



**GENDER EQUITY IN ZIMBAWEAN HIGHER EDUCATION
MANAGEMENT: THE CONDITIONS AND BARRIERS THAT IMPACT
ON THE RETENTION AND ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN FACULTY IN
ZIMBABWEAN UNIVERSITIES.**

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ABSTRACT

Women's citizenship in Academia is by far still very low in high level management ranks. According to Zulu (2003) in South Africa, "the pattern of representation is still generally the same with very little change over time .Perumal (2003) says that "... the official status of women in South African Academia ranges from being head of department to senior lectures to serving on programme coordinating, and other committees". Other positions women still occupy are identified by Zulu (2003), as student affairs, student fees, payroll, public relations and so forth. Subotzky (2003; 2001) also points to persistent under representation of women in South African higher education management jobs and that the problem of gender equity is in fact a global issue as it has been and still is a problem in the U.K., Canada, Norway, the Netherlands as well as New-Zealand etc (Subotzky, 2003; Kwesiga, 2003; Mabokela, 2003).

The problem of gender equity seems to persist despite many pieces of legislation in the various countries and the supporting institutions in the form of courts and law enforcement agents. Women in higher education (HE) experience a wide range of challenges and barriers to appointment and advancement. In my recent study in Zimbabwean universities, I found out that the Zimbabwean university workplace is still a male dominated space and women still experience most of the following challenges such as: balancing work and marriage, sexual harassment, stereotyping, under representation in management ranks, lack of information on careers and career development, marginalization, imbalances in the work load, scrutiny of their professional abilities, the need to constantly prove themselves and being pigeonholed into restricted roles (Perumal, 2003; Zulu, 2003; Mabokela, 2003; Subotzky, 2003; Kwesiga, 2002; Moorosi, 2007). Women in Zimbabwean higher education are also impeded by barriers to advancement such as; cultural barriers in the form of persistent sexism in particular strong patriarchy that is especially evident among men, division of labour along gender, ethnic, and class lines, institutional level formal policies and informal practices, strategies which often

involve an assimilationist rather than a transformmatory approach to access and change, position of power in the organization, organizational structure, socialization in early childhood, exclusion of women from the old boy network, lack of female role models, lack of mentors and unavailability of funds for research and publications (Subotzky, 2003; Parumal, 2003; Zulu 2003; Mabokela, 2003; Kwesiga, 2003; Haralambos and Holborn, 1991; Gaidzanwa, 2007). Some women have a problem in pursuing a double career that is if a woman is married to a professional man; patriarchy demands that the husband's career comes first. Hence women spend time moving from place to place following the husband's career (Walby; 1998; Haralambos and Holborn, 1991; Moorosi, 2007; Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988).

Most Zimbabwean universities still have a culture of men leadership, the image of a leader is still that of a male and the prevailing culture is that of promotion by merit of a history of research, writing and publication (Ashby, 1964; Gaidzanwa, 2007; Maunde, 2003; Thomas, 1990). This paper seeks to discuss the above issues which impact on gender equity in academic management ranks for women with a view to sharing with colleagues on any new developments in this important area of analysis.

Key Words: Gender, Equity, Gender equity, Women and equity, Woman administrator, Education, Higher education, Women faculty/ academics, senior women academics

Introduction

Despite the growing numbers of women taking part in higher education, women are still under-represented in the majority of jobs with any claim to status and responsibility (Morley, Gunawardena, Kwesiga, Lihamba, Odejide, Shackleton and Sorhaindo, 2008). Women's equity in university higher management ranks has been viewed in many different ways by different people across the world. In this research project, equity is seen to imply a fair distribution of high management positions within a university set up between males and females. This issue has had a reasonable amount of attention in literature. Women's citizenship in Academia is by far still very low in high level management ranks in higher education institutions (Subotzky, 2003; Kwesiga, 2003; Mabokela, 2003; Brooks, 1991). The problem of gender equity is in fact a global phenomenon as it has been and still is a problem in the U.K. and is a problem in Canada, Norway, the Netherlands as well as New-Zealand (Subotzky, 2003; Kwesiga, 2003; Mabokela, 2003; Brooks, 1991; Jacobs, 1996; Priola, 2007).

In Zimbabwe in particular, most Zimbabwean universities still have a culture of men leadership (Gaidzanwa, 2007; Maunde, 2003; Chipunza, 2003). In this study, in order to understand the shape of gender relations in higher education institutions, I was particularly interested in identifying the extent to which the conditions in higher education create the optimum environment and climate for advancement and retention of women academics in higher education institutions in Zimbabwe.

I was interested in the conditions faced by women faculty in Zimbabwean Higher Education institutions? What are the factors that women experience in terms of appointments and promotions to higher occupational levels and are the conditions conducive to advancement. I was interested in probing the kinds of factors that reproduce the patriarchal structure and the associated cultural forces that harness the phenomena of patriarchy in certain institutions. In other words, I wanted to unpack the meanings associated with the phenomena of a glass ceiling. In order to answer this and other questions I need to set the backdrop for the study. For purposes of analysis, in this period I shall provide a brief sketch of the political economy of Zimbabwean society, with some focus on the role and socialization of women. This sets the socio-political and economic backdrop for a more focused outline of the evolution of the higher education system, as the context within which women academics (faculty) are working. This is done in order to understand the conditions under which women faculty have worked in higher education institutions.

Historical background

The early conquest of Rhodesia by the British occurred in the late 19th century (Martin and Johnson, 1981; Maunde, 2003). Scholars have signaled that self governance in 1923 introduced a system of discrimination based on colour and race differences (Maunde, 2003; Windrich, 1975; Murphree and Baker, 1975). During this period, the economy was dominated by mining and farming (Parsons, 1993; Wicht, 1952; Schraeder, 2000; Hargreaves, 1991; Maunde, 2003). During this period, we see the beginnings of a society being formally engineered along the lines of racial segregation for which several legal instruments had been established. Some of these included, the Native Regulation Act of 1897, the Urban Areas Act of 1923, Land Apportionment Act of 1930, the 1931 Public Service Act, Industrial Conciliation Act of 1934, and the Native Regulation Act of 1936 (Phimister, 1974; Herbst, 1973; Maunde, 2003; Murphree and Baker, 1975; Windrich, 1975; Martin and Johnson, 1981:57).¹Both farmland and residential areas were racially segregated (Parsons, 1993; Martin and Johnson, 1981; Murphree and Baker, 1975; Windrich, 1975; Gaidzanwa, 2007). (**Gender Relations: Patriarchal aspect of society**), During this period, due to the patriarchal Zimbabwean society and customary law, women played subordinate roles to men within the family as they wielded very little power in both civic and social circles. Under customary law property was owned by husbands and women had to submit to the will and wishes of their husbands or male relations in order to survive (Ncube, 1987:11; Schmidt, 1990:626). The colonial government used customary law which was heavily engraved with Victorian values to give more power to the domestic authority of male guardians. Women got less pay than men who had the same job and qualifications as theirs. Inadequate provision, traditional sexist attitudes, customary law and poverty combined to place enormous constraints on women in society (Chabaya and Gudhlanga, 2001)

It is important to note that in early Rhodesia, during the period before 1952, there was no university presence. For those seeking university education, SA and the UK were destination points (Maunde, 2003:636; Gaidzanwa, 2007). During this period the higher education system comprised of two elements, namely, technical and teacher training college sectors. During this period, it is observed that the profile of the teaching (i.e. those doing instruction) body in both the technical and teacher training colleges had been patriarchal. During this period, women were a rare minority in higher education institutions (Gaidzanwa, 2007). Of interest to me is this gendered nature of higher education work place with women serving mostly in a subservient position to men which persist even now. In gender terms, during this time, men occupied leadership roles in society and lead social activity. For black women, colonialism came with foreign religions like Christianity and Islam. With the introduction of new patriarchal religious values, women sometimes lost opportunities to occupy important and high positions in society. Women were relegated to second class citizens in cultural, political, social, economic and intellectual life. Thus traditional and religious patriarchal attitudes combined with colonial policies had further widened gender inequalities in pre-independent Zimbabwe (Chabaya and Gudhlanga, 2003).

In 1952 we witness the establishment of the first university college in Zimbabwe called The University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (UCRN). During this period; men dominated the university high ranks in administration, faculty, department and committee representation. Lectureships were occupied mostly by expatriate and local settler men (Gaidzanwa, 2007).

In 1980, we observe the formation of a government of national unity and the birth of a multiracial society in which all citizens of the country enjoy equal status under the law (Schraeder, 2000). However, within the new social order, gender discrimination persists in most spheres of life due to patriarchy, culture, traditions, old habits, attitudes and values. The nursing and teaching professions are still dominated by women, and men still dominate professions like medicine, engineering and architecture among others (Chabaya and Gudhlanga, 2001). In this period, we witness a more rapid growth of the university system to include the establishment of six new public and five private universities, bringing the total number of institutions after independence to fifteen. We also witness that as part of this overall expansion, that the UCRN had further grown both physically as well as in terms of overall enrolments. Despite the proliferation of universities with new bureaucracies and new academic posts, during this period, there were still only two women Vice Chancellors of universities in Zimbabwe (Chipunza, 2003). Women academics were seriously under-represented in university top management posts. Chipunza (2003:2) argues that, "Even among full time academic staff women were in the minority". The general picture is that there were very few women academics in Zimbabwean universities during this period (Chipunza, 2003).

The situation of under-representation of female faculty is endemic in all the universities in Zimbabwe today. Therefore, I was interested in exploring some of the reasons for the under-representation of women academics in Zimbabwean higher education institutions management ranks. The aim of this study was to investigate the conditions under which women work, with a specific emphasis on employment conditions, and how institutions take account of the multiple roles which women play in society. This study was keen to identify the extent to which these conditions were conducive to the retention and progression of women academics.

Research Methodology

A largely qualitative research approach was deployed in this study about women faculty. As a qualitative inquiry, the overall aim of this study's design was to understand the construction and reproduction of gender inequality in higher education institutions as a historical socio-political phenomenon and as a social practice which affects women faculty globally. Convenience sampling was used to select the six universities that made up the sample for the study. The population of the study was made up of senior women academics in the six selected universities. The research techniques used included face to face semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The profiles of the respondents are shown in tables 1 and 2 below.

Profiling the Respondents

Table 1: The Profile of the Respondents: Senior Lecturers

Characteristic	Institution	1	2	3	4	5	6	total
Age	26-30		1					1
	31-40		1					1
	+ 40	2	4	6	4	4	5	25
Marital status	Married	2	5	5	1	1	3	17
	Single		1	1	3	3	2	10
Number of Children	0-2	2	5	6	4	4	5	26
	3-5		1					1
Qualifications	MA	2	3	5	4	4	5	23
	PhD		3	1				4
Residential	Urban low	2	5	6	4	4	5	26

Property ownership/land tenure	density							
	Urban high density		1					1
Total		2	6	6	4	4	5	27

Certain trends in the profile of the respondents are revealed by the above table. For a start, the majority of respondents were older females who were above 40 years of age. As can be seen from table 1 above, most of the respondents were married. The majority of the respondents were holders of Masters Degrees, and there were only four Doctorates among this group. This was mainly due to the fact that there has been a massive exodus of highly qualified academics leaving Zimbabwean Institutions of Higher Education for greener pastures (Gaidzanwa, 2007). Several questions that arise are: What is occurring with the younger female academics below the age of forty? What is happening to single women academics? And How does it arise that most of the women are holders of Masters degrees and not Doctorate?

There were very few senior women academics in Zimbabwean universities at the time of the research at the professorial level. Hence it was difficult to locate female professors in order to make a sample. See the profile of professors in table 2 below.

Table 2: Profile of Respondents: Professors

Characteristic	Institution	1	Total
Age	+40 years	3	3
Marital Status	Married	1	1
	Single	2	2
Number of children	0-2	3	3
Qualifications	PhD	3	3
Residential Property	Urban L/ Density	3	3
Total		3	3

Table 2 above indicates the profile of professors who were respondents to the study. There were three professors, all of them from one institution. One was a Director of an Institute while the other two were Faculty Deans. Most high level management posts in Institutions of Higher learning were occupied by a male majority.

Presentation of the findings

Conditions

Women academics in Zimbabwean higher education institutions report the following as conditions which exist in institutions of higher education that have a negative impact on their appointment and progression.

Fields of Study/ Division of labour

In the views of the respondents, women faculty in Zimbabwe is still pigeonholed into restricted roles in terms of fields of study. Women are still found in the traditional subject roles of Arts, Social Sciences, English and Education and there are very few women academics in the natural and other sciences. In the universities, the Sciences faculties tend to be dominated by men to a point that there is as few as one woman academic in a faculty dominated by men. Furthermore, in the views of the respondents “There is inflexibility in terms of development in the university. The Science subjects offered are male oriented, hence fewer girls are able to enroll than boys.” As a result, few women train in the science subject areas giving rise to the lack of a critical mass of women academics in these areas of study particularly so when it comes to academic jobs within the Zimbabwean institutions of higher education. Such a scenario, leads to the existence of male dominated department, faculty and university committees as is the current Zimbabwean situation (see Gaidzanwa, 2007; Barnes, 2007; Chipunza, 2003).

Male Domination/Patriarchy,

The condition of male domination or patriarchy in Zimbabwean institutions of higher education is evident in the data as shown by statements from some of the key informants of the study. Here are some of the recorded statements from key informants concerning the effects of patriarchy on women in higher education workplace in Zimbabwe. One respondent said that

I think patriarchy does affect us women a lot. Because men in high positions think that things should be run the patriarchal way. For example, in this department men have been exchanging the chairmanship. When I came, there was one man and one woman, but when the man who was chairman left, they put another man as chairman.

Most universities in Zimbabwe and indeed across the globe are male dominated in terms of power. Positions of authority are occupied by men, although women form the majority of the workforce in terms of lower operational positions. In the views of Moorosi (2007:507) “The traditional stereotypes associate school Principalship with masculinity, a view that hampers women’s career progression in education management.” According to Middlehurst (1997:13) it is “Because management and leadership have for long been predominantly male enclaves, the picture of the ideal manager is grounded in masculine attributes.” Furthermore, in the views of another key informant, university committees that make decisions are male dominated and that males make important decisions on promotions and appointments in universities, “The University runs on committee system. There is minimal representation where there are fewer people. It is in the committees where decisions are made. There are no women, for example there are 1 or 2 chairpersons who are women and 1 deputy dean”

Furthermore, respondents point out that representation is by virtue of one’s rank in management and there being very few women in management ranks, there is usually the case of one woman surrounded by males in university committees. In this regard one of the informants said the following: “It depends, but the problem is numbers, there are more males than females in the institution, for example one woman surrounded by males in a committee.” Most respondents further argue that women are required to be much more qualified than men to be Heads of Departments. Such views are echoed by (Tsikata, 2007).

Multiple Roles

In the views of key informants, there are multiple expectations for women and at the same time there are not many options for women. They argued that men can leave the family and go to work in other locations with ease. They also argued that women academics turn down posts that are far away from their current homes and that single women were a little bit mobile. Such views are manifest in the data as shown by the following statement from one of the key informants,

Multiple roles are a major challenge. Meetings of some committees for example Research Committee are called last minute and you are pushed to go to the meeting. It interferes with role as a mother, role as a woman. If I didn’t have children, I wouldn’t be bothered. The challenge is in taking up certain roles.

Such views are echoed by Bone (1997), Tsikata (2007) and by (Hames et al. (2006:25).

Institutional Culture

Another factor has been surfaced by the data which has a negative impact on the progression of Zimbabwean women academics is that of institutional culture. Most informants felt that the structure and culture in most universities in Zimbabwe were not conducive to female

advancement due to male domination at the top of the organizations as well as a culture of males occupying top management ranks. Such views are manifest in the data as shown by the following statements by key informants:

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This is a male dominated institution in the sense that the 1st four levels up to my level, there are very few women. I am the only female Dean. At the Vice-Chancellor, Pro Vice-Chancellor, Chairperson of Department levels, there are very insignificant numbers of women. There are very few women here

Males dominate in positions of authority. Sometimes women withdraw from positions of authority. Women have handed over power in some departments. Men want the power.

Such views are echoed by Gaidzanwa (2007), Barnes (2007), Tsikata (2007) and Odejide et al. (2007). Furthermore, one of the key informants had the following to say, "There are fewer women lecturers in the academy than men; hence competition for posts, women versus men is very stiff and difficult for women." As such, the institutional culture is not all that conducive for women academics in Zimbabwe. In the views of another respondent, "There are very few women and very few of the guys are accommodative to women." In literature, it has been argued that there are a few female academics in African Universities (Gaidzanwa, 2007; Tsikata, 2007). This is because women are still an underprivileged group, a situation which is exacerbated by the effects of patriarchy and past colonial policies which were not conducive for women's education and a majority of women did not access education (Gaidzanwa, 2007; Odejide, 2007). It has also been argued that women are portrayed and treated as subordinate (Odejide, 2007:45). This trend resonates with some experiences in African universities for example at the University of Buea in Cameroon (Endekey and Ngaling, 2007). Hence the condition of lack of gender equity policies as well as lack of gender action plans may be a wide spread phenomenon in African developing country universities.

In Zimbabwe at the time of the research, there were very few women in faculty and there was a male majority both in lectureship positions as well as in top management ranks. One explanation offered for this continued trend is that the status quo has been maintained because the power relations have remained intact, and it is these power relations which underlie the stubborn resistance of senior positions to change (Ismail, 2002; Morley et al., 1996; Heward, 1996). Furthermore, it has been argued that power is maintained through old networks, social class, institutional culture, and forms of assessment. For example, senior academics control the career aspirations of their peers and junior colleagues by evaluating intellectual outputs, theses, papers, books, and research applications (Morley et al., 1996).

Lack of resources for Research, writing and publishing

One other condition/ barrier that was raised by respondents is that of lack of resources. Gaidzanwa (2007:70) on the UZ situation says that there are no resources for research, no materials, no cleaners, hence lecturers sweep their own offices which they share in two's although small and meant for one person. Tsikata (2007:28) talks about a similar situation at the University of Ghana.

According to Gaidzanwa (2007:72), on the availability of internet facilities at the UZ, argues that some search engines such as yahoo do not work on campus during normal working hours. Yahoo is only available before 8 am and after 4.30 pm when people are going home. This affects academic parents, particularly women, who cater for their children and spouses in the mornings and before evening after work. From my experience as an academic as well as from the informants' experiences, the situation is worse with some institutions having no computers for academic use as well as internet facilities. This is indeed a serious challenge for research and publication.

Lack of a proper policy implementation framework

Respondents pointed out to lack of a proper gender equity policy implementation. They pointed to a chaotic or haphazard gender equity implementation by institutions of higher education. Here is what one of the key informants said about the issue of gender policy in higher education institutions:

There is no gender policy. There are haphazard activities which are not well coordinated. Women are generally under privileged due to patriarchy as well as the past colonial policies which were not conducive for women to go to school.

Lack of female role models

On the availability of role models, some of the key informants pointed out that there were very few female role models because some of those who were seem as role models were in fact not. For example one key informant said that, "There are no role models but just political issues". In the universities themselves, it was pointed out that there were very few senior women to act as mentors for their junior counterparts.

Treatment issues

Women in Zimbabwean higher education institutions raised the following treatment issues which impact on their appointment and progression.

Marriage, Work and Discrimination

Another barrier/challenge which was raised was that of discrimination on the basis of race in which a black woman was not allowed to work under the supervision of her husband at a college in which a previous white principal had worked with his wife under his supervision. The black women became the victim of her own husband's promotion because as he got promoted to be principal at her workplace, she had to move elsewhere to facilitate his appointment. In this case, the Ministry of Education put the husband's interests first ahead of those of the wife, thereby practicing discrimination. According to Aisenberg and Harrington (1988:124), a common problem that arises for the professional woman is that her husband is usually becoming established in his own work the same time that her career is getting underway, and so her balancing act must include accommodating two careers. And such accommodation often has unforeseen and disastrous effects for the women, because the weight of opinion says the husband's career comes first.

In the views of Powney and Weiner (1997:58) "women who follow the husband's career lose substantial professional ground after each move." Because of that, women experience this type of challenge and indeed women in Zimbabwean universities are not alone in having challenges of this nature. According to Bone (1997:39), "Women are expected to bear the major responsibility for hands-on family care." It is this cultural expectation or norm that brings about barriers/ challenges for women academics. They have to choose between their work and family and in the absence of divorce or separation; they mostly are forced to choose the family over work. According to Munro (1994:12), "The issue of child-care and the limitations this places upon women is a significant reason why many women fail to resume or fully participate in the workforce." Here are some of the recorded statements from the key informants on the effects of marital status and discrimination on their work relations:

My status as a mother is in conflict with work. Meetings are called last minute. My male colleagues have no problem of looking after children. Male colleagues often don't understand it when I complain. There is conflict of interest. For example, I could not offer to take up Chairmanship because of the conflict with my role as a mother. I have to balance more than one role. I am more affected by marital status than my male colleagues.

As a woman, yes I have suffered discrimination at the workplace. If you are a woman you have to go an extra mile to be appointed to a position of responsibility. One cannot pin point it. It is not seen as discrimination if you are not appointed.

(Walby, 1999) argues that, "discrimination against women in the academy is a complex, messy business. It gains visibility at such key moments as those of recruitment and promotion, but it

also leaks into daily practices and processes that constellate to undermine the sense of self-efficiency of many women.” Du Toit (2007:195) argues that women suffer discrimination at the work place and that such discrimination , “...usually relate to issues such as getting recognition for work they do, access to networks, remuneration and promotion opportunities. It seems the ‘old boys’ networks are much more effective than the women’s networks.” Women are constantly under pressure to prove their worth (Aisenberg and Harrington, 1988:67). The respondents also talk of subtle discrimination which is difficult to substantiate in promotions in which senior women lose out to males who are their juniors. The micro-politics taking place is too subtle to pin point any discrimination (Morley, 2005). Some of the respondents talk of discrimination of single people as well as regionalism and tribalism (ethnicity) in which people from Matabeleland are complaining of being discriminated against although such discrimination is difficult to prove. It has been argued that the roots of gender based discrimination run deep and lie buried in culture, customs, beliefs and superstitions (Farrell, 2007:237)

Sexual harassment

Some of the key informants said the following statements on sexual harassment in Zimbabwean universities:

Those who have power usually as men intimidate those below them. Sometimes men ask for favours from women and it has happened here. If women don’t respond correctly they can even lose jobs. Sometimes these are young women who do not quite understand their rights and what is happening to them.

It depends really on what culture you come from. A lot of statements said by African men can be sexual harassment. Even in conversations, a lot of African men say a lot of raw statements which can be construed to be sexual harassment if you were in the USA, UK or Europe. It happens a lot. It’s a struggle, particularly with the younger people. As you get older, it gets better. It is an uphill battle. You can be tough with sexual harassment and give back what you are getting.

There is a view that there is wide spread occurrence of sexual harassment as well as transactional sex on university campuses (Morley, 2005; Adedokun, 2005; Gherardi, 1995; Morley, 2005; Tsikata, 2007). Bennett et al. (2007:88), talking about the SADC on the issue of sexual harassment, point out that, “Firstly, the hierarchical nature of universities, coupled with patriarchal cultures of leadership, means that there are multiple zones of seniority operating within the campus, and those considered “junior” are constantly vulnerable to unwanted sexualisation from senior men.”

Gaidzanwa (2007) alludes to the existence of gender based violence at the UZ with the campus being unsafe for women in the evenings after work hours as women have been attacked. There is a view that sexual harassment and direct physical violence of rape and assault of both female academics and students exists on African universities (Barnes, 2007; Bennet, 2002; Ndlovu, 2001). Literature suggests that sexual harassment is rife on campus and is either mentioned or specifically studied in reports from across the Commonwealth (Bajpai, 1999; Durrani, 2000; Gender Study Group, 1996; Hallam, 1994; Mloma, 1998; Omale, 2000; Simelane, 2001; Tete-Mensah, 1999; Morley, 2005). Sexual harassment is frequently cited as an explanatory factor for women's reluctance to make themselves visible in the academy or in some cases to enter in the first place either as students or staff (Morley, 2005).

Stereotyping

Stereotyping was another of the challenges raised by respondents as indicated by this statement from one of the key informants on stereotyping:

Attributing negative roles to females. Even females stereotype females, for example, "females cannot do this and that", statements coming from other females. I have experienced it.

The key informants also pointed out that women needed to be assertive to be taken seriously as they are often taken for granted in the male dominated university set up. Here is a statement from one of the key informants on being assertive:

At times, there is a general belief that a woman cannot do it well, especially if she is alone. She needs help. You have to work extra hard to prove that you can do what men can do. Because they think that a woman should submit to them..

In brief, the following are some of the treatment issues raised by informants of the study apart from the above: marginalization, unwarranted scrutiny of their professional abilities and heavy workloads for less pay. This affects female academics as they mostly occupy the junior ranks of the university, hence do more work for lesser pay than their seniors who are mostly older males.

Conclusion

From the findings of the study, women academics in Zimbabwe experience difficult conditions for both appointments and progression in terms of division of labour, male domination/patriarchy, promotional procedures, institutional culture and differential treatment among others. As a result, there is serious under-representation of women academics in

university posts, committees as well as in high level management posts. There has been very little change if any over a long period of time. However with the new thrust in government towards women empowerment with respect to the economy as well as representation in parliament, the situation is slowly changing for the better.

Recommendations

It is a recommendation of this study that there is need for the government as well as labour organizations to enforce for the implementation of the gender equity policy as well as seeing to it that practical steps are taken to eliminate gender discrimination in the workplace.

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