  (Men  $f = 6$ ; Women  $f = 22$ ) consisted of several codes.

Some of the concepts and codes used under that theme and their frequency include:

- Teamwork ( $f = 19$ ; (Men  $f = 2$ ; Women  $f = 17$ ) – teambuilding, increase women inclusion.
- Building relationships ( $f = 9$ ; (Men  $f = 4$ ; Women  $f = 5$ ) – build relationships, build trust, build confidence, promote respect.

Collaboration was not as popular with the men as with the women; since it was used 28 times in the data, it was considered a significant role of women in public administration. Some examples of how collaboration was presented in the data include: Lucia 1 indicated that generally, she has good relationships with men. She stated, "as far as male-female relationships go, they are mostly good." However, she also stated that she "preferred working with females, because with males there is always a sexual connotation and with women, it's strictly professional."

With regard to teamwork, Lucia 4 indicated, "the teamwork here is very strong if I forget something, they tell me PS don't forget." Lucia 7 expressed that she "prefers working with a team composed of more women than men," as women are "results-oriented." This is an expression of the collaborative approach in public administration. Lucia 5 spoke of relationships in the organization as she stated, "she has had wonderful relationships with females," which helped her meet her objectives and made her work

easier. These examples are indications that they work as teams or collaboratively, and good relationships exist. Therefore, several women in public administration build relationships and collaboration to meet their goals. The data points to collaboration as a key role of women in public administration.

**Theme: Meeting the Needs of the Citizenry**

Meeting the needs of the citizenry was the fifth key theme emerging from the data. The theme of meeting the needs of the citizenry ( $f = 20$ ) includes the codes customer service ( $f = 9$ ), public service delivery ( $f = 8$ ), and broaden the scope of women ( $f = 3$ ). Public service leaders saw the role of meeting the needs of the citizens as a primary role of a public officer, including women in the public service. Offering services to the public on behalf of the government, especially some services that are only available from the public service, such as issuing a birth certificate or a passport, are the primary role of public officers. Seven participants expressed that service delivery was a role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia, three of which were female participants and four male participants. Lucius 3 said, "women's role is coming up with ideas to improve public service delivery." At the same time, Lucia 2 indicated that "women play a nurturing role, which results in the whole objective of service delivery. "Most leaders agreed that public service delivery is a significant role of women in public administration; even though it was not directly expressed in some cases, it was implied. The concept of service delivery included two initial codes for the male participants, (a) public service delivery and (b) enhance customer experience were grouped under this theme. Four out of five male leaders believed that the role of women in public

administration involved public service delivery, with one of the four, Lucius 3, also indicated that women's role is to "enhance customer experience."

For the female participants' service delivery has the following initial codes (a) deliver service to the public, (b) customer service, (c) broaden the scope of women to play a role in every sector, and (d) public service delivery (See Table 5). One female leader (Lucia 5) expressed that women have "a desire to serve" and "strong aspirations to make a better society." Another female leader (Lucia 7) indicated that women's role is "to deliver service to the public." In examining the data and the context of the information provided by public service leaders in Saint Lucia, the concept of public service delivery was best captured by the theme of meeting the needs of the citizenry. Hence, it became one of the emergent themes from the data and therefore is identified as one of the women's roles in public administration. Some of the concepts and codes used under that theme and their frequency include:

- Customer service ( $f = 9$  (Men  $f = 6$ ; Women  $f = 3$ ) – enhance customer experience, improve the image of the public service.
- Public service delivery ( $f = 8$  (Men  $f = 4$ ; Women  $f = 4$ ) – deliver service to the public, passion for service, the honor of serving.
- Broaden the scope of women ( $f = 3$ , (Men  $f = 0$ ; Women  $f = 3$ ) – desire to serve, broaden the scope of women to play a role in every sector, strong aspiration for a better organization and ultimately a better society. The male participants did not express that view. Thus, this is an expressed desire for

women to improve the organization, their current status, and society on the whole.

This theme had an  $f = 20$ , being mentioned 10 times among male participants and 10 among females; however, the overall mandate of the public service is to deliver service to the citizens.

The concepts of breaking barriers, collaboration, and change management cut across the various themes as they assist women in public administration in meeting the needs of the citizenry, foster social development, and are natural aspects of good leadership in the public service and public administration general. All of the concepts are interrelated. The leaders used them jointly to meet the public service mandate, which is to deliver public service to the citizenry and ultimately meet their needs. Hence, the other themes emerging from the data are seen as secondary to the mandate. Consequently, several male and female leaders expressed that "both male and female are expected to perform any aspect of the job" (Lucia 1 and Lucia 3). Others mentioned that "women have no specific role in public administration" (Lucia 2, 4, and 5), and Lucia 7 stated that "public officers are expected to provide service to the public. Hence women have no specific role outside of that. They need to provide the service and make a positive impact." Similarly, Lucia 6 indicated that women in public administration "have to make a mark." These opinions are all aligned to the role of public officers, including women, to meet the public service mandate, that of public service delivery. The results were discussed further in chapter 5.



## Summary

This study was a generic qualitative study that aimed to understand the role of women in public administration based on the opinions of public service leaders in Saint Lucia. In this Chapter, the data analysis was presented and the participants identified several roles. The data was collected using open-ended semi-structured interviews of twelve public service leaders, five males, and seven females. I used three coding cycles: in-Vivo coding, concept coding, and pattern coding or thematic analysis to generate broad themes from the data. The answer to the research question emerged as five broad overarching roles of women in public administration, (1) social development (2) leadership, (3) change management, (4) collaboration, and (5) meeting the needs of the citizenry, each comprising of subthemes and identified several roles.

The five themes revealed that the perceptions of male and female public service leaders in Saint Lucia are similar in many ways. They identified mostly the same roles for women in public administration and the same themes. In all but one case, women's roles were similar between male and female participants. The first theme or broad role was social development and the associated roles are: encouraging diversity/gender equity and equality, staff development, and women empowerment. All of which leads to organizational development and bring about societal changes and social development.

Leadership was the second theme that is needed to foster change and create an enabling environment, and it included roles such as good governance and leadership. Change management was the third theme and it is needed to keep abreast with the dynamic environment within which we operate to remain efficient and be productive.

Hence, change management includes the role of fostering change, and make a positive impact. Collaboration was the fourth theme and it consisted of the roles, promoting teamwork, and building relationships to achieve organizational goals. The fifth theme was meeting the need of the citizenry and consist of roles such a: public service delivery, Customer service, and broaden the scope of women

The roles identified are interconnected and can influence each other and the effectiveness of the women in performing their roles. Hence, they all need to be executed appropriately and operate holistically for greater impact. The data on the opinions of public service leaders on the role of women in public administration based on their experience revealed that women's roles could be categorized into five broad themes: social development, leadership, change management, collaboration, and meeting the needs of the citizenry. Each of these themes had several subthemes, categories, and codes. Chapter 4 discussed the study settings, participants' demographics, data collection, and analysis. Also, the study results were presented, including evidence of the trustworthiness of the data and research ethics. The data from the male and female leaders in the public service yielded information to answer the research question. Therefore, in this chapter, I achieved the research purpose by filling a gap in the literature where the role of women in public administration was not known. I answered the research question, identifying women's role in public administration based on the opinions of male and female leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia. In Chapter 5, I presented an interpretation of the key findings, discussions on the study conclusions,

limitations, and recommendations for further research. The implications for social change were also discussed as part of the implications of the study results.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the perceptions of male and female public service leaders on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. The aim was to gain a better understanding of the roles of women in public administration. I purposefully sampled a small group of male and female leaders in the public service sector in Saint Lucia and used semistructured interviews to capture their perceptions of women's roles in public administration. Social and organizational factors such as training, education, role models, and national policies may have played a part in women's advancement in their leadership roles (D'Agostino, 2017; Hoyt & Murphy, 2015; Sam, 2015; Schachter, 2017; Yaghi, 2018). Hence, I explored the personal characteristics they believe may have led to their advancement as public service leaders and how they contributed to women's role in public administration.

This research was a qualitative study using a generic qualitative approach. I used a descriptive approach that allowed participants to provide in-depth information based on their understanding of their experience and knowledge of the public service in their natural setting (see Patton, 2015). I investigated the research problem using qualitative data from open-ended semistructured interviews with 12 public service leaders related to their perceptions of the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia until I achieved data saturation at seven interviews. However, I interviewed 12 leaders during this study. The data helped provide a better understanding of women's role in the public service using a sample to ensure data saturation and yield reliable results.

I used a qualitative approach in which male and female leaders in the public service provided data based on their perceptions of women's roles in public administration, which emphasized their success and progress. The narrative approach was used as an alternative method in the research, highlighting women's progress and success as leaders (D'Agostino, 2017). The generic qualitative approach is another method to research women in public administration and identify their roles. Information was gathered from male public service leaders on women's role in the public administration based on their experience working with women in the public service to understand better women's role as perceived by a diverse group for more accurate results. A comparison was made of the data gathered from women with that collected from men to examine similarities and differences in their perceptions and determine women's fundamental role in public administration in Saint Lucia.

I analyzed the data using manual coding and thematic analysis. First, the interview was recorded and transcribed verbatim. I initially coded the transcripts using a priori codes and in-vivo coding and later concept and thematic codes to highlight similarities in the perceptions among females and between female and male leaders, and I noted the differences.

The findings revealed that women have several roles in public administration including encouraging (a) gender diversity, equity, and equality; (b) staff development; (c) women empowerment; (d) public service delivery; (e) customer service, and (f) teamwork and fostering change. As mentioned in Chapter 4, these were categorized into five broad themes ranked from the highest to the lowest frequency. The first theme

involved social development, represented by gender equity/equality/diversity, staff development, and women's empowerment, all leading to organizational change and development, influencing societal change. The second theme was leadership for good governance. The third was change management, which entails fostering change, improving image, making a positive impact, and developing culture. The fourth theme was collaboration, and it involved building trust, building relationships, and promoting teamwork. Finally, the theme of meeting the citizenry's needs included public service delivery, customer service, and broadening the scope of women. All five themes are interconnected and work together to provide high-quality service and meet the citizenry's needs (see Figure 2).

In addition, the research found evidence to support that modern public service exists in Saint Lucia, where power is redistributed, a participatory approach is taken and women are empowered, and they are advancing to top positions and key roles. Women are also well trained with a track record of high performance. However, in the public service, there are some organizations, for example, law enforcement, in which gender inequality still exists, with male dominance, gendered roles, and discrimination against women, as explained in Figure 1 and described by Acker (1992).

### **Interpretation of Findings**

In this study, I examined the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia based on male and female public service leaders' perceptions. I aimed to understand how leaders in the Saint Lucia public service viewed women's role in public administration based on their experience as long-serving public service employees who

worked with female supervisors. The literature highlighted various roles that women hold in public administration globally, including subordinate roles (Acker, 2012, 2009, 1990; Amis et al, 2020; Meier & Funk, 2017;), roles at the leadership level (D'Agostino, 2020; Shafitz & Hyde, 2017), and technical or middle management level roles (Mojapelo & Musandiwa, 2020); however, the specific role of women in public administration in was not clear. Therefore, the study provided data to better understand the role of women in public administration based on the perceptions of male and female public service leaders in Saint Lucia. The results of the study supported several studies on women's role in public administration. Also, it added to the knowledge base on perceptions of the role of women in public administration. Additionally, given this may be the first study on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia, the results of the study may contribute to a better understanding of the role of women while generating new questions on gender and public administration.

### **Research Question**

RQ: How do male and female leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia perceive the role of women in public administration?

I collected the data using interviews from a representative group of male and female leaders to determine the role of women in public administration. I interpreted the research findings using a research question and the gendered organization theory. The data from the participants identified women's role in public administration under five broad themes, including social development, leadership, change management, collaboration, and meeting the needs of the citizenry. These themes were divided into

subthemes, each having several roles as identified by the participants, as described in Chapter 4. The broad themes discussed below represent an overarching role that is interlinked to bring about effectiveness in public administration.

***Theme 1: Social Development***

All participants mentioned the role of women related to social development several times in their responses. Consequently, social development was one of the first themes that emerged from the data. The social development theme involved three subthemes or roles:

**Subtheme 1: Women Empowerment.** Both male and female participants expressed that women's empowerment is a significant role of women in public administration. One male and one female indicated that women's role is to "increase women's inclusion," while three female participants agreed that women "support other women," and another stated that they "empower women." As mentioned above, the literature confirmed that women's empowerment is women's role in the organization. Women empowerment is the subtheme most supported by the data. In addition, women empowerment was tied to staff development and resulted in social development in the organization, as it changes the status of women; consequently, I included women empowerment as the first subtheme of social development.

**Subtheme 2: Staff Development.** Many leaders expressed the role of training and career development as a role of women. Lucius 3, 4, and 5 and Lucia 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 spoke of the "softer side of women," and its "benefit in motivating staff." Others mentioned that women had natural nurturing and caregiving roles in their family life



which they transferred to the workplace to encourage staff development and help others succeed. The literature confirms staff development as a role of women in leadership. Selzer et al., (2017) asserted that one of the roles of women in leadership is to develop strategies for preparing and equipping women for advancement in the workplace and the training that results in women's empowerment. Hence, staff development was highlighted as one of the dominant roles of women in public administration, with women's empowerment as an added benefit.

**Subtheme 3: Encouraging Gender Diversity, Equity, and Equality.** Generally, the participants agreed that women promote gender equity, equality, and diversity in the workplace and saw this as one of their primary roles, particularly as a leader in public administration where they can influence and formulate gender-based policies. For example, Lucia 2 stated that as leaders, "women encouraged other women to develop themselves, to increase the number of women in supervisory roles." Likewise, Lucia 1 spoke of her experience with collecting data on gender disparities in the transport sector, as part of a project to encourage more women to gain employment in the sector. Some males also indicated that women encouraged gender equality, Lucius 1 stated, "Gender equality programs have encouraged our females in the service to have the same level of certification as men." He also stated, "Women drive programs for gender equality, which created more opportunities for women in the public service."

The literature also supported the assertion that women encourage gender equity and equality. Agencies such as U.N. Women (2018) have a gender equality mandate focused on empowering women and girls. Other programs such as gender mainstreaming

were implemented in public administration globally to encourage gender equality (United Nations, 2017). Also, Saint Lucia is a party to the Sustainable Development Goals, which include the empowerment of women and girls. The Saint Lucia public service has therefore benefited from the gender mainstreaming programs that involved encouraging gender equality and women's empowerment.

Therefore, social development is tied closely to the roles purported in the literature review, such as training and development and caring and nurturing roles, which fell under staff development. Also, taking part in decision-making and influencing policies that favor women and development fell under women empowerment. The study found evidence of female dominance in several sectors in the Saint Lucia public service, where there appears to be some form of gender equality/equity, and both men and women are allowed employment opportunities in various sectors in public administration. Thus, the study refuted the claims by some authors that there is persistent gender inequality in public sector employment, with the under-representation of women in public bureaucracies undermining institutional performance and trust (Johnson, 2019).

In Saint Lucia, women are underrepresented in law enforcement, and there appear to have some of the characteristics of the gendered organization. Although many women have experienced some form of discrimination, all of the female participants were able to advance to top positions in the public service, thus, overcoming or breaking barriers. Gender equality legislation and activities have increased equality in the public service, albeit at varying degrees in organizations. Years of gender equality programs and policies have paid off, and most organizations have removed barriers to women's advancement

and fostered some form of gender equality, as Acker (2002) noted. Hence, the programs have promoted social development by encouraging diversity, gender equality/equity, and women empowerment.

Also, a key role of women in leadership in public administration identified by the literature was negotiation to ensure equal opportunity for all, which formed part of the role of encouraging diversity/gender equity. D'Agostino et al. (2020) purported, public administrators need to negotiate for the scarce organizational resources; hence, women need to be effective negotiators to access the resources necessary to succeed as future public administrators. Therefore, the public service needs to help women develop their negotiation skills through human resource development programs to lead and manage public governance, communicate and interact productively with the changing workforce and citizenry (D'Agostino et al., 2020). Additionally, Bowles et al. (2019) indicated that women claimed that the public service needs to invest in their leadership potential and expand their authority in public administration. Thus, the public service leaders identified social development and the roles of encouraging diversity/gender equity and equality, staff development, and women empowerment as women's roles in public administration, and the findings are confirmed in the literature.

***Theme 2: Leadership.***

Leadership is the theme used to describe public administration at the organizational level and involves two main roles or subthemes

**Subtheme 4: Leadership.** The subtheme leadership was most supported by the data under the theme of leadership. The participants spoke of the success of women in

leadership roles, for example, Lucia 3 indicated women's domestic experience as leaders of their household was transferred to the workplace to strengthen their ability to lead. In the case of Saint Lucia, there was an increasing number of women advancing to senior management and leadership roles in public administration. Thus, women appear to dominate in leadership as permanent secretaries and heads of departments in the public service in the majority of the organizations. Under the leadership theme, the research data identified some of the roles postulated in the literature review as roles of women in public administration. For example, Bowles et al. (2019) posited that women's negotiation focused on developing mutually beneficial and multi-party negotiation, supported positive organizational change over an extended period, thus increasing productivity and administrative efficiencies. Bowles et al. also concluded that women in leadership used various negotiation strategies to help reduce resistance to their leadership claims and, in the process, helped to bring mutual benefits to the organization. Thus, women need to exercise effective leadership to achieve organizational goals, encourage social change, including staff development and managing diversity, collaborate and foster change in public administration.

The data on leadership also identified the leadership styles of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. The male participants thought female leaders were more authoritarian/autocratic, followed closely by transformational, while the female participants believed female leaders were participatory and authoritarian/autocratic, followed by transformational. Hence, the data refuted the literature, which purported that more women tend to be democratic leaders than men and found women more likely to

have the features associated with transformational leadership (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Therefore, although both male and female participants indicated that some women used a transformational leadership style, it was not the dominant approach used by female leaders based on the participants' observation. The authoritarian/autocratic approach was the highest frequency in the data, making it another area for further research as it provided anecdotal data. However, the data revealed that combining the servant, transformational, participatory, and democratic leadership styles (which are all thought to be more aligned female leaders) had the total frequencies higher than the authoritarian/autocratic style, somewhat reflective of the opinions in the literature.

**Subtheme 5: Good Governance.** Good governance includes ensuring proper controls, policy formulation and implementation, financial management, budgeting, problem solving, human resource and operations management. Both male and female participants regarded good governance as a significant role of women in public administration. Lucius 1 and 5 indicated that women need to provide guidance, formulate and implement policies, and ensure good governance, while Lucia 1 to 5 were of the view that women had to “set standards for good governance,” engage in human resource and financial management, and other forms of good governance practices in public administration. Hence, most participants stated that women in public administration are duty bound to engage in good governance to ensure transparency and accountability.

### ***Theme 3: Change Management***

Change management is another role identified as a major role of women in public administration. Two sub-themes associated with change management include:

**Subtheme 6: Fostering Change.** Public administrators operate in a dynamic and global environment, with new developments and rapid political, economic, technological, social, and legal changes. Such changes call for strategic planning to prepare for and engage in timely response to keep public administrations abreast with what's happening in the global community we form part of. The study highlighted the need to respond to change as one of the roles of women, with three male and three female leaders specifying "fostering change" as women's role. The male participants "fostering change" and "breaking barriers" were grouped as fostering change. On the other hand, fostering change for women included codes like "fostering change", "developing culture", and "building a foundation based on values." Profiroiu, et al. (2021) posited that women are seen as transformational leaders capable of fostering change in public institutions. Their study revealed a strong correlation between transformational leadership and leaders' capacity to manage change (Profiroiu, et al., 2021). Hence, with women being more susceptible to being transformational leaders, they appear to be strong change managers.

**Subtheme 7: Making a Positive Impact.** Also, change management is vital for the success of leaders in the global community. Friendly foreign governments and international agencies engage in bilateral and multilateral agreements such as the Sustainable Development Goals, Education for All, and the UN Declaration of Human Rights that change the way public administrators operate, it is important to scan the global environment to anticipate and plan for changes. Therefore, women in public administration have to position themselves to take advantage of the changes in their environment and make a positive impact in the organization and society. The literature

also supports the role of women in managing change to make a positive impact in public administration. Women are considered transformational leaders capable of managing change in public institutions (Profiroiu, et al., 2021). Some participants contented that women in public administration in Saint Lucia demonstrate a transformation style while others indicated that some used autocratic, authoritarian, and other leadership styles, it would therefore be beneficial for leaders to strengthen their transformational behaviors to be great enablers of change. Thus building on their capacity to better manage change in the public service in Saint Lucia.

Others also support the role of women as change agents or change management. D'Agostino (2017) indicated that training women could stimulate change in the prevailing public administration culture and institutional norms. Training can, therefore, be used as a strategy to advance women and gender equality in public administration and should be encouraged to allow women to realize their full potential in whatever roles they choose in public administration. Therefore, although training is a subtheme under social development, D'Agostino showed the link between leadership and social development as training stimulated change. Thus, indicating that the various roles of women in public administration are interconnected and support each other in achieving the mandate of public administration.

#### ***Theme 4: Collaboration***

The participants identified collaboration as another key role of women in public administration. Collaboration involved working together to achieve common goals and included teamwork, increasing women's inclusion, building relationships, promoting

respect, build trust, and developing good relationships. Two sub-themes associated with collaboration include:

**Subtheme 8: Building Relationships.** This sub-theme involves increasing women's inclusion, promoting respect, building trust, and developing good relationships, which are all areas needed for effective teamwork. Public administrators engage with people and organizations to build relationships and cooperation to achieve specific goals. The results were skewed in favor of female participants concerning collaboration, however, it was also mentioned by several men. Two participants expressed that collaboration in public administration is needed as part of the bilateral and multilateral agreement that public sector leaders engage in and have to implement. Lucius 1 saw collaboration as "a must, in the global community that we operate," while Lucia 3 believed that public service leaders "collaborate daily with foreign governments, regional and international institutions to get things done and to implement some of the policy decisions of the government." In the literature review, Nasser (2018) posited that through partnership and synergies at the regional and international level women were able to advance to leadership positions. Therefore, the study complements the literature as partnerships can be considered a form of collaboration, which stressed its importance as a role of women in public administration.

**Subtheme 9: Teamwork.** Working in teams and developing good relationships were also considered as a collaboration that can be used at both the micro and macro levels in the organization. For example, Lucia 4 valued the team approach used in her new organization, which comforted her and gave her the confidence, that she had the



support of the staff in the organization, which she described as quite the opposite to the lack of support she experienced in her former role. Teamwork and good relationship may result in greater collaboration, as implied by Lucius 3 who stated, “most successful women try to develop good relationships,” with the staff of the organization and “work as teams to encourage staff development and greater productivity” in the workplace. Also, regional and international organizations engage in working groups and teams such as the Council for National Security and Law Enforcement in which a group of Ministers for national security from the Caribbean region comes together quarterly to deal with national security issues in the region to ensure a safe community. Therefore, several women in public administration build relationships, work with teams, and collaborate to achieve their goals, making collaboration one of the major roles of women in public administration.

***Theme 5: Meeting the Need of the Citizenry***

This theme had the lowest frequency of the five themes identified as the major roles of women in public administration. Meeting the need of the citizenry was the theme used to represent three roles or sub-themes including:

**Subtheme 10: Customer Service.** Customer service was specified by both male and female participants. The description provided by some women in the data, implied the customer service role, while the men were more direct and identified customer service as a role of women in public administration. Customer service had the highest frequency under the theme of meeting the needs of the citizenry and is considered important in meeting those needs. Customer service focus on identifying the needs of customers, and

public officer need to understand citizens' needs to effectively meet them. The Ministry of the Public Service mission also highlighted providing "service to customers (Government of Saint Lucia, 2021), as part of its mission, which supported the data from the study.

**Subtheme 11: Public Service Delivery.** This theme was used by both males and females in the study. Four male participants and two females stated women's role is service delivery. Hence, the theme was considered a significant role. For example, Lucia 2 indicated, female public officers have "the honor of serving" the public. Likewise, the missions of various public service institutions focus on public service delivery in their respective sectors. For example, the Ministry of Public Service has a mission "to lead, facilitate and regulate Human Resource Management/Development and Information Communication Technology to deliver efficient and effective public service to our customers" (Government of Saint Lucia, 2021)

**Subtheme 12: Broadening the Scope of Women.** The female participants identified this sub-theme. The participants thought broadening the scope of women is a significant role, as five female participants, including Lucia 1, 2, 3, 4, believed that "women give a voice to disadvantaged women" and "represent women's interest." With such high numbers of women expressing this theme as a role of women in public administration, it was necessary to include it as part of the broad key roles of women in public administration. Derk et al. (2016) posited strategies aimed at reducing social identity threats and identifying women as individuals rather than women led to the removal of barriers and allowed women to focus on their values and accomplishments;

thus, broadening the scope for employment in the public service. Also, Sisjord (2017) found gender quotas, and Smith and Suby-Long (2019) stated women leaders sharing their purpose and stories, can benefit women in the workplace aspiring to leadership roles and in so doing helped create avenues for women advancement into other roles in public administration. Therefore, women in public administration by representing women's interests in the workplace helped broaden the scope of women in public administration.

Employees of the public service or public administrators have several roles, which ultimately fulfill the role of meeting the needs of the citizenry. Citizenry includes civil society, businesses, non-governmental organizations, legislators, elected/appointed officials, politicians, the general public, and individuals. The data indicated that female public administrators or women employed in public administration are expected to engage in various roles and activities to meet the needs of the citizenry. For example, all participants were of the view that women and men in public administration are expected to perform any aspect of the job to meet the needs of citizens of Saint Lucia. The activities public administrators engage in include strategic planning, organizing, directing, coordinating, accounting and budgeting to ensure the proper use of the limited resources available to solve problems and improve lives in society (Bragaru, 2020). Additionally, D'Agostino (2020) indicated that women should undertake training in negotiations to negotiate for and acquire some of the limited available to effectively carry out their duties. These activities must be conducted using the public service laws, policies, and regulations. Where these no longer work, the necessary amendments and new policies are required to foster the change and increase the system's efficiency.

To improve efficiencies and customer satisfaction, the women in public administration, like other public administrators, need to develop teamwork, collaboration and partnership, women empowerment, negotiation, and diversity. Hence, to achieve the organization's goals and meet the citizenry's needs, it is necessary to hold various roles. Bragaru (2020) identified some of the roles of public administrators as problem solvers, actors, guardians, heroes, villains, and artisans. Bragaru described these roles as problem-solver, associated with resolving challenges and developing solutions to problems, which includes policy formulation, program development to meet the needs of the public. Achieving the problem-solving goal can turn administrators into heroes or villains; individuals whose needs are met see a hero. However, it is impossible to meet everyone's needs. Administrators have to use discretion and make decisions for the greater good, which does not necessarily satisfy some people, who may consider them villains. Administrators are required to make tough decisions such as resource allocation in which they may be seen as villains by some. However, wicked problems are complex and may not have an easy solution, which may be setting up administrators to fail (Bragaru, 2020). Third, as actors, administrators set aside their personal beliefs and morals to meet the work plan and, in the process, behave as actors to ensure they deliver their work responsibilities. As an artisan, there is a trade-off that benefits both the administrator and the citizens being served. As a guardian, the administration attempts to provide adequate care to those who need it most. Thus, the female public administrator in meeting the needs of the citizenry also carries out the role of social development and leadership.

The literature on women in public administration was summarized as a proposed public administration model for Saint Lucia (see Figure 1). The proposed model indicated a trend in public administration with a shift from the historical to the modern public service. In examining the data, the finding revealed evidence to support the historical literature on the public sector organization where both male and female participants indicated that upon entry into the public service or during their early years of employment, they faced an organization with some characteristics of the gendered organization. Amis et al. (2020) and Meier and Funk (2017) explained the organization as one where hierarchical structures, high levels of bureaucracy, gendered roles, male dominance with positions of power, women subordination with very few women in positions of power, and mainly holding caring and nurturing roles. The data provided evidence that these characteristics still exist in some organizations in the public service, to varying degrees.

All participants expressed some experience with discrimination during their employment in the public service. For example, Lucius 1 stated that “women were from a historically less powerful group in the public administration and society.” Also, Lucius 4 indicated that in the public service men traditionally held the top positions in leadership and the political directorate, and women the low ranks and roles, and they were expected to support their male leaders, in positions such as a secretary. Likewise, several female participants expressed that they experienced some form of discrimination.

In most cases, the participants expressed they experienced discrimination during their early years of employment. Given that the data shows that all participants have over

20 years of public service employment served as an indication that they experienced the historical public sector organization (see Figure 1). For example, Lucia 2 mentioned that she “went through a very intimidating process of interviews by three male leaders as part of the promotions process, in which she was promoted to a senior management post, however, once she was appointed to the post, she was undermined by male employees and lost the support of members of the management team who were all males at the time.” However, the research indicated that there were some organizations where some of the characteristics such as gendered roles, male dominance, hierarchical structures, and high bureaucracy still exist.

The data revealed that the public organization and administration experienced some international community interventions, such as gender mainstreaming, which helped change the traditional organization to the modern organization. In the literature review, Sam (2015) and Vargas (2017) presented literature to support the evidence of international organizations' interventions that result in changes in public sector organizations. The study data provided evidence to support the literature.

Various forms of gendered discrimination exist in public sector organizations, including glass walls, glass ceilings, and glass cliffs. For example, a glass cliff is a form of gender-based discrimination that leads women to fail in leadership roles because men made it difficult for them to succeed by placing them in risky positions with a high probability of failure (Yaghi, 2018). The glass wall is defined as a barrier preventing the upward mobility of women in the organization (Sneed, 2007), and the glass ceiling is the under-representation of women in critical roles in the organization (Acker, 2009). Some

women in leadership positions enforced discrimination as they acted as queen bees, whereby, women leaders in male-dominated organizations distance themselves from female subordinates (Derk et al., 2016), and contributed to the discrimination that subordinate women experienced in the public administration and determined the actual roles women held in public administration. Hence, some women appear to discriminate against other women and kept them from advancing in the organization. Although the data supported the presence of discrimination against women, most female participants said that discrimination was more prevalent during their early years in the public service. They also indicated that this had reduced significantly due to various government and international community interventions such as gender mainstreaming, the implementation of millennium development goals and sustainable development goals, and public sector reform initiatives.

Therefore, while participants in most cases referenced male dominance, female subordination, and the presence of the queen bee phenomenon in the public service, many indicated the presence of some form of gender equity and equality. However, an emerging trend from the study was female dominance at various levels in the public service, including in leadership. Hence, in the study, there is evidence among this sample population to refute the information in the literature review. The literature stated that globally, a limited number of women are advancing to leadership roles compared to men, partly due to discrimination, barriers, stereotypes, and other factors that hinder women's progress in organizations, including the public sector (Nasser, 2018; Schachter, 2017).

Some participants expressed that male dominance was only found in the executive and law enforcement and expressed concern about the future of the public service regarding the presence of males in public administration. Thus, the study's results supported the findings of Sam (2015) which revealed that several Caribbean countries (including Saint Lucia) had implemented programs and policies for women's advancement, which caused several women to aspire to and take up top management positions. Additionally, it led to young males' marginalization in some Caribbean countries, with women more likely to be administrators than political leaders (Sam, 2015). Hence, the study's findings supported Sam's study regarding men's under-representation as administrators and dominance in the executive.

The study also provided anecdotal evidence to support the notion that participatory governance is present with power redistribution in the modern organization, where both women and men are allowed to advance to top management positions. In most cases, leaders shared perceptions that women were as qualified as men and, in some instances, more skilled than their male counterparts. Hence, providing evidence to confirm the proposition that women are as qualified and professional as men, with some better qualified than their male counterparts (Mojapelo & Musandiwa, 2020; Stiver, 2002). All participants stated, most women take advantage of training opportunities, while very few men used those opportunities. Thus, women seek qualification as they strive to prepare for top leadership positions, represent other women and foster gender diversity. Female leaders and women, in general, are also performing well, as stated by Lucius 1, "women have a track record of good performance." He also stated "it's not like



the men are not performing but more women seem to advance to leadership positions and are performing well. Therefore, women have proven their ability to perform as leaders and sometimes outperform their male counterparts and, in the process advancing to top positions.

In the modern public service or public sector organization, whereas women generally appear to dominate, some males continue to dominate and hold leadership roles in some cases. Therefore, some gender inequality still exists with few women in leadership, the majority of women in subordinate roles, and they face discrimination, stereotypes, and barriers to their advancement to senior positions in those organizations. Thus, male dominance continued in some organizations as men empowered other men. Lucius 1 expressed this sentiment when he stated that “in law enforcement and organizations such as Fire Service, Customs Department, males continue to dominate.”

Some organizations tried to maintain the status quo and continue the historical public sector organization with some degree of gendered organization. For example, Acker (1992) indicated that in gendered organizations processes appeared to work collaboratively to replicate and strengthen its various components. Acker (2009) also stated that beliefs, images, and gender-based stereotypes shaped actions and practices in organizations. The study found some characteristics of the historical perspective in some organizations with varying degrees of transition. There was evidence of some change either through public sector reform and gender mainstreaming programs and, in some instances, gender quotas, particularly in male-dominant organizations. Hence, transitioning in the modern organization existed on a spectrum, from organizations

having minimal change to those with a high level of change and transformation to the modern public service agencies, with higher levels of gender equity (see Figure 1).

Women have made some strides in public administration by using various strategies, policies, and legislation for gender mainstreaming. They faced many challenges that questioned their role in public administration. Gender inequality in the organization and public administration led Acker (1990) to produce the gendered organization theory to critique the persistently male dominance and attempt to incorporate gender into the organizational theory to understand better why organizations' activities were structured the way they were. The theory critiqued the inequalities women faced in organizations and society in general; outlined the importance of gender equality and the organization's role in removing barriers, disadvantages, exclusion, stereotypes, and gender-neutral (Shafritz et al., 2016). I examined the public service through the gendered organization theory lens to highlight gender inequalities while identifying women's successes and the various roles that women now hold in public administration. It also allowed for the examination of the way organizations worked on removing barriers, women's disadvantages, exclusion, and stereotypes, and fostering gender neutrality.

However, the theory did not provide a convincing explanation of why male power continues to dominate in some organizations and advancement barriers for women remain prevalent (Shafritz et al., 2016). Neither the literature nor the data captured an explanation for male-dominated organizations. Some participants indicated that some males supported each other and maintained the status quo, which continued

discriminatory practices and fostered male dominance in organizations like law enforcement. Shafritz et al. posited many critiques of women's inequalities but no theory on gendered power imbalance in the organization, which is also an area for further research. This study provided insight on the roles of women in public administration and suggested that generally, the public service in Saint Lucia experienced some form of gender balance and, for the most part, some form of gender equality/equity. However, the study also purported men under-representation in several sectors and male dominance in law enforcement which warrants further investigations.

### **Limitations of Findings**

The limitations of this research resulted from research bias and the transferability of the study. The study was qualitative research using interviews based on participants' perceptions and prone to research bias. Various measures were used to reduce research bias, such as verbatim transcription of the digital records of the interviews, using member checking to ensure the transcripts were true reflections of the interviewee's perceptions, thus enhancing confirmability.

In conducting the research, I had various roles that could result in research bias including roles as a researcher/interviewer, a student, a public service employee, and a female public service leader. Measures such as member checking ensured that my perceptions did not influence decisions and create bias or distort information. In addition, the use of purposeful or judgmental sampling methods could have created sampling bias and a lack of equity for participants' selection, resulting in an untrue representation of the population and skewed results.

The participants were invited to volunteer to participate in the study and informed that they were not receiving funding. Hence, participants volunteered for the study based on their interest, so though a purposeful sampling of leaders was used in identifying the target group, the final selection was based on the inclusion criteria of volunteers and exclusion criteria. The exclusion criteria involved not selecting anyone that I supervised or had supervised to participate in the study so that participants were not within the scope of my influence, thus reducing bias. Therefore, I tried to eliminate researcher bias during the various components of the study.

Another area of unintentional bias may come from the fact that the participants consisted of five males and seven females, thus skewing the data toward responses from the women. Nevertheless, there appeared to be no significant difference between the data presented by the men vis-a-vis the women, so the slightly high number of female participants did not appear to create research bias.

This research was a qualitative study; consequently, limitations regarding duplication in the natural setting made it challenging to generalize the findings. O'Sullivan et al. (2017) posited when using qualitative design, the researcher has to use sound research practices and set boundaries to limit the study's scope, making it difficult to replicate with such limitations. Therefore, I provided details of the research process so that others could duplicate the study. I also kept a journal, digital recordings, verbatim interview transcripts, and field notes taken during the research process (data collection) to track my ideas, beliefs, and thoughts (Saldaña, 2016). Hence, these measures increased the research transferability. The qualitative research design had additional limitations

regarding trustworthiness. O'Sullivan et al. indicated that using different data sources can lead to other data collection methods and may suffer from unevenness without a competent research team to process the data.

Additionally, each method required time to design, pretest, and testing, which required much effort, skills, knowledge, and time, making the qualitative studies impractical, particularly those in public administration with limited time. Therefore, I used semi-structured interviews to collect data, thus eliminating the challenges of using more than one method. However, the studies yielded high-quality data to answer the research question. I made accurate records of the data, communicated effectively, listened actively, interpreted accurately, gave descriptive accounts of observations and verbatim reports of data to improve data reliability and accuracy. Despite the limitation, qualitative researchers can use various strategies such as journaling, verbatim interview transcripts, field notes, and cross-checking to increase the study's trustworthiness. I followed the method outlined in chapters 3 and 4 for trustworthiness to ensure high-quality research and research trustworthiness. Therefore, I followed the IRB guidelines in conducting the study to produce ethical research and incorporate measures to guarantee reliability and validity. Also, possible exposure of data or disclosure of participants' information may cause harm to the participants unintentionally. I did everything I could to ensure confidentiality, including ensuring that participants were de-identified and masked by using the name Lucius for the men and Lucia for the women.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

To a large extent, the literature review supported the findings of the research, which is an indication of the alignment of the various components of the study. However, the study has several limitations, which calls for further research to better understand and fill in existing gaps in the literature. Previous research focused mainly on the women's underrepresentation in leadership, discrimination, stereotypes, and barriers against women and women and gender studies (Johnson, 2019; Meier, 2018). Johnson (2019) recommended a research agenda to improve representation in public administration, provide opportunities to exchange knowledge of better practices, and improve performance through better representation.

This study focused on the role of women in public administration in the Caribbean setting in Saint Lucia, using a population of senior leaders in public administration. Hence the first recommendation is to conduct the study in another geographical location or as a comparative study within the Caribbean region, to examine similarities and disparities and identify the reasons for them or use another population, perhaps middle managers or public sector organizations outside the public service. Another study recommended is a quantitative study to examine the rise of women in public administration in Saint Lucia and its impact on job satisfaction, diversity, and customer satisfaction or public service delivery.

The third recommendation is to conduct a study on women in the executive branch of government. According to Sam (2015), the programs for gender equality at the local, regional, and international levels led to women's advancement in the Caribbean;

however, women were more likely to be administrators than political leaders. Therefore, the study should examine why women have a low attraction to the executive. This study should examine the perception of women in politics based on their experience as political candidates and what measures are needed to attract more women to political parties and eventually to the executive. A researcher can do this study in Saint Lucia, another Caribbean country, or another geographic location where the underrepresentation of women in the executive or leadership in politics exists.

The final recommendation is to conduct a study to examine the possibility of male marginalization in public administration. Sam's (2015) research findings suggested that female leaders appeared to empower other women in the workplace and society, and in some Caribbean countries, have led to young males' marginalization. This study examined women in public administration, and given that there appears to be a reduction in interest or a low attraction for men to work in public administration in the Caribbean region, it would make an interesting study to determine the reason. It would also be interesting to understand better the contribution of men to public administration in the Caribbean region or determine whether such information will attract more males to public administration. Another possible study would be to examine the impact of the interventions by the international community on the public administration, for example, gender mainstreaming, sustainable development goals, and other related programs on men in the Caribbean region. This can be a quantitative study in which a survey can be conducted to gather data.

### **Implications**

The research findings helped fill in a gap in the literature on women in public administration by providing a better understanding of the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. This is one of the few studies giving specific attention to Saint Lucia, particularly women in public administration in Saint Lucia. The study was unique as it addressed the role of women in public administration based on the perceptions of male and female public service leaders in Saint Lucia, and their perceptions were compared to validate the findings and reduce research bias. The study provided additional data and contributed to the existing literature on women in leadership in the public service by highlighting women's success as public sector leaders and their progress in the workplace. The research also provided information that will educate people in leadership and human resource management on the role of women in public administration. With such knowledge comes the power for people to make changes in the workplace and influence society's transition to empower women, and encourage greater gender equality, particularly in the executive and law enforcement where males still dominate. Och and Hasunuma (2019) identified pressure for women's inclusion, women's preference for a particular organization, descriptive representation, substantive representation, and increase in feminist claim-making by the organization as five conditions necessary for the feminization of the conservative political party in Japan. Given that the executive members come from the political parties, perhaps the political parties in Saint Lucia should embark on a feminization agenda or a quota system to increase the number of women in politics and ultimately on the executive.



### **Impact for Positive Social Change**

The study findings can bring about positive social change within the public service, in public administration at the national and regional level, and possibly elsewhere. The results provided insights into the areas aspiring female public service leaders can advance into and help build their confidence. They also offered support, knowing that other females have succeeded in these fields. The three broad themes revealed by the study identified three overarching roles of women in public administration. The subthemes and concept codes provided more in-depth details of women's roles. The study's data provided evidence to support women's empowerment and promote gender equality and positive social change at the individual level, especially where women hold positions in so-called masculine areas. Hence, the study encourages more women to gain access to leadership, policy formulation, and decision-making to impact society significantly. Thus, more women may be allowed opportunities to address women's issues, which may lead to women's independence through economic and social benefits from employment in senior positions with higher wages and possibly the financial freedom to care for and provide for their families.

At the organizational level, the potential for positive social change is increasing diversity and equality in the workplace. Diversity can create greater tolerance of the rights of others and promote equity and equality with the organization, especially between the male and female or among gender on the whole, as the potential exists for greater acceptance of the various gender within the organization and ensuring the removal or amendments of discriminatory policies. In addition, changes in policies and

procedures can result in positive social change as it has the potential to create awareness of the differences among employees in the organization and foster the acceptance of the unique circumstances of specific individuals within the organization and society, and the organization's response to accommodate them in the workplace.

Additionally, the study provided information on the use of public service policies to help shape the role of women in public administration and the public service. Thus, it can create a greater awareness of women's changing roles, their ability to hold leadership positions and provide insights on their ability to break barriers and stereotypes and advance to leadership positions in the public service. Consequently, the study results can potentially help bring about the greater acceptance of women in leadership and empower other women aspiring to senior leadership positions. As stated by (Mansbridge 1999), women leaders are expected to represent women's interests and involvement in policy formulation, and as legislators should result in greater representation for women. Thus, a clear understanding of the role of women in public administration has the potential to create positive social change by increasing the number of women in leadership positions in the public sector and greater gender diversity as more women participate in decision-making. The study provided evidence that supported that most of the organizations were once male-dominated. Therefore, one would expect that communication was impaired by distrust and conflicting interests; hence the women in leadership can represent women's interests, improve communication and negotiation quality (Mansbridge, 1999). Therefore, potentially, the research may also encourage women to voice their opinions, enabling

women's issues to be addressed and greater acceptance of women as public sector leaders in the identified roles and society in general.

***Social Determinants of Health: Women in Public Administration***

*Social determinants of health (SDOH)* are the non-medical factors that can affect someone's health, including the conditions in which they were born, live, work, and grow (Healthy People 2030). Health People 2030 organized the SDOH into five sectors. The five sectors are (1) Economic Stability, (2) Education Access and Quality, (3) Health Care Access and Quality, (4) Neighborhood and Built Environment, and (5) Social and Community Context. It appears that all five factors are impacted by enhancing opportunities for women in public administration.

The knowledge of women's role in public administration and the associated positive social change may influence positive SDOH, as such information can lead to the greater acceptance of women as playing essential roles in public administration. I identified five major roles of women in public administration in this study, including social development, leadership, change management, collaboration, and meeting the needs of the citizenry. These roles involve building relationships to meet the public service administration mandate. Good relationships contribute to good physical and psychological health and encourage social cohesion in organizations and in the community or society in which they operate (Healthy People 2030). The public sector organizations have social capital and individuals develop social networks which support those individuals, by ensuring fairness, equity, and equality, leading to better health care and mental health. Consequently, the social development of women which includes

gender equality, equity, and diversity, and the role of meeting the needs of the citizenry under the subtheme of broadening the scope of women, as well as collaboration positively influence the SDOH of women in public administration in Saint Lucia.

The research findings revealed that male-dominant public sector organizations, such, as law enforcement, were found to have some level of gender bias and discrimination against women. Discrimination brings about unfairness and harm to some groups in the organization, while offering power to the privileged groups (Healthy People 2030). For example, a research participant indicated that very few women are in leadership roles in law enforcement in Saint Lucia, and a female is yet to hold the top position of Comptroller of Customs or Commissioner of Police or similar top positions, they have all been held by males. Also, it is difficult for women to advance beyond middle management, and this impacts negatively on the females in the organization.

According to Healthy People 2030, the negativity associated with discrimination can harm the health of individuals, both at the structural and individual levels. Structural and individual discrimination may result in unintentional or unintended harm to individuals; because it can be considered a social stressor with psychological effects on people. At the structural level, the women in law enforcement may be subjected to limited interactions and participation in decision making, while at the individual level may have limited opportunities for advancement into senior management roles, which, can lead to some form of harm and negative health consequences. Thus, is a negative SDOH.

The SDOH are social factors that influence an individual's health (World Health Organization, n.d.). These factors include a person's age and specific conditions within which people they were born, raised, work, and live; as well as, other issues and conditions affecting individuals' daily life (World Health Organization, n.d.). It is, therefore, imperative for public sector organizations and government policies to foster gender neutrality, equity, and equality such as gender mainstreaming to reduce and where possible eliminate all forms of discrimination and stressors in the workplace. Such actions can lead to improvement in the social standing of women, as more women will be able to advance to senior management positions and the top ranks of the public service. The increasing number of women in top management and the increasing acceptance of women in leadership roles can positively impact health as there may be fewer stressors and reduce negative health consequences of individuals in the organizations from less discrimination. In addition, the advancement of women to top management positions can lead to higher income and economic stability, allowing women greater independence and financial freedom along with the ability to care and provide for their families, including accessing health care.

### ***The Methodological Implications***

The research methodology was a qualitative inquiry using a generic or basic qualitative study to discuss the research problem and semi-structured interviews to gather data from selected male and female leaders of the public service in Saint Lucia. This methodology was aligned to the study, and open-ended questions were used to generate in-depth data from participants during the interview. The generic qualitative inquiry

involved asking participants open-ended questions and observing the issue of interest in its natural setting to resolve problems, improve programs, and develop policies (Patton, 2015). The interviews were conducted using voice-over-Internet Protocol, which allowed for digital records and field notes to record observations of participants. The gendered organization theory provided a lens through which to understand male and female public service leaders' perceptions on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia. However, the research method can stand on its own to answer a research question without using a theoretical framework, philosophical, epistemological, or ontological tradition (Patton, 2015).

The gendered organization theory lens was used to conduct this study to provide insight on the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia, and it provided thick descriptive information necessary to answer the research question (Saldaña, 2016). Therefore, the research method was ideal for achieving the study objective. The study aimed to gain insight into the perception of those leaders in identifying the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia, which was achieved using twelve participants from the research population. However, saturation was achieved with seven of them. The data was coded using first-generation in-Vivo coding, then second generation, concept coding, and I looked for patterns and brought common themes to generate the final codes (Rubin & Rubin, 2012; Saldana, 2016). Therefore, the data collected were analyzed using thematic analysis, which highlighted commonalities and differences with the gendered organization theory and the way the participants experienced and saw the world, the public service, and women in public administration. A comparative analysis was done

between the interview data from the male and female interviewees to examine variations and common responses, which were discussed to conclude. The methodology was an effective method for this study as I was able to gather data that answered the research question and achieved the aim of the study.

### **Implications of Theoretical Foundation: Gendered Organization Theory**

The gendering organization theory was used in the study. Acker (1990) developed the gendered organizational theory as a feminist organizational theory. She critiqued the persistently male-dominated organization characterized by gendered roles, gendered images and symbols, gendered relationships, gendered culture and rules, and processes to support gender. She incorporated gender into the organizational theory to understand better why organizations function the way they do. The study provided evidence of the existence of the public service as a gendered organization in the past, with several of the characteristics identified by Acker (see Table 6, 7, and 8). However, over the years, there have been changes in the way public service operates. Among the twelve participants in the study, only two participants, one female, and one male mentioned gendered images and symbols.

Additionally, every participant indicated that some form of discrimination and gendered roles exists in the public service. Although all participants experienced gendered roles, the majority believed that gendered roles, processes, culture, and relationships no longer exist in their organization. Acker (1990) examined the inequalities women face in organizations and society in general, such as differentiated roles, wage gaps, and segregation. Therefore, the theory attempted to understand the impact of gender

on organizations, emphasizing gendered roles and how organizations assigned roles to individuals in the workplace. This study focused specifically on the assignment of roles based on gender in public administration. Several male and female participants expressed that the role assignment in the public service involves a gender-neutral process in which there is a benchmark outlining the skills, experience, knowledge, and qualifications for specific positions. They are pre-established and used to appoint people to positions rather than gender-based stereotypes and other discriminatory measures such as pay. The benchmark applies to both men and women. Hence they had equal pay and possibly equal access to any vacant positions in the public service.

The study produced evidence of interventions by the international community and the government of Saint Lucia to remove barriers, women's disadvantages and promote gender equality and equity. Acker (1992) viewed gender as the difference society produces between men and women and observed organizations empowering men and discrimination against women. She outlined the importance of gender equality and the organization's role in removing barriers, women's disadvantages, exclusion, and stereotypes, and being gender-neutral. Hence, in most instances, the organizations engaged in activities introduced by the government to foster gender neutrality across the public service. Some organizations have greater success levels than others.

The study revealed that the public service historically consisted of gendered organizations with the characteristics described by Acker (1992, 1990). According to Acker (2009), the masculine organizational structure continuously provided certain advantages to the male leaders over time. It forced women to take up a subordinate role.



It may be necessary for government legislature to transform the organizations' goals and cultures, allow more women to take up top leadership positions, and foster organizational change to a more gender-neutral setting (Acker, 2012). There was also evidence that the government formulated policies and enacted laws to change administrative processes and procedures to encourage gender equality and gender neutrality. Hence, substantiating that the gendered organization theory provided an ideal theoretical framework to understand the role of women in public administration from the perception of the public service leaders. Also, the data from the study supported Acker's claim that government legislation was needed to transform the organizations' goals and cultures, allowing more women to take up top leadership positions and foster organizational change to a more gender-neutral setting. The public service in Saint Lucia appeared to have benefited from the legislative and structural changes to promote gender neutrality to a large extent. However, there seems to be an emerging trend of female dominance and a reduction in the number of men in public administration in most public service organizations in Saint Lucia. This is a matter for further studies and was discussed later in this chapter.

The gendering organization theory was used as the study's theoretical foundation. It was aligned to the research as it provided a lens to support understanding the perceptions of male and female leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia on the role of women in public administration. The concepts from the gendering organization theory were used as preliminary codes and concept coding in data analysis to develop categories aligned to the theoretical framework (see Table 6). Given that the a priori codes were created from the literature review based on the various elements of the theory, during the

data analysis, the data was organized and coded using those themes (see Tables 6, 7, and 8). The tables present the data using a combination of preliminary codes and the theoretical framework to determine the alignment of the gendered organization theory to the emergent codes. Table 7 and 8 present the evidence to suggest that there was alignment between the data, data analysis, and the theoretical framework. Thus, the theoretical framework was the most appropriate for the study. It encouraged in-depth data and generated sufficient data to answer the research question, filling in a gap in the literature and contributing to the literature on women in public administration.

### **Significance in Public Administration (Leaders and Practitioners)**

The study results provided important information to leaders in public administration and governance and scholars, researchers, public officers, individuals aspiring to become public officers, civil society, and others interested in the field of public administration, leadership, and gender studies. The information would most likely be more meaningful to the public administrator (leaders and practitioners) as it provides information on the various roles of women in public administration and provides an idea of the areas in which to build competencies to advance as public administrators, therefore, serving as a guide to identifying training needs. D'Agostino (2020) indicated that public administrators need to learn to negotiate to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; hence, they need negotiation skills to be fully equipped and access the scarce resources available for competing interests and programs. Thus, staff development is the significant role of women in public administration. It is necessary to build capacity in the organization so

that the required skills to deliver service and meet the needs of the public are available in the organization.

The study information can be used to educate leaders, human resource officers, and managers on the various roles of women in public administration in the Saint Lucia context. The information can be used to develop training programs for women in public administration. Given that some perceived no difference between the roles of men and women in public administration, the training will also apply to men in public administration. The training may include leadership development, diversity, gender equity/equality, teamwork, delegation, and other leadership skills areas, thus resulting in organizational development, which improves administrative processes and builds and improves the public service to make it better equipped to deliver service to the citizenry.

The increase in women in public administration and the subsequent intervention to promote diversity, gender equality, and equity will empower and encourage women to take up higher positions in public administration and possibly on the executive. In the executive, women can make meaningful policies for further women advancement where their salaries can increase, giving them the income needed to provide for their family and possibly financial freedom. Women's advancement may lead to women's independence as their income is high enough to live independently, care for and provide for their families.

The public administration scholars can learn from the research findings and use them as a building block to build upon by conducting further studies or future research in public administration. Scholars can research the areas I recommended or replicate this study in a different geographical location, where women's roles in public administration

are unknown. They can also use another population, such as middle managers or female participants, to see if it will produce different results. Finally, another research method can be employed to investigate the roles of women in public administration. A different theoretical framework could also possibly lead to different results and maybe an area to explore by scholars for future studies on women in public administration.

### **Conclusion**

Women have several roles in public administration. According to public service leaders in Saint Lucia, women have twelve major roles, which can be categorized into five broad roles: social development, leadership, change management, collaboration, meeting the citizenry's needs, and several other related roles. The five broad roles are the overarching themes that emerged from the study, and they provided insights on the women's role in public administration in Saint Lucia. These roles are interlinked and work together to achieve the ultimate goal of the public service, which is meeting the needs of the citizenry through public service delivery. The results indicated that women in public administration had to overcome several challenges, some from inception, and some obstacles are still present in some organizations. Despite the challenges, women have advanced in public administration using various strategies, which helped define their role in public administration.

The research was very successful and yielded in-depth data that helped identify women's roles in public administration from the perspective of public service leaders in Saint Lucia. The findings did not only fill in a gap in the literature on women in public administration, but it also gave a clearer understanding of women's role, thus,

empowering women employed in public administration. Hence, women in public administration have to perform various other roles, to encourage social development, provide leadership, manage change, collaborate to get things done, and meet the needs of the citizenry, among other things. The ultimate role is to serve and, in serving, meet the needs of the various stakeholders that make up the citizenry.

The study data confirmed the existing literature on women in public administration, including the data on male dominance and the public service as a gendered organization which was purported by the historical views on public administration. It also supported that there were interventions by international agencies and government policies that fostered a change and brought about the greater empowerment of women in public administration. Thus, the study confirmed the findings of Sam (2015), that interventions by international organizations, such as the implementation of the SDGs, resulted in the advancement of women and may have led to the underrepresentation of men and possibly led to young males' marginalization, with women more likely to be administrators than political leaders. The study provided evidence which suggested that women had little interest in the executive or leadership roles in political parties. The research also indicated some of the major roles of women in public administration in Saint Lucia, which encouraged other women employed in public administration and other sectors, like the business community, non-governmental organizations, and civil society. In addition, the study advocated that the public service in Saint Lucia is becoming female dominant, thus providing aspiring female leaders and

employees the confidence they need to advance further in the organization and suggesting the need to examine the role of men in public administration.

The research had a few limitations, some specific to the methodology; however, measures were incorporated to reduce the limitations, increase trustworthiness and research ethics. Thus, the research was conducted with minimal harm to participants and presented sufficient data to answer the research question and achieve the study objectives. The study has built on the literature on women and public administration, specifically, provided a better understanding of the role of women in public administration in Saint Lucia, with a possibility to replicate the research using a different population. Also, it can be used as a building block for further studies as per the recommendations presented earlier or as needed by scholars, students, human resource managers, and others interested in the field of women studies, gender equality, gender equity, diversity, and public administration.

Women in public administration in Saint Lucia now play critical roles which can contribute to the development of the country and the continued advancement of the nation. The modern public administrator has to be empowered to serve the society where it operates. Public administrators serve as planners, organizers, coordinators, directors, implementers, legislators, educators, mentors, trainers, negotiators, communicators, and enforcers, among other roles. Women in public administration are expected to carry out those roles alongside the domestic, caregiving, and family-related roles. They, therefore, have to be excellent at balancing those roles to be effective on the job. In Saint Lucia, women have been in public administration for a long time and can perform the roles as

effectively as their male counterparts and, in some instances, even better. The findings provide a better understanding of women's role in public administration in Saint Lucia. The knowledge of these roles can be used to strengthen the case for the advancement of women in all sectors, ultimately leading to the greater acceptance of women, specifically in male-dominated organizations and in society. Thus, leading to positive social change, with the greater acceptance of women as lead breadwinners, earning higher incomes and providing for their families.

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## Appendix A: Instrumentation

### **The Interview Guide**

#### **Part I: Personal Introduction and Brief Explanation of the Research Project**

Good day (participant) my name is Elizabeth Bailey, and I am a Student of Walden University, pursuing a Ph.D. of Public Policy and Administration with a concentration in Public Administration and Leadership. Therefore, I am the researcher/interviewer, please have a seat. Thanks for agreeing to participate in this vital research, which will provide public service leaders a better understanding of the current public service environment and enable better leadership and development in the future. The interview aims to understand the role of women in public administration using male and female public service leaders as participants. The research question is, *how do male and female leaders in the public service in Saint Lucia perceive the role of women in public administration?* I am particularly, interested in your experience with women in public administration, as a leader in the public service with several years of work experience.

Keywords from the literature on women in public administration, women, and leadership, and gendered organization theory are women leadership, gendered roles, gendered images and culture, gender inequality, discrimination, gender stereotypes, and gendered processes. Some of these keywords were used to develop the interview questions. The interview questions should help you share your stories, experiences, and perceptions of the role of women in public administration. Hence, there is no wrong or

right answer to these questions. The interview should be no more than 90 minutes long and will be recorded to ensure the accurate reflection of your responses which will be transcribed after the interview and shared with you for a crosscheck. I will ensure that your identity is masked when reporting the study findings and your responses will be kept confidential. You have reviewed the informed consent forms and consented to participate in the study. Do you understand the process and are there any questions you would like to ask before beginning the interview? Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this interview. **(Start the tape-recorder).**

### **Part II: Person Profile of Participant**

The first part of the interview is on your profile, as I would like to provide a brief profile of each interviewee. Therefore, I would like to ask some personal questions.

Gender: male ..... Female .....

Current position .....

No. of years of service: ..... in current post: .....

### **Part III: Women in Public Administration - Gendered roles**

1. Tell me your story about your public service experience / as an employee of the public service (P.S.).

### **Part IV: Women and Leadership –**

2. a) Drawing on your experience - What is it like being a leader in the public service?

Probe - Is there a female leaders' leadership approach/style – Please describe?

Probe - What brought you're here? Why did you choose employment in the P.S.?

Probe: What do you think are the - strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of women public administration?

**Part V: Gendered Relationships**

3. What has been your experience working with women in the public service?

Probe: Was there a shift? How do you feel about it now?

Ask this question if needed: In your opinion how would you describe the relationship between men and women in the public service?

**Part V: Gendered Images and symbols**

4. What experience have you had with gendered images or symbols in the public service in Saint Lucia – explain? Or Explain any experience you had with gendered images or symbols in communication in the public service.

**Part V: Gendered processes and culture**

5. Please describe the ways you believe that the organization processes and policies are formulated? Probe. Are women and men allowed equal participation?

6. Is there anything else you would like to share on women in the public service in Saint Lucia?

7. If the information on gendered role is not captured ask the question below:

In the Saint Lucia public service, are there positions considered more suitable for a) men and b) women? Explain or give examples of posts.

**End tape - recorder**

This is the end of the interview. Would you like to ask any questions? In closing, I want to thank you for your participation. I intend to transcribe the interview and send a copy to

you (most likely via e-mail) in a week, for your review and feedback. Please feel free to make changes or add to the information in the transcript to reflect an accurate picture of what you said. Once more, thank you very much for participating in this research.



## Appendix B: Aggregate Frequency Matrix of Initial and In-Vivo Coding

*Aggregate Frequency Matrix Based on Initial and in-Vivo Coding*

Codes	Aggregate Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	
	Males	Female
Initial Code Based on Literature on the Theory		
<b>Gendered roles</b>	16	21
<b>Symbols represent gender</b>	1	1
<b>Culture of rules related to gender</b>	6	1
<b>Process to support gender</b>	1	1
<b>Gendered relationships</b>	3	3
Initial Code Based on Literature on Women's Role		
<b>Women empowerment</b>	0	0
<b>Women representation/negotiation</b>	0	0
<b>Women public administration leadership styles</b>	0	0
<b>Role model</b>	1	1
<b>mentoring, coaching</b>	1	5
<b>training and nurturing</b>	3	6
<b>Gender equity/equality interventions</b>	4	8
<b>Gender neutrality</b>	3	2
New Codes Emerging from the Data Related to the Theory		
Power – men powerful, women less powerful	3	7
Gender inequality	1	1
Male dominance	9	11
Discrimination	22	35
New Codes Emerging from the Data on Women's Roles		
Public service delivery	4	2
Serve the customer	1	0
Gender balance	2	0
Promote gender diversity	4	3

Break barriers	2	1
Mediation	1	0
Build capacity	1	1
Increase women inclusion	1	1
Good governance	1	0
Problem solving	2	2
Policy implementation	1	4
Give advice & guidance	2	2
Leadership	1	1
Leading by example	1	0
Team building/teamwork	2	2
Fostering change	3	3
Give a voice to disadvantaged women	0	5
Remove gender bias	0	2
Share experience	0	1
Staff development	0	3
Empower women	0	1
Support other women	0	3
Set standard for governance	1	1
Financial management & budgeting	0	2
Ensure proper controls	0	1
Disciplinary action	0	1
Due diligence	0	1
Build resilience	0	1
Find the right people for the job	0	1
Uphold & enforce policy	0	1
Stick to what feels right	0	1
Encourage & motivate	0	2

Inspire & motivate	0	4
Build confidence	0	1
Innovative	0	1
Guide and support staff	0	4
Build relationships	2	2
Build trust	0	1
Build foundation based on values	0	2
Make a positive impact	0	3
Improve image	0	1
Develop culture	0	1
Make a mark	0	2

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*N.B. Bold prints are priori codes. Regular prints are in-Vivo codes.*

5 initial codes based on the literature on theory – both men and women used all 5 codes

8 initial codes based on the literature on women in public administration- 5 codes used for men and women

4 emerging codes on the theory – used by both men and women

43 emerging codes on the role of women. 18 for men, 38 for women. 13 used for both men and women.

Total codes =60 - 38 used for men - 52 used for women. 27 codes used for both men and women

## Appendix C: Qualitative Data Analysis Worksheet

## Qualitative Data Analysis Worksheet - Male Leaders

RQ: How do male and female public service leaders in Saint Lucia perceive the role of women in public administration?

Male Leaders	DATA	CODE CATEGORIES	MEANINGS AND PATTERNS
Lucius 1 (DMFS)	<p>“public service delivery”</p> <p>“gender balance”</p> <p>“caring and nurturing staff”</p> <p>“leadership”</p> <p>“encouraging diversity/equality”</p>	<p>Service Delivery</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Equity/equality</p> <p>Staff development</p> <p>Leadership</p>	<p>Meeting the need of the citizenry</p> <p>Social Development</p> <p>Change Management/ Modernization</p>
Lucius 2 (PCFS)	<p>“public service delivery”</p> <p>“encouraging diversity/equality”</p>	<p>Women</p> <p>Empowerment</p>	<p>Leadership</p> <p>Empowerment</p>
Lucius 3 (DLFS)	<p>“foster change”</p> <p>“encouraging diversity/equality”</p> <p>“problem-solving”</p> <p>“public service delivery”</p> <p>“providing guidance”</p> <p>“team building”</p> <p>“caring and nurturing”</p> <p>“leading others”</p> <p>“break barriers”</p> <p>“enhancing customer experience”</p>	<p>Breaking barriers</p> <p>Collaboration</p>	
Lucius 4 (GSFS)	<p>“public service delivery”</p> <p>“gender balance”</p> <p>“nurturing”</p>		

Male Leaders	DATA	CODE CATEGORIES	MEANINGS AND PATTERNS
	"encouraging diversity/equality"		
Lucius 5 (BFFS)	"good governance" "role models" "leading by example" "foster change" "policy implementation"	Good governance Leadership Change management	

### Qualitative Data Analysis Worksheet - Female Leaders

RQ: How do male and female public service leaders in Saint Lucia perceive the role of women in public administration?

Female Leaders	DATA	CODE CATEGORIES	MEANINGS AND PATTERNS
Lucia 1 (LJFS)	<p>“set standards for governance”</p> <p>“problem-Solving”</p> <p>“due diligence”</p> <p>“build resilience”</p> <p>“build trust”</p> <p>“ensure proper controls”</p> <p>“set values”</p> <p>“develop culture”</p> <p>“foster change”</p> <p>“financial management”</p> <p>“make a positive impact”</p> <p>“increasing women inclusion”</p> <p>“nurturing and training”</p> <p>“advice &amp; guide”</p> <p>“encourage &amp; motivate”</p> <p>“share experiences”</p> <p>“leadership”</p>	<p>Service Delivery</p> <p>Gender</p> <p>Equity/equality</p> <p>Staff development</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Resource Management</p> <p>Women Empowerment</p> <p>Leave a legacy</p> <p>Breaking barriers</p>	<p>Meeting the need of the citizenry</p> <p>Social Development</p> <p>Change Management/ Modernization</p> <p>Empowerment</p> <p>Diversity</p> <p>Leadership</p> <p>Collaboration</p>
Lucia 2 (PSCFS)	<p>“public service delivery”</p> <p>“give a voice to disadvantaged women”</p> <p>“foster gender equality”</p> <p>“remove gender bias”</p> <p>“promote gender neutrality &amp; diversity”</p> <p>“coach, mentor”</p>	<p>Collaboration</p>	

Female Leaders	DATA	CODE CATEGORIES	MEANINGS AND PATTERNS
	<p>and support staff”  “inspire &amp; motivate”  “nurturing”  “guide &amp; support staff”</p>	<p><b>Good governance</b></p>	
<p>Lucia 3 (ISCFs)</p>	<p>“give a voice to disadvantaged women”  “gender equality”  “customer service”  “providing guidance”  “nurturing “  “inspire &amp; motivate”  “coaching &amp; mentoring”  “empower others”  <b>“lead others”</b>  “innovate”  “make a mark”</p>	<p><b>Leadership</b></p> <p><b>Change management</b></p>	
<p>Lucia 4 (AMFS)</p>	<p>“nurturing”  “staff development”  “motivate staff “  “encouraging diversity”  “empower women”  “build relationships”  “break barriers”  “be a role model”  “enhance/enforce policy”  “doing things right”  “promote values-integrity, fairness, teamwork,</p>		

Female Leaders	DATA	CODE CATEGORIES	MEANINGS AND PATTERNS
	<p>“transparency”</p> <p>“use public service tools to guide decisions”</p> <p>“promote respect, teamwork, &amp; good relationships”</p> <p>“policy formulation &amp; implementation”</p> <p>“foster change”</p> <p>“financial management”</p>		
Lucia 5 (CAFS)	<p>“give women a voice /gender equality/support other women”</p> <p>“influence women matters”</p> <p>“build relationships”</p> <p>“guide and support /coaching staff”</p> <p>“good governance”</p> <p>“identify &amp; fix discrepancies”</p> <p>“inspire other women”</p> <p>“foster change”</p> <p>“policy formulation &amp; implementation”</p>		
Lucia 6 (MCFS)	<p>“promote gender neutrality &amp; diversity / Remove gender bias”</p> <p>“nurturing”</p> <p>“strive for a higher purpose”</p>		



Female Leaders	DATA	CODE CATEGORIES	MEANINGS AND PATTERNS
	<p><b>“break through glass ceilings”</b></p>		
<p><b>Lucia 7 (SMHFS)</b></p>	<p><b>“problem-solving”</b>  <b>“make a positive impact”</b>  “deliver service to the public”  “broaden scope of women to play a role in every sector”  <b>“empower other women”</b>  <b>“drive change”</b></p>		