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**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE
ACADEMICS ON THEIR CAREER DEVELOPMENT : A
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND ZIMBABWEAN
UNIVERSITIES**

BY

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE
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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions of female academics on their career development in South African and Zimbabwean universities. The study attempted to unravel the story of the female academics which must be heard but is seldom accorded the space within the academia. The interpretive paradigm was utilised in this study because it focuses on individual perceptions and experiences. In addition a qualitative approach was employed for the collection of data since it allowed for triangulation of data collection techniques so as to gain in-depth and rich information on the career trajectory of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean universities. Therefore, semi- structured interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis were employed. The participants were purposively selected for the sample of this study and comprised of 5 senior female academics from each university and 5 junior female academics also representing each university respectively. Thematic content analysis was used to analyse data and this was carried out in line with the research questions, aims and objectives of the study. Through the participants' answers from both universities under study, a transcript was formulated, coded and categorised in view of the career development of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean universities. It was discovered from the data that the female academics still encounter a number of challenges with regard to their career mobility both in and out of academia inter alia, (1) gender stereotyping and male domination (2) knowledge retention (3) lack of mentorship and organisational support especially through funding and professional staff development programmes (4) lack of female solidarity (5) under-representation of female academics (6) teaching workloads and research publications and (7) lack of family support, were illuminated by the participants as common fixtures that hinder their career development in academia. Moreover, there were variances in both universities under study especially with relations to funding, gender policies in place and male domination. Consequently, the above mentioned factors were more pronounced in Zimbabwean universities than in South African universities.

As a result, emphasis was that both South African and Zimbabwean universities have to draw a line between theory and practice especially on the professional staff development programmes that are offered to the academics. A crucial observation was made by the researcher on how most of the participants from both universities

under study had negotiated their roles as mothers, wives, academic and sisters in a bid to realise career growth, such that striking a balance between work and family posed a continuous hindrance their career development. As a result, hard work, commitment, confidence, self-assertiveness and sacrifice cut across both universities as strategies used if the battle of career development of female academics had to be won.

In sum, this study attempted to illuminate the perceptions and experiences of female academics and what it means to be a female academic in the 21st century university and why there is a need to create, cultivate and have a conducive and supportive working environment. Moreover, promotion of knowledge expansion and sharing, gender equity and equality needs to be employed by both universities under research. Additionally, the professional staff development programmes offered need to be conducted by qualified and experienced personnel in a bid to avoid repetition of workshops and training programs. Furthermore, formalisation of mentoring and role modelling should also be employed by South African and Zimbabwean universities. Lastly, the study recommended that there is a need for universities source out resources for its academics if there are to produce well rounded scholars who will be able to experience career development.

KEY WORDS: Perceptions, Career Development, Female academics, Universities

DECLARATION ON PLAGIARISM

I, **BELLITA BANDA CHITSAMATANGA**, Student Number **201104691** hereby declare that I am fully aware of the University of Fort Hare's policy on plagiarism and I have taken every precaution to comply with the regulations

Signature

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Bellita Banda', is written over a horizontal line.

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I would like to give praise and glory to the Almighty for his faithfulness. For he is the author and the perfecter of my faith and life. Not only is he a Good God, He is just an Extraordinarily Good God all the times!

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Affirmative Action
ACU	Association of Commonwealth Universities
App. Sci.	Applied Science
BBC	British Broadcasting Co-operation
CDE	Centre for Development Enterprises
CEDAWU	Convention on elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
CHE	Council of Higher Education
CS	Commonwealth Secretariat
Ed.	Education
FGP	Focus Group
GEE	Gender Equity and Equality
HEI	Higher education Institutions
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HFWA	High Flying Women Association
HOD	Head of Department
ICAA	Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia
IHL	Institutions of Higher Learning
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MGT & COM	Management and Commerce
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
ODL	Open distance Learning

OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P1 – P10	participant 1 to Participant 10
PHD	Doctor of Philosophy
PSDP	Professional Staff Development Programmes
SA	South Africa
SAHE	South Africa Higher Education
SARUA	Southern Africa Regional University Association
SAWISE	South African Women in Science and Engineering
SCI & AGRIC.	Science and Agriculture
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
TLC	Teaching and Learning Centre
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US	United States

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my four boys **Tungamirai “Fidzi” Farai, Comfort “SaMaphi” Ngcekuyenkosi, Thandolwethu “tutula” Munaiswi and Gift Tawana “Mavari” Kudzanayi**, and my only girl **Gugulethu “ndilandila” Adelaide** you are the best there ever will be!

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

During the last decade or so, Universities world-wide have come under increasing pressure to adapt to rapidly changing social, technological, economic and political forces emanating from the immediate as well as the broader post-industrial external environment (Mabokela, 2002 : 43). Modern universities, including those in Southern Africa in general, and South Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, are providers of knowledge to their respective societies. In some countries, universities are government institutions with a mission to produce patriotic and competent manpower. However, the values, norms, beliefs, and traditions of Universities continue to be male-centred or patriarchal. Career development of female academics has thus been viewed through male lenses, and this has, to a certain extent, affected its development (Makura, 2012).

1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

The position of female academics on their career development in developing countries such as South Africa, Nigeria, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe mimics a global pattern (Aiston, 2011). While there might be a number of challenges to career development of female academics worldwide, developing an academic career in a developing country poses particular challenges. It is well-documented that the career development of female academics is replete with unique obstacles (Sheshamani & Shalumba, 2011). Opportunities for female academics are different and unique to the countries they reside in. Thus, the higher the status and reward, the lower the number of females academics (Theron, 2002). Drawing on previous research, Otunga and Ojuang (2004) as cited by Seshamani and Shalumba (2011), affirmed that in some of Africa's private and public Universities, more than 90% of their staff, 80% of teachers/lecturers and 75% of the students are male. In 2013, the University of Zimbabwe had approximately 1 200 academic staff and only 10% were female academics, with 1% holding management positions (Chipunza, 2003).

Reports by Higher Education South Africa (HESA), show that out of a total of 92 Universities in the African continent, comprising of 17 African states, only Lesotho, South Africa, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland and Mauritius had more than 25% of

female academics in their Universities (Singh, 2008). In addition, only 4 countries, namely Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana and Mauritius had more than 30% female deans and senior female academics. Based on this data, Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) in Nguyen (2012), confirm that Universities have always been a realm of a certain class of men, biased and patriarchal. HESA (2008), also opines that the status of female academics in higher education should be improved to cascade down to women at all levels of society so that they can be able to participate fully.

These disparities are omnipresent and significant with regard to female academics' perceptions on career development as they highlight how practices and norms of learning institutions (Universities) tend to be moulded around men's life experiences (Schein, 1998). Female academics' achievements and role in society are hardly acknowledged or recognised (Osongo, 2004). They face copious challenges in the kaleidoscope of Zimbabwean and South African learning institutions (Bezuidenhout & Cilliers, 2010; and Mugweni, Mufanechiya & Dhlomo, 2011) because the system gives male academics a false sense of superiority over female academics which must be maintained to keep the prevailing system intact. According to Bezuidenhout & Cilliers (2010), the metaphor "leaking pipeline" was used by De la Rey (2008) to refer to the manner in which higher learning institutions struggle to find ways to retain their few female academics through career development. UNESCO (2002) argues that despite the increasing female representation the world over, and the policies in place, only a small percentage has been able to develop their careers especially in universities.

Numerous gender related policies and legislations have been promulgated by various countries (Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango., 2009). All such policies were designed to address the problem of the under-representation of female academics particularly in learning institutions. These policies advocate in-service training and capacity building programmes to prepare women to advance to positions of power in private and public sectors by being given equal participation in the workplace. They are crafted, fundamentally, on the foundation of international human rights legislation, such as the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Despite these efforts, structural and institutional barriers create an uneven playing field for female academics and hinder their career progression (Kagoda, 2011).

The bulk of available literature on career development of female academics has been examined from a Eurocentric view (Mabokela, 2002; Bhalalusesa, 2010). Moreover, the authors opine that comparative studies in Canada, Europe, United States of America and New Zealand, and the results therefrom, paint a picture of under-representation and barriers to career development of female academics. This is notwithstanding the fact that such countries are well resourced in terms of finance, quality of education, governance and efficiency and may not have infrastructural deficiencies in their universities as compared to developing countries. In addition, there is evidence that research on female academics is abundant in many developing countries (Otunga & Ojuang 2004; De la Rey, 2005; Gaidzanwa, 2005; Maurtin-Cairncross, 2009 and Migosi, Muola & Maithya, 2012). However, the problem is that literature has focused on individual studies in developing countries and much of that literature is written as comparative studies within the provinces, states, schools and universities of the countries in question. These studies show intellectual convergence by female academics on issues of gender inequality, barriers to promotion of female academics, work and family role conflict (Zikhali & Maphosa, 2012; Nguyen, 2012; Mugweni, Mufanechiya, Dhlomo, 2011; Bhalalusesa, 2010; Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango ,2009; Ogbugo, 2009). Given these findings, the researcher is of the view that developing countries have largely overlooked this area of study, culminating in dearth of published materials on career development of female academics.

The perceptions of female academics regarding barriers to promotion and inequality to career development has also received little attention in management literature (Zikhali & Maphosa, 2012; Mugweni et al., 2011; Chabaya et al., 2009; Dominico & Jones, 2006; Forster, 2001; Tsoka & Mathipa, 2001) The authors above concluded that female academics blamed themselves for their career trajectory shenanigans. Their voice is reportedly missing from the under-representation, promotion prospects, leadership positions, equity in salaries puzzle. In a similar vein, BBC News in 2005 quoted renowned Zimbabwean female author, Tsitsi Dangarembga as saying, “one of the reasons why females fail to develop is lack of unity among themselves, they lack confidence, self-efficacy, assertiveness and have low self-esteem”. Grogan, (1995:25) in Tsoka and Mathipa, (2001), says “females must make their demands and their claim along with others; make them powerfully and

passionately". It is therefore, imperative that the perceptions of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean universities be brought to the fore by tapping into their responses to the different developmental opportunities and needs in and out of the workplace.

The criteria for developmental opportunities and needs in academia has changed over the years. Hassan (2011), in a study on the needs and perceptions of female academics regarding their professional development, asked what the needs of academics for their career development within the context of educational transformation in Universities were. Bhalalusesa (2010) had earlier on advocated the need for academic scholars to strive to acquire a PhD if career development within Universities is to be a reality. On the other hand, career development of some female academics in Zimbabwe has also been exacerbated over the last decade by a crippling loss of senior academics and researchers, lack of donor support and failure to keep abreast of international scholarship, trends and publications. Furthermore, the paucity of PhD holders in Zimbabwean universities has led to a Government decree that requires every University lecturer to have a PhD by 2015.

SARUA's regional overview reveals that the Graduation statistics in 2008 showed that 1 274 PhD graduates were from South African universities, thus the remaining 43 government supported universities in developing (Zimbabwe included) countries had only 143 (0.6%) PhD graduands among them. Moreover, a casual observation by the researcher at the graduation ceremonies held between 6 – 8 May 2013 at University of Fort Hare, Alice Campus in South Africa, revealed a highly disproportionate ratio of 82% of males graduating with a PhD compared to 18% of female academics (See the Graduation Programme, Alice Campus 6 – 8 May 2013). Concerns have been raised (Cortis & Casser, 2006) that female academics may find it difficult to compete equitably for promotion based on this criteria. Thus, career development of female academics may be obstructed by the imbalance of workloads, the increasing students enrolments (Mabokela, 2002; Tetty, 2009), occupation of lowest academic ranks, societal issues and family responsibilities (Wolf-Wendell & Ward, 2004). According to the researcher's observation while working at a University in Zimbabwe five years ago, female academics had to constantly prove themselves as capable academics if they were to remain in the university system after acquiring a PhD. The Mail and Guardian of February 2013,

highlighted that universities are now casualising their workforce. Even after obtaining a PhD, one has to be grateful to have a job within the academia, despite working hard and attaining good feedback for teaching and other responsibilities, most female academics are not permanent workers. It's either one leaves academia, gives up the dream or looks for a job 100% of the time. It is against this background that the researcher seeks to find out the perceptions of female academics on their career development using a comparative approach.

Female academics have informally voiced their concerns about the huge gap between policy and practice (Nguyen, 2012; Airini, Conner, McPherson, Midson & Wilson 2011; Ogbogu, 2009; Luke, 2000). Most policies with regard to career development have been described by female academics as tokenism and pieces of paper just meant to protect the universities legally (Aiston, 2011). Against this backdrop, female academics may have to situate themselves as “outsider on the inside” and may be seen as “other” when measured against standards and norms set by universities. As a result, the culture of long working hours, teaching workload, administration responsibilities, teaching over the weekend, makes it difficult for female academics to make other commitments such as family responsibilities and especially time for research which is a pre-requisite for career development.

Parlemo (2004), also notes that factors such as lack of easy access to informed male networks, shortage of mentors, lack of work place flexibility, unequal workloads and poor job design all contribute to career development of female academics within Universities. Furthermore, the ‘glass ceiling’ is also a term used to define the obstacles that female academics face in their workplace. The term ‘ceiling’, implies how female academics face hurdles when progressing in their careers and ‘glass’ implies that the career trajectory of female academics allows them to glance at what their future in the academia might be like, but failing to reach the apex (Tetty, 2009: 9). Gaidzanwa (2005), says that the problem lies in the fact that male academics do not hesitate to mentor fellow male colleagues, leaving female academics largely without mentors. Tetty (2009:14) argues that the lack of, “females in the professoriate to serve as role models so as to attract prospective female academics or mentor those already in their institutions” is responsible for this scenario. Hence Makura’s and Zireva’s (2013), suggestion that mentors (male and female) must play a cardinal role in institutions by exposing mentees to the art of their profession. The

researcher opines that the focus in universities of developing countries is more on institutional comparisons of their academic staff by rank and gender and not on the reasons that many female academics are lost through the pipeline before they even reach the position of senior lecturer or professor. Institutions of Higher Learning face difficulties in retaining and attracting female academics and there is migration of these academics. Opportunities in other sectors tend to be more lucrative than employment within higher education (Higher Education in South Africa, 2011)

These factors can only be overcome by strong policies and a change of mind-sets that support females in their professional careers. The phenomenon of “think professor-think male, or think vice chancellor- think male” aligns with how career development of female academics is psychologically viewed within university sectors. (Nguyen, 2012). It is usually taken for granted that men will naturally work outside home. Therefore, it is highly uncommon to find male partners who are willing to make a move to a new location with uncertain career prospects for the advancement of their partners (female) careers. Thus, females who succeed academically and thrive professionally are deemed deviant (Monsen, 2000) in Mutekwe, Modiba & Maphosa, 2011) and to top it all, Universities have been slow to respond to work and family balance issues. Rumbley et al (2008) as quoted by Nieuwenhuizen (2011), notes that, it is vital that the universities realize that the component of female academics and their career development is expected to be representative of at least the specific community in which the University operates.

Furthermore, literature on career development of female academics is documented more from a Eurocentric worldview. Researchers have tended to look at the female career trajectory in terms of constraints, demands and choices experienced by females in developed countries (Bhalalusesa, 2010; and Gaidzanwa 2007). This view suggests that much more work needs to be done as far as career development of female university academics is concerned from the perspective of developing countries. Therefore, it is against this background that the researcher seeks to advance an understanding of the complexities inherent in female Universities academics’ career development in developing countries using a comparative study.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although we live in the 21st century, which is characterised by advances in various spheres of life, much of the scholarly literature shows that female academics are still under-represented and cannot reach the same level of career progression, promotion and leadership as their male counterparts. Their opportunities in academia have therefore continued to wane because studies tend to build on statistics of female academics and not what is behind the scenes. The Mail & Guardian (May 2013); Coronelo, Moreno and Carraso, (2010); Gaidzanwa, (2005); and Mabokela, (2002) have singled out lack of access to mentors, chilly organisational culture, the use of research publications as a yardstick for promotion and developmental opportunities that segregate as factors that keep female academics stagnant in their careers for a very long time. It is also argued that universities are largely concerned with the total number of females in employment and not about enhancing their careers (Mail & Guardian in April 2012). The echelons of power in universities reveal that the higher the status, the lower the number of female academics. This situation prevails in spite of affirmative action policies that advocate rights of women. In Zimbabwe, for instance, marginalisation of female academics seems to prevail although there policies such as the Gender Affirmative Action Policy of 1992 and the recent National Gender Policy Section 5.5 of 2013-2017. South Africa also has policies and pieces of legislation such as the Gender Equality Act, (Act 39) of 1996, the Affirmative Action of 1998, the Employment Equity Act of 1998 and the National Policy Framework of Women Empowerment and Gender Equality of 2000, and the South African Human Right Commission of 2004.

In spite of these policy advances, career development of female academics remains fraught with challenges . The voice of the female academic is missing as university culture tends to be skewed towards male dominance. This has been an obstacle to meaningful career progression for female academics. The problem is that society has not changed, female academics are still viewed through male lenses (Makura, 2012).Historically, the career development of female academics has always been shaped by the truism that only male academics can survive in universities. The researcher opines that all female academics have important stories to tell and that they should tell their stories so that through self-expression they can achieve self-awareness and a full sense of selfhood. Therefore, this study unravels the story of

female academics with regard to their career development in universities. There is a bulk of literature on career development of female academics. However, most of the literature has been presented from a Eurocentric point of view (Mabokela, 2002; Bhalalusesa, 2010). Scholarly literature on career development of female academics in developing countries is scanty and the depiction of female academics' experiences and perspectives is inadequate. Therefore, this study is based on the axiom that female academics still face a number of challenges in their career development which they need to reveal if they are to realise positive career mobility.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.4.1 Main research question:

What are the perceptions of female academics on their career development in South African and Zimbabwean Universities?

1.4.2 Research Sub-questions

This study proposes the following questions:-

- How do South African and Zimbabwean female academics perceive their career progression and experiences in the academia?
- What factors do female academics perceive as barriers to their career progression in universities?
- What strategies are used by female academics to overcome barriers to their career development in South African and Zimbabwean Universities?
- What professional support do female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities need for their career development in universities?

1.5 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this current study is to find out the perceptions of female academics regarding their career development in some South African and Zimbabwean Universities.

1.6 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the research is to investigate the perceptions of female academics with regard to their career development in universities. To accomplish this, the researcher will be guided by the following research objectives

- To investigate female academics' perceptions and experiences regarding their career progression in some South African and Zimbabwean Universities
- To find out factors that are perceived as barriers to career progression by female academics in Zimbabwean and South African Universities
- To identify the strategies that can be used by female academics to overcome perceived barriers to career development in the respective universities
- To reveal the professional support that female academics perceive as necessary for their career development in South African and Zimbabwean Universities.

1.7 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

This study assumes that there are female academics in universities where the study will be carried out, and that they will co-operate in this research endeavour. In this vein, this study assumes that:-

- Female academics hold perceptions regarding career progression and their experiences in South African and Zimbabwean Universities.
- There are barriers in South African and Zimbabwean Universities that affect the career development of female academics
- Female academics employ different strategies to overcome barriers to career development in universities
- There is lack of support from Universities to enhance career development of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The dearth of comparative studies on career development of female academics in developed countries creates a gap in useful empirical literature (Nguyen, 2012; and Bhalalusesa, 2010). Therefore, this study seeks to bridge that information gap with the hope that its findings will help illuminate and reveal the experiences of female academics in developing countries. The reason for comparing Zimbabwe and South Africa is that female academics' perceptions may provide interesting lenses through which to analyse the similarities and differences of their career development taking into consideration the fact that these two countries have different academic and educational backgrounds. It is also anticipated that this study will offer a valuable

lesson not only to the 21st century generation of female academics, but also to female(s) who wish to enter into the academia in the near future by exposing unacknowledged forms of domination and advocating emancipatory consciousness in the academia. Literature on female academics is mostly about promotion prospects, research publications, barriers to gender inequality, ranks and work and family conflicts and leadership. Therefore, the significance of this study lies in its ability to supplement the existing research in developing countries on the perceptions of female academics with regard to their career development, thus opening up spaces for previously silenced voices (Mertens, 2005). It is hoped that universities will understand the importance of empowering and promoting career development of female academics in Africa, particularly in Zimbabwe and South Africa.

1.9 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study will be limited to two public universities in South Africa and Zimbabwe. This study will only investigate the perceptions of female academics on their career development.

1.10 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher encountered a number of challenges during the data collection phase. Securing the interviews was a problem as it was hard to find the participants in their offices. Some of the interviews with the senior female academics had to be done over a number of days because of their busy schedules with some of the interviews being done after working hours. Moreover, securing venues for the focus groups in both universities was problematic. It proved to be a mammoth task to get the participants at the same time, same place and on the same day. As a result, **both interviews** in universities under study were eventually done as interview cum lunch as this was the only time when all participants were free.

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

1.11.1 Perceptions - the process by which people (female academics) attach meaning to experiences (Eggen and Kauchack, 2001).

1.11.2 Career Development – it is the growth of an individual by striving to be in a better status through increased recognition in a particular field of study (Domenico & Jones, 2006).

1.12 CHAPTER OUTLINE

The outline of the study will be presented in the form of six chapters as indicated below

Chapter 1

This chapter gives a background of the study, the research problem, and significance of the study. In addition, the delimitation and definition of key terms used in the study are discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 2

The theoretical framework used is discussed in detail. Related literature is discussed under various themes as derived from the research questions namely: the perceptions and experiences of female academics in Universities; barriers to their career development; strategies used for career development; and professional support for career development of female academics in Universities.

Chapter 3

This chapter provides a detailed explanation of the research methodology used in this study. Particular focus on the research paradigm in which this study is located is discussed. The research instruments (description and justification) population and sampling, adopted to collect data and the ethical considerations are also discussed.

Chapter 4

Data is presented and analysed in this chapter. Tables are used only on the biographical data of the participants. The rest of the chapter presents and analyses the data collection techniques discussed in the preceding chapter, namely, semi structured interviews, focus groups and documents analysis.

Chapter 5

This chapter focuses on the research findings which are interpreted to give meaning with regard to career trajectories of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities

Chapter 6

The summary of important and relevant issues, conclusions and recommendations based on the results of the study and suggestions for future research will be made.

1.13 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter provided a general introduction to the study. It discussed the perceptions of female academics on their career development in Universities. The chapter also posed the research problem, the aims, objectives and research questions that underpin the study. Furthermore, the significance of the study, delimitations and definition of key terms are also tackled. A brief chapter outline of the study is also provided. The next chapter reviews related literature.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews preliminary documented literature and the theoretical framework of the study. The review of related literature provides a framework or springboard for argument whether for or against and critically engages with the study. The researcher looked at related studies undertaken by other researchers on perceptions of female academics' career development in Universities. Knowledge gaps were also identified in order to place this study into its appropriate perspective. To shed more light on the research problem, the review of related literature was organised as follows :

- a) Theoretical framework
- b) Experiences and career development of female academics in universities
- c) Barriers to career development of female academics
- d) Strategies that can be used to promote career development of female academics
- e) Professional support for career development of female academics in Universities

2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 LIBERAL FEMINIST THEORY

The liberal feminist theory addresses women's lives and experiences and it can be used to challenge the status quo that disadvantages women (Marshall, 1984; 1992; Hall, 1996 in Bhalalusesa 2010; Smith, 2003;). Also known as the egalitarian or mainstream theory (Babbie & Mouton, 2005) the liberal feminist theory was used in this study because it promotes equality between males and females and is against oppression and male supremacy (Women Leadership and Governance Institute, 2002; Gentile, 1999). This theory focuses on females and their ability to amass resources from a variety of sources in their individual and personal lives such as family, spouses, children (micro level) and through social, political and educational and professional levels (macro level) (Kenway and Modra, 1992). The liberal

feminist theory is concerned about giving a choice to females (academics in Universities) so that they can be able to exercise control over their own destinies. Therefore, this theory advocates ways in which female (academics) can empower themselves and how they can develop emancipatory consciousness (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994) by rising above the generally held beliefs, norms and values with regard to their career development in universities and society.

Moreover, the liberal theory enables us to realise that though female academics may encounter a number of hurdles in developing their careers in the academia, they are not spineless or inferior (Van Der Poll, 2012). They have the urge to survive and adapt under stressful and challenging conditions. Hence their sole aim of achieving positive recognition of their careers and being promoted into meaningful and equitable positions in academia through merit (Kenway 1992). In addition, the liberal feminist theory has over the years proved to be the most attractive because it informs the works of many gender reformers in learning institutions, policy making authorities and focuses on female provision for both practical and strategic gender needs. Interestingly, this theory has its roots in the African conditions (Meena, 1992) because African women (academics) in developing countries have always challenged oppressive ways and tensions that arise when they interact with men in learning institutions.

Therefore, its main contribution is that it has provided massive ideas and information for the implementation of equal opportunities and affirmative action policies. These have in turn contributed to the voice and abilities of the female academics being recognised in learning institutions as they advocate equal opportunities with regard to their career development. Cognisant of the foregoing, the researcher subscribes to the assertion of Johnson and Thomas (2012), that the liberal feminist theory is flexible. It supports and allows the voice of the female academics to dismantle the institutional structures that have been used for a long time to buttress the existing state of affairs in learning institutions which have steadily ostracised certain groups in developing their careers. The point arising from this feminist theory is that female academics are equally capable and committed to their career development and that the healing remedy is to eradicate the persistent discrimination practices within the university structures (Chowwen, 2004).

The main strengths of the liberal feminist theory according to hooks (2000), is its capacity to show that the environment that female academics operate from promotes faddism, and impermanent and insincere adaptation of different values. hooks (2000), further argues that it is this environment which may easily persuade female academics to think that positive changes have indeed taken place in academia when there has been little or no change at all. An additional strength is that the liberal feminist theory is premised on identifying and removing the structural, psychological and social barriers to female academics' equal representation in positions of power and authority within the academia (Kenway 1992). It can be noted from the preceding statements that the liberal feminist theory will act as a framework in guiding this writer in choosing the methodology, data collection methods and determining how data will be analysed and discussed.

The researcher finds the liberal feminist theory to be relevant to the study because it is built on the foundation that humans are of equal status, created equal, should be treated equally and the opportunities available should be transparent to everyone irrespective of gender. It also grants the female academics the "openings" to explore, voice out their experiences, challenges and achievements in the academia. The researcher further finds the liberal feminist theory ideal for this study because it takes into consideration the current realities and recognises the importance of allowing female academics "as other" at the margins to define and clarify the limits or boundaries of those margins that affect their career development in universities (Collins, 2000; hooks, 2000).

Therefore using this theory is advantageous as it highlight the plight of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. In addition, it clearly makes the point that the gender of academics should not be implicated in the systems and power structures of universities. The liberal feminist theory aligns with this study because it argues that equal opportunities are not about replacing patriarchy with matriarchy, neither is it about female academics overtaking the male academics in universities. The main issue is gender equity and equality which promotes career development of female academics in universities.

2.3 EXPERIENCES AND CAREER PROGRESSION OF FEMALE ACADEMICS IN UNIVERSITIES

A woman defines herself through the way she lives her embodied situation in the world – through the way in which she makes something of what the world makes of her (Moi 1999). The fact that female academics in developed and developing countries continue to occupy a unique place within academia has positioned their experiences and career progression prospects to the margins (hooks, 2000). Linton, in his book, *The cultural background of personality*, argued that babies “who are not loved do not live”. Literally this means for female academics to prosper and progress in their careers, Universities have to move away from the cultural and traditional values and norms that still regard females as the “other”, fit only to stay at home without progressing in their careers. Career development is the positive work achievement, consequences of human capital, socio-psychological factors and outcomes which an individual accumulates over time in line with their work experiences in a particular profession (Creswell, 2013).

Getting a clear global overview of female academics’ participation and career development in higher education is a mammoth task. (Tsjmosland, 2009). According to Brooks (1997), the experiences of female academics in universities should not be generalised as if they were a comprehensible and an integrated whole. She further points out that the experiences of female academics in academia are diverse and touch on many issues that affect their career progression in and out of academia. In the same vein, White, Bagilhole & Riordan, (2012) assert that the under-representation of female academics in universities begins at senior lecturer positions and is even more conspicuous at professorial level. Some of the reasons for the under and over-representation of female academics in the university ranks are due to work and family responsibilities, male dominance, policies in universities and lack of support systems in place. On this issue, Erikson-Zetterquist & Styhrer (2008), in Aiston (2011) are quick to remind us that in Universities gendering is manifested in many ways, the most debated of which is the presence of glass ceiling, that is those invisible, culturally embedded assumptions and beliefs about the skills and competences of female academics that prevent their career development.

In fact, the research on female academics' career development and their experiences in universities has seen the "birth" of "legitimised" terms that are used to propagate the phenomena of their career development in universities. Terms such as *glass ceiling*, *sticky floors*, *pay gaps*, *wrong stuff*, *blame the victim*, *labyrinth*, *gossamer ceiling*, *glass cliff*, *glass floor*, *glass wall*, *glass door* (Cohen et al, 1998; ;Ryan & Haslam, 2005; Eargly and Carli, 2007; Barnet-Versat & Woolf, 2008 and Guillaune & Pochic, 2009) as cited by Smith, Caputi & Crittenden, 2012) are all used to describe and identify the experiences and magnitude of discrimination against the career development of female academics. Universities

It can be interpreted from the foregoing that the metaphors used do not necessarily reflect homogeneity. Rather, it shows that the university is one such site where issues concerning the career progression of female academics continue to reveal new and disturbing possibilities of gender regime in favour of the male academics (Brooks & Mackinnon 2001). According to Tsoka and Mathipa (2001), the reality behind the veneer of the obstacles, experiences, challenges that female academics encounter in their career progression is that they have had no career orientation made available to them.

In support of the above mentioned views, Mabokela (2002), did a study on reflections of black women in South African Universities. Using a modest sample of ten scholars and collecting data through intensive semi structured interviews, Mabokela (2002), revealed that the experiences and career progression of female academics in Universities was through trial and error. The participants in the study felt they had not been properly inducted into the academic profession so as to learn the ropes. Furthermore, the female academics highlighted that the ambiguity in the promotion policies at institutions of Higher Learning complicated a lot of issues. Thus, lack of transparency in the promotion process was a cause of concern which has led them to being stranded in the "ivory basement" (Groombridge, 2004) in universities. However Zikhalis' and Maphosa (2012) study done in Zimbabwe on women in organizational management universities appears to dispute that there is indistinctness in the promotion policies. Zikhali and Maphosa (2012), used a mixed method approach with a sample size of 50 randomly selected participants, showed that policies in the workplace were more biased towards women. The interrelation in these two studies is that they compare the females' predicaments in the workplace.

As a result, the results from both studies are indicative that the existence of meritocracy and equity of policies in any workplace is also largely reliant on the organisational culture and not the countries in question.

Meanwhile, it is apparent from the above sentiments that the experiences of female academics in academia and the strength of the underlying university and organisational cultures are principal variables which influence their career development. Tsui, Wang, & Xin (2006) posit that organisational culture, though ubiquitous, is at the same time intangible. It plays an important role in establishing an organisation identity by giving it value, direction, and purpose in order to increase performance as well as enable organisations to adapt to external environment conditions.

Nemagembe and Ntayi (2012) echo the same sentiments and posit that organisational culture is the shared values and beliefs that give identity to members and generates commitment beyond the “self” and enhances social systems stability. Therefore, lack of a conducive organisational culture, the chilly climate and “gender” schemas, isolation, negative and unprofessional treatment, scanty opportunities to work collectively, exclusion from professional activities, are the permeating factors which help to account for female academics failure to thrive in academia (Stout et al, 2007; Kamler & Rasheed, 2006). Moreover, when female academics began to make their presence felt, already the universities had for many years, reproduced and built a solid foundation based on male patriarchal culture.

From established research, it is apparent that the reproduction of male dominance in universities is exacerbated by the fact that female academics are often portrayed as the main “reservoir” and a source of cultural traditions in which the subservient and unobstructed characteristics of women are regarded as important values to retain (World Bank, 2002). This creates obstinate problems for female academics that choose to go off the trodden track of tradition with regard to the development of their career. Therefore, universities continue to be boys clubs such that the skills needed for successful academic career is a socialisation process that no female academic can participate in (White, 2003).

The researcher argues that to circumvent the seeming challenges, patriarchal boundaries within universities need to be tested and destroyed (De la Rey, 1999).

Thus, male academics should cease to be hostile and resistant to renegotiating the values, norms and beliefs of their 'boys clubs' and networking, especially to those female academics that they view as 'unruly and difficult' to handle because they intimidate the existence of their boys' networks and state of affairs in Universities. Bagilhole (1994) confirms the widely held belief that the pre-establishment of the "boys network, boys club, and male domination" have thwarted efforts made by female academics to achieve and gain credit in universities.

Findings on the studies done by De la Rey (1999) in South Africa show that the endemic problem within universities is that research on the experiences and career progression of female academics is being swept underneath the carpet. Thus, issues on the social context and power relations that female academics experience in academia are to a certain extent ignored and this has resulted in a tremendous waste of human potential. Makura (2008) cited in Makura (2012), writing from a Zimbabwean perspective also had similar results in his study and buttressed the above sentiments saying, it is unfortunate that the scarcity of female academics in the higher echelons of learning institutions reveals the misuse and discrimination of their abilities.

Drawing on previous research, Stout, Staiger & Jennings (2007), at a University of Texas in Austin, adopted a qualitative study, and found that even those female academics that have made it to the top echelons of the university rungs still profuse that the culture of the Universities has hardly changed. They are over looked and are the forgotten group in the academia. The female academics explicitly stated that they felt undervalued, demoralised and that feelings of helplessness and devaluation were part of their experiences with regard to their career development in universities.

Stout et al (2007), further adds that 81% of the stories told by their research participants were victim stories. Perhaps, the reasons could have been the micro invalidations and subtle "micro insults" (Cobb-Roberts, 2011) that female academics are exposed to that go unabated in universities. On the other hand, Ismail & Rasdi (2007) conducted a similar study on the career development and experiences of High Flying Women Academics (HFWAs) in Malaysia. Their data were gathered using in-depth interviews of 31 female professors. The findings of their research show that though these (HFWAs) have nearly reached the pinnacle of their careers,

they still have to work hard and network like men so as to continually prove themselves as capable academicians.

Thus, though the above studies were done in different contexts, they endorse the results of research studies that show why female academics have shorter academic careers than their male counterparts and have to be over-prepared for their positions should they be promoted to higher ranks in the academia. Double standards are applied to female academics in universities and they are expected to accomplish and produce results more than the male academics (Nazemi, Mortazavi and Borjalilou, 2012; Harris, 2007).

Thus, it is not surprising that one of the participants in Mabokela's (2002) research contended that though female academics experienced persistent prejudice and discrimination in universities, such discrimination tended to be difficult to challenge because it exists among the most educated and experienced *fundis*. As a result, it becomes a colossal task to have proof that they (female academics) are exposed to such practices because they are very subtle, pervasive, and imperceptible and can easily go unnoticed. It is unfortunate that though there are female academics that have made their mark and have risen to higher ranks of the university echelons, their careers continue to be marred with negative experiences and failure to progress in academia. Makondo (2012), using a case study of four South African and Zimbabwean Universities opines that, if pertinent changes are to be realised, Universities need a total overhaul with regard to the career progression of their female academics so that excellence can be attained, sustained and retained.

Interestingly, Mabokela (2002) sums it all up and says, when female academics fail to perform, the questions asked should be; *"were these female academics given support, training and exposure they needed to do their respective jobs effectively and accordingly and skills to enhance their career progression?"* The researcher believes the above sentiments accentuates the inability and the unwillingness of male academics in universities to share knowledge, and experiences appropriately and freely. This influences the continual experiences of marginalisation and undermining of female academics in universities.

Moreover, scholars in South Africa and Zimbabwe have similar results which allude to the view that career progression and experiences of female academics in

Universities are influenced by a number of factors such as mentoring, work place policies, organisational culture, lack of self-efficacy and self-confidence, race and sexism. Apparently, this has intensified why female academics continue being in the minority in the higher ranks of the university echelons.

However, this author is of the view that the highly individualistic and fragmented gender relationships that exist between the female academics and the universities are extraordinary and these actually accentuate the negative forces towards their career development. Hence, Coleman (2003), postulates that it is paramount that the culture of a learning institution should embrace collegiality and collaboration with a common understanding of shared values and aims that result in changing, promoting and establishing career development of its staff members.

Moreover, Bush (2011), proposes that the culture, values, norms and mission statement should be the heart of any organisation (including Universities), and should contribute to career satisfaction and impact positively on its staff retention by striving to be professional learning communities (Kilbane, 2009). From the preceding paragraph, this researcher reinforces the above statement and opines that the universities' ability to promote the career development of female academics may determine whether or not Universities will thrive or perish in the years ahead should female academics continue to exit the pipeline before they reach their full potential.

Ironically, research done by Zikhali & Maphosa (2012) in Zimbabwe and Beoku-Betts (2005), demonstrate that, lack of support from other female academics and lack of voice in sharing their hopes, challenges and experiences also affects their career progression. Zikhali & Maphosa (2011), and Beoku-Betts (2005) findings are consistent with an earlier study done by Schulze (2009) on Job satisfaction of Black female academics in South Africa. The participants in the data that were collected alluded to too much isolation as some academics (female) were very cold and distant and did not hesitate to give negative treatment to the suggestions they made. It can be pointed out that the support system that female academics offer each other can be a healing mechanism which can contribute to how they can grow and prolong their permanency in universities (Harris 2007). For instance, Forster (2001) used a mixed method approach of questionnaires and semi-structured interviews at a UK University to tape on the experiences of female academics with regard to work and

family. This scholar found out that despite the inroads that female academics have made into the academia in the last 20 years, their career development is still fraught with failure to balance between work and family responsibilities which have brought careers of some female academics to a halt.

This has given rise to numerous scholars using allegories such as *dual role syndrome*, *double shift*, *second shift*, *maternal wall*, *mommy track*, *opt out revolution*, *leaking pipeline*, *hurdles in the pipeline*, *off and on the ramp* to describe the impediments that affect female academics' career progression (Hochschild, 1989; Belan, 2003; De la Rey in Theron, 2006; Hewlett & Luce, 2005) quoted by Smith, Caputi & Crittenden (2012). Moreover, a number of studies have shown that combining these two affects the career progression of female academics in learning institutions (Nguyen, 2012; Naidoo et al, 2011; Bhalalusesa, 2010; Chabaya et al., 2009; Makura, 2009; Dominico & Jones, 2006; Ward & Wolf-Wendel 2004, Brooks, 1997; Bagilhole, 1993; and Marshall & Barnett, 1993). Ostensibly, having a family especially for the female academics is still a "sealed dialogue" within the academia which, sadly, must remain imperceptible in the academic settings.

Therefore, this researcher believes it is important that universities recognise that work and family roles are not mutually exclusive entities but typically overlap each other. Failure to strike a balance between a plethora of these roles is a salient stressor for female academics and this has led to attitudes, behaviours, and emotions associated with one role negatively spilling over to the other (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000). In furtherance to the above, Hacifazlioglu (2010), who used a qualitative research design and a modest sample of 4 female academics, 2 from Turkey and 2 from United States of America, concluded that the heart of an academic career is commitment at being a faculty member and finding balance between family and work as the necessary and missing ingredient for career progression female academics.

In addition, work and family role conflicts are not the only factors that affect career progression of female academics in Universities. The lack of mentoring and adequate role models for female academics is pervasive in universities. There is a paucity of senior female mentors who can coach, sponsor, protect and increase exposure and visibility of junior female academics (O'Neill, 2002). Shaw (2005), in

Harris (2007), Quinlan (2006), reflect on similar arguments and point out that female academics in developed countries do not get adequate mentoring on how to teach, research and publish. Research on higher education teaching in these two countries under study show that most academics are 'thrown' into teaching with derisory teaching or mentoring (Mabokela, 2003). As such, there is need to offer these academics adequate professional support to improve their teaching and learning efficacy by creating teaching and learning conditions that support critical self-reflection.

Undeniably, these writers further argue that it is assumed that knowledge of how, when and what to teach, research or publish is part of the graduation preparation. The researcher is of the view that such an assumption must be challenged. Being a female academic at a University may mean being exposed to burdens of being treated as an individual of lesser ability, intelligence and status. For instance, in a study done by Linda (1995), her results uncovered that the predicament among female academics was that they were not in favour of research publications being used as form of an assessment tool for promotion.

In addition, the female academics, in their informal meeting have highlighted that the academic canon used in universities for promotion is discriminatory and frustrating because their non-credited academic responsibilities are not taken into account when it comes to the promotion game. This is despite the fact that new academics (females) enter into academia with an ardent vision of freedom, autonomy and opportunities for intellectual discovery and growth.

In describing the present situations faced by female academics, Kjeldal, Rindfleish and Sheridan (2005) vividly point out that the workload distribution between male and female academics in Universities reveals a very different outcome when it comes to the career progression. Males are more likely to have "teaching free" periods and to be involved in teaching courses that involve less face-to-face teaching responsibilities and student consultation hours, thereby freeing them to pursue their careers. Ironically, this writer is of the view that if teaching workloads, administrative work and pastoral care were part of the promotions criteria, most female academics would have reached their academic plateau.

Unfortunately, this vision does not match what female academics actually experience over time in Universities (Rice, Sorcinelli & Austin, 2000). The fact is that female academics hardly describe themselves as very satisfied with their career progression (Schulze, 2009, citing Kelly, 1989). These scholar's findings show that female academics place themselves on the level of fairly satisfied within their careers. Cognisant of the foregoing, it is apparent that female academics under-rate themselves and tend to depend on the "virtuous" beliefs on how their career progression is perceived within the academia. Most female academics tend to be disappointed about their experiences as academics and the route that their career progression follows once they are inside the universities. This is despite the tenacious efforts that they would have put so that they can fit in and be perceived as valued members within their department and faculties (Schulze 2009).

However, Johnson & Thomas (2012) refute the above and posit that the case in point with regard to the career progression of female academics in Universities is that they have failed to reconcile with their less than fully empowered status, negotiating for positive working environment, culture and climate within the academia to ensure their own advancement and career mobility. The researcher disputes the above assertion because female academics experience situations whereby they are expected to assimilate or acculturate to the established culture and ideologies within universities that do not fully see and hear them because of their minority (Johnson & Thomas 2012). Thus, they find themselves speaking the language of the male academics just to survive in the University environment and have to constantly alter their personality and styles for the sake of successful interactions within the academia. Thus, the previous paragraph brings us to the conclusion that these tenacious philosophies paint a picture that universities may not after all represent "safe havens" for female academics to develop their careers.

Quinlan (2006) further posits that gender politics in universities tend to obstruct the development of productive male-female relationships especially in mentoring. Male academics tend to perceive positive results when mentoring each other. This may be attributed to the notions that the traditional description of mentoring originating from the developed countries is based on models of traditional male career development (Erikson, 1968; Levinson et al, 1978; and Schein, 1993). Thus, to yield positive results, mentoring needs to be meaningful, well aligned with the premeditated goals

of the university. It requires a self-effacing relationship between mentor and mentee regardless of gender so that it cannot be seen as a vague concept (Harris, 2007).

Unfortunately, the academic canon is founded on a highly masculinist culture at universities and acts as a barricade to career progression of female academics. Meyerson and Fletcher (2000) in Nguyen (2012) observed that university practices and norms are constructed around men's life experiences. Such practices are not only taken for granted, but are difficult to change and female academics constantly experience difficulties in trying to navigate their career progression in predominantly masculine management culture.

The fact that the balance of power is in the hands of male academics means that female academics even experience disadvantages with regard to pay and promotion. For instance, female academics in Australian Universities often do not receive the pay and career opportunities to progress in their career that commensurate with their skills and experience (Neale & White 2004). In a similar vein, the review of literature in UK, New Zealand and Canada also shows identical issues of inequity in pay, and fewer opportunities for promotion (Mabokela, 2002).

Hence, this writer opines that the reality behind the veneer is that the career progression of female academics wavers between "bitter sweet" experiences. On one hand, female academics are always ready to lend a hand, to try hard to fit in and be good populaces of their department, faculties and university as a whole. But, on the other hand, they have to work twice as hard, even covering some responsibilities that are not even part of the job-description and yet the academia continues to be crippled with poor rewarding systems especially for the female academics. Hence the Council of Higher Education (2009) is of the view that the success of universities and development of its staff members is dependent on the appropriate rewarding system of its academic staff.

Meanwhile, Altabach (2002) in Niewenhuizen (2011) found in his study that remuneration and working conditions in Universities of developing countries are inadequate. This is compounded by the fact that female academics in developing and even developed countries are in the minority in the management of universities and this makes it difficult for them to have a voice or contribute on policies or future direction in which the universities can be channelled to.

These scholars' sentiments are echoed by the research findings of Ward & Wolf – Wendel (2004). Focusing on a sample size of 29 female academics and 9 research intensive Universities in United States of America, Ward & Wolf-Wendel (2004) administered semi-structured protocol to guide their interviews. Using a constant comparative approach, these scholars observed that the female academics unanimously agreed that the prevalent inclination among themselves was that the policies in most of the universities were just papers in black and white which lacked transparency with regard to promotion in universities.

To begin with, studies of career progression in United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia, Uganda, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe draw a clear picture that the awareness and the existence of gender policies have had a limited impact on the culture of universities. Therefore, the concerns about the differences between policy and practice are being voiced by female academics (Ogbugo, 2012). Moreover, Airini et al (2011) and Luke (2002) concede that poor policies on female academics returning from maternity leave and discrimination in female academics continues to grow. Most female academics feel that though these policies are meant to create and enhance a positive organisational culture, they are in fact lukewarm and they strictly regard them as merely a paper exercise which protects the institution legally (Monroe et al, 2008 as cited by Aiston, 2011).

Indeed even in the nineties, female academics were already up in arms that the mere existence of gender equality policies would cleverly disguise the subtle and inescapable discrimination which unfortunately, the female academics of the 21st century are now experiencing (Brooks, 1997). Recently, the Mail and Guardian May 2013, noted that the real threat to academe is internal because some academics actually sabotage policies of employment and promotion and hinder progression prospects of those they dislike, showing lack of collegiality in (South African) Universities. Cognisant of the foregoing, there seems to be a widening gap with how female academics perceive the policies in place and their involvement. To circumvent the seeming challenges, the researcher draws upon the argument of Morley (1999) that universities should strive to ensure that policies put in place must be a process and not just statements and words that cannot be turned into deeds.

A glance at the Zimbabwean situation reveals a different scenario as compared to South Africa on the issue of policies. Thus in their writings, Mugweni et al (2011) argue that change has been realised, some institutions are promoting good practices of promotion and policies as a way of upgrading and promoting female academics. In the same vein, the opening of opportunities for women which are in line with gender equity and equality policies has seen a number of female academics paving their way into the universities and holding powerful positions. It may be concluded that policy makers and academics in the field have given increasing attention to education and career development of female academics .

As can be noted from the foregoing paragraphs, it will be recalled by the reader that the career development of female academics in both in developing and developed countries seems to be hampered by the emphasis on and prioritisation of research publications as criteria for promotion in universities. (Brook, 1997; White, 2003; and Sullivan, 1996) cited by Hemmings, Rushbrook and Smith, (2003). Female academics in United States of America, the United Kingdom, Canada and New Zealand, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Uganda and South Africa lack the adequate guidance and time to accomplish all tasks that can promote their career development (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004; Gaidzanwa, 2005; Nemagembe and Ntayi, 2012). Therefore, the pragmatic way forward is to make the clandestine activities within the academia blatant by exposing the hidden assumptions and decisions made pertaining to the deterring factors of the career development of female academics. This can be achieved by identifying the barriers that hinder their career development, creating strategies that can be used to promote their careers and provide professional support universities.

2.4 BARRIERS AFFECTING CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE

ACADEMICS

The career growth and experiences of female academics is hampered by a number of factors. It will therefore be revealed to the reader that these factors are inter-related and tend to impact each other. Therefore the researcher shall discuss each of these factors as a separate entity with the hope of accentuating the role that each barrier plays with regard to career development of female academics in universities.

2.4.1 WORK AND FAMILY CONFLICT

Authors such as Cullibo and Brown (2003) have used the term barriers to refer to events or conditions internal to a person or those of his or her environment that make career progression difficult. Prejudicial attitude towards female academics are the most ingrained barriers towards their career development. According to Nguyen (2012), females are thought to be more communal, soft spoken and gentle. Such communal aspects are often considered to be inappropriate to develop a career. Domegan & Flemming, (2003) support Nguyen's (2012) sentiments and contend that cultural traditions that women are expected to follow put the female academics in disadvantaged positions in trying to advance their careers.

Globally, female are expected to follow a number of traditions, whether educated or not, so as to not loose "face value". Because of such pre-conceived thought, female academics find they are at times "forced to display their feminine traits" and this can limit their professional opportunities and career development so as to avoid being labelled as unfeminine, uncaring and negligent mothers (Dominico & Jones, 2006).

In the same vein, Tsoka and Mathipa (2001) concluded that, unfortunately for females, education which is expected to play a liberating role, has taught them to accept and practice what society expects of them at the expense of what they aspire to be. Cortis & Carter (2006) also reinforce the embedded assumptions that domestic responsibilities often buttress the argument that female academics may not be viewed or are not deeply involved in their work as men. These views are in tandem with an argument advanced by Gaidzanwa (1998) in a study done at the University in Zimbabwe. The study concluded that female academics were viewed with misconceptions and degradation in the work place because of failure in exhibiting commitment and conscientiousness in meeting the organisational aims and objectives due to their efforts in trying to balance work and family responsibilities.

In the same vein, a recent study done yet by another Zimbabwean scholar Nani (2011) on challenges faced by Urban Zimbabwean Women Entrepreneurs shows that the goal posts have not shifted at all in the barriers faced by female academics. Nani (2011), points out that woman often have to choose between work and family because of being continually tied to the biological tasks, which may lead to

absenteeism. This is why they tend to be left behind in their career development. As a result, management may view these interruptions as signals that women lack commitment. Therefore, they are not given leadership positions. Such ideas actually emanate from the historically held perceptions against working females. This writer also buttresses the foregoing sentiments because it is the female academics who bear the brunt and responsibility of achieving their own sense of balance between work, family and traditional values.

According to Armenti (2000) in Ward & Wolf-Wendel (2004), the structure of academic career silences females' personal lives and creates taboos related to being a parent. Most female academics have casually raised concerns that family responsibilities are in most instances time consuming and too demanding. Since the bulk of family responsibilities are directed to women, female academics are no exception and their career development continues to be slowed down. Due to the pressure of the family responsibilities (Nguyen, 2012), it is always the females that have to interrupt their careers by taking time off, working fewer hours and working part-time and having fewer years of job experience. Gaidzanwa (2005), opines that issues of marriage, child bearing and rearing actually make female academics to be less physically and socially mobile. It is important to bring to light that these barriers do not just begin when female academics are working.

The onset of these barriers to career development of female academics actually begins when female academics are children, they are reinforced throughout schooling, college and work and become complex over time. In her thesis on Senior Women Academics in Hong Kong, Lam (2006), found that some of the female academics in her study believed that "having a child in academia is an act of academic suicide", literally meaning Universities are not set up to deal with family issues and such role expectations impede on one's career advancement (Case, 2007).

The case in point is that, some females tend to avoid academic careers because of the perceived barriers to parenthood and slow movement in career development. It is therefore a travesty that the unique structure of the universities offers female academics no good opportunity to take time out for children. The household, child care and work which are a treble shift to some female academics have proved

difficult to dismantle. Hence, Chakravarty (1986) as cited by Ogbogu (2009), claims that, it is mostly those female academics in their fifties that have more time for themselves because their children are grown up and are able to network and make contacts that help positively in their careers.

Bagilhole, (1993) refutes the preceding assertions and postulates that the number of dependants, family responsibilities and age does not affect time devoted to developing ones' career. Ironically, their study found out that female academics with children had higher levels of research productivity than those without. In a similar vein, a research study carried out by Chipunza (2003), concluded that some female academics believed that family responsibilities and the requisites of coping strategies reflected positively on their competences as wives and mothers regardless of the age factor. These female academics seem to hold the view that though career development is indeed slowed down by family responsibilities, one can always reclaim their academic space later on or re-enter the academic pipeline in the future.

Furthermore, Monroe (2008), discovered that a number of female academics in his study did not judge balancing work and child care as relevant to career development in Universities. Rather such issues were seen by these academics as the responsibility of an individual and should not be used as a stumbling block to career development. This brings us to Hakim's (2006), observations that it is not the historical unfairness that has stopped female academics to develop their careers, but their attitude. In this context, this scholar clearly points out that she has limited sympathy for female academics who take time-off to have children, and then use it as an excuse for their failure to progress the ladder, arguing that academic life offers flexibility that is beyond most sectors' wildest dreams.

Cognisant to the foregoing, Hakim (2006) fails to unravel in her sentiments that it is not all Universities that have some form of flexibility. Even if they do, academia is a very "greedy" career which has led authorities to say it even causes stress and burnout. Hakim's (2006) views are based on elitist and Eurocentric views. For instance, research done by Geber (2000) in South Africa and Mwana (2010) in Zimbabwe both yielded similar results that females are born care givers and responsible for running the homes. Geber (2000) and Mwana (2010), further add that society (in South Africa and Zimbabwe) expects married women, especially those

with children to make their families first priority before anything else, that is, their professional development. Thus, instead of change being experienced in South African and Zimbabwean contexts, female academics struggle to develop a career and find balance between work, family and outside commitment has intensified. This is the reason why the study is focusing on developing countries because female academics in these countries appear to have different worldviews from those in developed countries.

On the other hand, this does not change the fact that work and family responsibilities in academia are a salient experience. The personal individual struggle, compromises and solutions to the daily problems of attempting to combine being a good wife, parent and a competent, productive academic are unvoiced (Leornard & Malina 1994 in Aiston, 2011). These scholars actually affirm Ogbugo (2009), findings in Nigeria that family responsibilities and institutional constraints are a major limitation to female academics' career development and research productivity.

An equally perplexing issue is brought afore in a comparative study by Gudhlanga, Magadza & Mafa (2012) on the challenges and opportunities faced by female in Open Distance Learning (ODL) in rural and urban settings in Zimbabwe. The results indicate that females continue to have problems in developing their careers because of lack of external support. For example, one participant in the study highlighted how her husband tore up her research following some misunderstanding because of her pursuance in advancing her studies academically. There is a fine line between professional and domestic spheres and trying to satisfy the two can lead to professional frustration and high levels of stress especially among female academics. For instance, the transformation of Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) in South Africa since 1994 has affected and influenced many sectors within the universities. Career and job satisfaction, and the ever increasing number of student population has led to the academic profession being identified as a stressful career. Moreover, the unrealistic expectations from the universities management has also contributed to brain drain.

Meanwhile, research shows that a female academics' career's is usually 10 years behind that of a male academic in cases where they graduated from the university at the same time (Beoku-Betts 2005). This scholar further states that this is due to lack

of support, dual roles that are often exhausting which lead to low career performance. Turner (2007) opines that it is highly uncommon to find male partners/husbands who are willing to make a move to a new location with uncertain career prospects as a way of supporting the advancement of their wives' careers. Though the liberal feminist theory used in this study supports equality in and out of academia, the career development of female academics is at times worsened by the home-environment which can be highly resistant to reform and support.

In furtherance to the views above, Makombe and Geroy (2009), used telephone interviews to tape the perceptions of 10 senior women managers in Zimbabwe to explore the factors that had led to their career development. Makombe and Geroy's (2009) study documented that though most of the participants emphasised the importance of family and spousal support, unfortunately, in the African context, equal rights were null and void. Therefore, female academics have taught themselves to be humble to their partners and continue to play all the domestic roles so that they could develop their careers. This writer also adds that there is an immediate need for new efforts to educate men to improve the power of women agency if they are to realise career growth in universities.

Cheung & Halpern (2010) negates the above sentiments and state that female academics in their study mentioned that career development is indeed possible if one has solid family support. This researcher supports the above views because family and spousal support is vital for career development of female academics. The aim is not to achieve equal amounts of time at work and home, but to balance the amount that is right for a particular role. Erikson-Zetterquist & Styhrer (2008 : 458) view work and family balance as the achievement of role related expectations that are negotiated and shared between an individual and role related partners in work and family spheres.

Beoku-Betts (2005) says that the perception the world over that women can do and are capable of coping with multiple responsibilities often creates problems for female academics and places them in a precarious position such that more female academics end up being single, divorced or single parents. For instance failure to balance work and family responsibilities usually leads to stress and a sense of guilty the female academics when they fail to put up the pieces together. Thus, those who

try to balance family life, find out that though academic life is intrinsically satisfying, it is also consuming and can have negative effects on personal and academic life. Furthermore, it creates the ideal academic individual as someone who gives total priority to work and life of being an intellectual with no other external engagements (Makura, 2012).

The researcher is of the view that the issue of family responsibilities and career development of female academics tends to paint a pedantic picture in society. Thus, it may seem as if many female academics are sabotaging their success despite their marital status and holding themselves back before they can fully dedicate their time to full time studying and career development. Given this set of circumstances, and the deeply seated societal norms and strong cultural values in South African and especially in Zimbabwean society, spousal and family support is viewed as the only route which female academics have to embark on so that they can develop their careers. Thus, the status of women in Zimbabwe as compared to South Africa is shaped by the patriarchal ideology that informs the indigenous cultures (Chitando & Mateveke, 2012) and this has to certain extent affected and delayed the professional growth of females in the country.

Interestingly, Nemagambe and Ntayi (2012), in their study of individual ethical orientation, organisational culture and career growth in Universities of Uganda, using a sample size of 300 male and female academics, came up with a totally different perspective with regard to work and family responsibilities being the barriers to career development of female academics. They argue that the career development of an academic is affected by their individual ethical consideration and academic staff only embrace the issue of developing their careers if it is truly desired by them and if at all the career development prospects meet their interests. Surely, the above assertion throws this discussion into a very different perspective. Thus, as long as it is not within an individual's plan to develop their career, then family responsibility and motherhood should not be "used" as a defence mechanism for failure to develop oneself.

2.4.2 RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Publication is recognised all over the world as an integral part of an academic career, not only is it a pre-condition for academic promotion and advancement

universally, it is a hall mark of true academics (Gaidzanwa, 2005). The issue of research publications is quite complex because of different institutional demands, discipline differences and the evaluation of research output. These can lead to a bias towards research based activities. A crucial aspect to career development of female academics is striving for research publications (Brooks, 1997; White, 2003, Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2004). Research publication is viewed by most female academics as a barrier to their career development and a mysterious process simply because of failure to being exposed to a culture of research as a condition of employment until recently (Mabokela, 2002).

According to Gaidzanwa, (2005), female academics do not do much research as evidenced by the fact that in 2002 at University of Zimbabwe, male academics contributed 83% of research output and articles produced in the institution. If comparisons be made, the picture in South Africa is not at all different from Zimbabwe. According to a report in the Mail & Guardian April 2012, male academics do most of the research in South Africa. For illustrative purposes, in 2005, the female academics shared 14% and 37% of research including the traditional Universities, notwithstanding the fact that South Africa produces 80% of the basic research done in Southern Africa. On an international sphere, more recent studies indicate that male academics publish 8% more articles in refereed journals and in Japan 90% of highly productive researchers are male academics (Horta, Dautel & Veloso, 2012). Being less productive in research puts female academics at a disadvantage in terms of career development in universities (Mamiseishvili & Rosser, 2011; Ogbogu, 2009 and Mabokela, 2002).

Cognisant of the foregoing, Ogbogu (2009) states that it is the role of developing countries to come up with strategies to link research to economic growth. This can only be achieved through gender equity in universities and not just finance, quality, governance and efficiency. Moreover, research as a barrier to career development of female academics has been attributed to work and family conflict, lack of time by focusing on completing PhD studies, teaching workloads and the organisational culture (Gaidzanwa, 2005; Ogbogu, 2009; and Mabokela, 2002). However, Corley, 2005) as cited by Barrett and Barrett (2010), refute the above statement and says that being a female academic and having responsibilities does not affect the number of publications that an academic can produce. In a similar vein, Bellas &

Toutkoushian (1999) in Ward & Wolf Wendel (2004), found that female academics with children, with a high quantity of work load actually had higher levels of research productivity than those without.

However, according to Kjedal, Rindfleish, Sheridan, 2005; Armenti, 2004; Brook, 1997) the work load distribution in Universities unveils a totally different picture between female and male academics. The above authors argue that female academics have more teaching loads and have little time to pursue research and these impact on their career development and keep them as novices in their careers. In 2011, Mabokela in her study on Gender and Organisational Change lamented that it was a pity that in the research and publication arena, female academics continued to be conspicuously absent and lacked a culture of research because research continued to be dominated by male academics.

In support of the foregoing statement, one may posit that though teaching is vital in any learning institution, unfortunately female academics do not benefit fully from this because teaching cannot be compared to research and used as promotional aspect within universities. Teaching and pastoral care that female academics offer should be valued at the same rate as research and publication in universities if female academics are to develop their careers. Research done by Barrett and Barrett (2013) found that female academics are given extra workload which is usually discreet, undetected and unchallenged by female academics. It may be concluded that the workload systems fail to raise awareness that female academics are given roles that are not helpful to improving their research publication or promote their career mobility.

The Mail & Guardian (2013) and Gephart, (1999) argue that a faculty (academic) member's productivity is often used as an index of departments and institutional prestige and is strongly associated with his or her reputation, visibility and advancement in the academic structure. In furtherance to these sentiments, when female academics are hired and promoted, universities always strive to make sure they are hiring or promoting a good scholar and a person who will do a good job in both research and instruction of the students. This researcher concurs with Mabokela (2002) that research publication is recognised globally as the crux of an

academic profession and has become an essential requirement for career advancement and promotion.

However, the working conditions of the female academics especially in developing countries may hinder them from producing tangible results. Ondari-Okemwa (2007); and Nieuwoudt & Wilcocks (2005) identify the challenges of developing countries such as lack of incentives, non-participation in scholarly conferences, language challenges, technological challenges and environmental challenges as factors that affect (female) academics publishing records. To compound on these problems, some African Universities such as Nigeria have made it very clear to all academic staff that it is paramount that their work gets published in international and referred journals (Akinyemi, Ofen and Ikuenomore, 2012) if they are to be considered for promotion. Universities are now using academic published papers to bulk up their publication and citations count so as to raise institutional ranking (Mail & Guardian 2013). Hence (female) academics are under pressure not only to develop their career, and get national and international visibility but to ensure that they are retained.

It is unfortunate that having a paper published in a referred journal is deemed as vital in most African Universities and comes with terms and conditions. The researcher is of the view that most research papers in developing countries are written from an Afro-centric context which is totally different from that of the Eurocentric view. Hence, the terms in which the paper may be accredited in context and quality may act as a disadvantage to African scholars (Akinyemi, Ofen and Ikuenomore, 2012). These views may be attributed to one of the reasons why most papers are rejected and why there is paucity on extant literature on career development of female academics in developing countries as compared to developed countries.

Furthermore, female academics are caught in a tangled web. Being disconnected or superficially connected to the network and mentoring system within the academia is a mammoth task. It means female academics do not get the opportunities to communicate with other academics who are also researching and are interested in the same area of study. Female academics may be omitted for reasons that have nothing to do with their research capability or output. For instance, their research might be perceived as not “fitting” within the mainstream research and a failure to

have a better understanding of research as compared to male academics (Knights & Richards 2003) as cited by Aiston, (2011). On the other hand, research publications tend to be viewed in a gendered manner therefore for female academics to make inroads and have advice on how to publish maybe difficult. In an earlier study, Patton (2003) concluded that peer reviewing with regard to research and publishing can also serve as a stumbling block to the female academics.

Thus, having their female academics scripts peer reviewed by male academics or Queen Bees is more like promoting the status quo in Universities. Further, support from these findings can be gleaned from the works of Mabileka, (2002) who also discovered in her study that female academics felt their manuscripts and publications were viewed in a gendered way. Further to this discussion, Hemmings, Rushbrook & Smith (2003), postulate that some Universities have “healthy incentives” for their academics who are research active and these incentives tend to exclude female academics “unintentionally”. Therefore, Nieuwoudt & Wilcocks (2005) confirm the widely held beliefs that lack of research output from female academics is tied to lack of organisational and financial support, failure to find appropriate research topics and gender stereotyping and discrimination. Thus, Mokhele (2013), opines that more critical attention needs to be paid to institutional and structural impairments so that the problem of ostracism of female researchers within the Universities can be nipped in the bud.

Likewise, the high rejection rate of research manuscripts is also one of the reasons why female academics fail to publish and are unable to develop their careers. Summers (2001) posits that the rejection rate of manuscripts by internationally renowned research journals averages around 90%. These views are also echoed by Albertyn, Kapp and Frick (2007) who stated that in South Africa, 73 accredited journals unanimously agreed that the rejection rate of research manuscripts was exceptionally high. One would therefore ask, where does this leave the female academics who already are compounded with numerous challenges with regard to their career development in universities?

This brings us to the reasons why career development of female academics has been associated with stress (Finnegan & Hyle, 2005; Pienaar & Bester, 2012; citing Barkhuizen, Rothman & Tytherleigh, 2004) anxiety, fear, frustration and a sense of

disillusionment with their career path. These scholars further endorsed that lack of acknowledgement from the universities' personnel and management that there exist a tension between research publication, teaching and family life is the cause of burn out and occupational stress among female academics. Given this backdrop, the majority of female academics finally exit the academia without being promoted, let alone publishing.

On the other hand, the relationship between academic work and publishing has in the past been associated with positive and negative connotations. In Taiwan, Coleman (2003) carried out a comparative study between senior and junior female academics research publications. The results showed that junior academics had more publications than senior female academics. An interesting observation made by the researcher is that under "normal" circumstances it is the senior female academics that have to show the ropes to the junior academics of how to publish, research, and teach. Given these set of circumstances, one would ask, if it is that female academics do not see the value of linking their career development with research and publication? Or, they have been failed by a system which has a strong sense of power imbalance. It can be noted that barriers to research and publication by female academics will not occur from nowhere, (Hemmings & Russell, 2010), therefore intervention that begins from known to unknown should be implemented within the universities.

2.4.3 MENTORING AND NETWORKING

Structural male dominance has led to limitations in the involvement of female academics in production and growth of knowledge in Universities (Nicolson, 1996; De la Rey 1999; Gaidzanwa, 2005). The old saying "it's not what you know", "it's who you know" is engrained with an element of truth with regard to mentoring, networking and of course career development of female academics in the academia (Ismail & Rasdi, 2007). Mentorship has been described as supportive relation between junior academics (novice) and senior academic (accomplished elder) through which knowledge, skills, experience and guidance, support and know-how are transferred (regardless of gender) from mentor to mentee (Monseratt et al , 2009).

Zikhali & Maphosa (2012) asked 31 male lecturers on how they viewed their female counterparts in 3 Zimbabwean Teacher Training Colleges in Masvingo Province. It emerged that the female academics' challenges and complexities are attributed to lack of mentorship and social networking in institutions of higher learning. These lead to the beginning of a maladaptive start in ones' academic career. Traditionally, male academics have always had more access to influential mentors who are able to guide and shape their careers than female academics. The major problem that female academics encounter is that the traditional description of mentoring offered is based on models of traditional male career development (Quinlan,2006) and such models do not fit the female academics development career patterns. Therefore lack of mentors (Gaidzanwa, 2005) means female academics continue to experience problems on their career development which lead to limitations towards achieving prominence in their careers. In addition, the notion that female academics need to be actively "marketed" and legitimised within the Universities makes it difficult for the female academics to get the necessary support required for their career development in a male dominated environment.

Given this backdrop, Johnson & Thomas (2012) argue that the literature now calls for a constellation of mentors as this will provide an opportunity for upward as well as traditional mentoring. Moreover, this will give the University leaders the opportunity to hear the female academics voices and experiences, while on the other hand providing them with advocates and sponsors to help enhance their career development. Furthermore, mentoring is a fundamental aspect in the South African educational setting which must be meaningful to both mentor and mentee (Nundulall and Reddy 2011, Shaw, 2005) it is important that universities make plans to consciously assist the female academics by having genuine, sound rapport and relationships so that they can advance in their careers.

Beoku-Betts (2005) concurs with the above and postulates that the lack of career development of female academics is due to the fact that female academics are excluded from the collaborations, informed networks and receive little or no mentoring at all. For instance, the "men club" and "old boys" networking found in universities have nothing to do with female academics and ensure that male academics network on their own, normally outside the University environment and

after hours. Luke (2000), further endorses this research by arguing that the deeply embedded socio cultural beliefs are the contributory factors that exclude female academics from mentoring and networking opportunities in the academia and can be a major cause for stress. However, Chowwen (2004), refutes the above assertion and concedes that mentoring is the best tool for reducing stress. The researcher feels Sweeny's findings are more of a "sweeping statement" because it is not all female academics that have the privilege of having mentors, or have the opportunity to experience collegiality and collaboration in their career development endeavours which in turn can reduce work related stress.

In addition, Stone & Coetzee (2005) posit that mentor and mentee relationships are usually instigated in informal meetings in which female academics are usually excluded. A recent survey that 24% of female academics claimed to be aware of informal networks that excluded faculty members on the basis of gender, whereas 6% of male academics reported similar awareness (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2000). This data is echoed by Jonnergard, Sweden, and Elg (2009) who say that mentoring and networking in universities entails a group of very experienced, older and powerful people with powerful positions and respect within the academia. Hence they act as a gatekeeping system - those with peripheral positions or of another gender do not have a chance to be included.

Consequently, Forster et al (2005) findings reveal that mentorship and networking between male and female academics has always carried with it negative connotations. Besides, the time and venues in which networking is done means most female academics have to forego their family responsibilities which begin after working hours. Moreover, female academics fear having to contend with the feelings that rend the air when they are mentored by male academics and are scared to lose "face value" should they be seen networking with male academics after working hours (Ragin and Cotton, 1991; Chowwen, 2004). In the same vein, Makombe and Geroy (2009), further posit that because of societal norms and cultural values, female academics, especially those who are married are not expected to network with male colleagues after hours. Thus, the assumption that female academics are not at par with the male academics means that their chances of being excluded from these crucial areas where professional identity and

recognition is needed to establish success will continue. This works against their upward mobility.

To circumvent the seeming challenges, Mabokela (2011), within her writings postulates that the antidote to career development of female academics is that universities should implement formal networking and mentoring processes and training especially in the early stages of their career. This author further states that senior academics who are most likely to serve as mentors will also be in a position to benefit from cross gender and cross cultural training so that they can also be effective participants in the mentoring relationship. Additionally, recent studies on mentoring done by Mudhovozi, Manyange and Mashamba (2013) in Zimbabwe and Ndebele, van Heerden and Chabaya (2013) in South Africa had similar results. It emerged from both countries under study that mentorship for academics was crucial and departments and faculties needed to provide extensive programmes on mentoring because they enhanced the research skills of academics.

Harris (2007) and Mc Guire & Reger (2003), further argue that it is a travesty that female academics continue to lack mentoring whether formally or informally within the Universities and are left out of the circles of networking. These authors further argue that, these two concepts would help so much in retaining the female academics in the pipeline instead of them exiting academia before they can fully realise their professional dreams. Thus, the researcher is of the view that female academics continue to be handicapped in the race to attain and sustain mentoring and networking initiatives in Universities and this has grossly affected their career development.

Chowwen (2004), used a mixed method approach and a sample size of 243 female professionals, with an age range of 30-68 to find out their perceptions on professional growth. The findings revealed a deplorable picture, an overwhelming 74% stated that they had no mentors and these mostly fell in the category of younger academics. Chowwen's (2004) findings confirm the widely held beliefs that male academics easily mentor fellow male academics leaving female academics largely without mentors (Gaidzanwa, 2005). The perplexing issue is that within the academic circles there is a widely held perception that mentoring male academics brings in greater returns than mentoring female academics who tend to take time off

due to child bearing and rearing, thus creating gaps in their academic experiences (Shaw, 2005). It is important for universities to look beyond gender when it comes to mentoring but ensure that all academics within an institution get equal opportunities for enhancing their careers.

According to Aiston (2011) and Ogbogu (2006), the scarcity of mentors for female academics and greater isolation has influenced an acculturation of the female academics to the status quo within the universities. It should be pointed out that mentoring of academics should be tied to the strategic goals of a university to avoid it being a nebulous concept (Shaw, 2005). However, the opposite is done because mentees (female academics) are socialised to the organisation patriarchal rules of the game which in turn can cause and create conflict for female academics who may fail to integrate within academic canons as compared to male academics.

A dearth of mentoring among female academics means that they also lack astute insights into political processes of the University; miss out on advice on applying for research grants and information about procedures involved for applying for promotion (Gardiner, Tiggemann, Kearns & Marshall (2007). Thus, a study by Okurame (2008) concludes that a scarcity of first-hand and realistic studies in the academia focusing on mentoring activities exists and indirectly perpetuates mentoring and networking problems encountered by female academics. In an attempt to curb the afore mentioned problems, Geber & Nyanjom (2009) opine that organisational culture needs to be considered in mentor development of female academics both at micro and macro level. These scholars further endorse that, it is the duty of the mentors to be aware of the disjuncture between policy and practice. In addition, they should be in a position and develop their own skills and capacities in managing change and to be compatible with the University environment as well as the mentees that they are mentoring.

In her earlier writings Bagilhole (1994) suggested that senior female academics by virtues of being senior are “survivors” and it is crucial that these women help other female academics. However, research studies show that female academics themselves are guilty of damaging and derogating the career development of each other through the Queen Bee Syndrome. The Queen Bee Syndrome (Stone & Coetze, 2005) has exacerbated the difficulties experienced by female academics

wishing to enter into mentoring relationships. Instead of senior female academics mentoring their juniors, they implicitly legitimize the disadvantaged position of female academics within the universities and propagate the organisational culture in which they become successful (Staines, Travis & Jayaratne, 1978).

These scholars note that the Queen Bee Syndrome is disadvantageous to female academics in universities and may block access to mentorship and networking. The criticism that female academics lend to each other tends to hold more weight. It is not viewed as gender stereotyping or bias and may remain unchallenged as compared to criticism which emanates from male academics (Derks et al 2010). For the senior female academics, the ultimate price for being one of the “boys” and promoting masculine qualities is a willingness to occasionally turn against the girls (female academics) by imitating male academics and failing to maintain their femininity.

It is unfortunate that though female academics do seek active, supportive and satisfying career relationships with other female academics, their efforts are met with a snub. Yet, they are meant to provide each other with emotional, psychological and social support about how to survive in these institutions that are infested with male dominance. In view of the foregoing statement, Lam (2006), says, female academics exhibit a greater need of the affective domain which involves constant “praises” and affirmation that they are on the right track towards their career development with their mentors and this builds a professional relationship for both parties. To circumvent the challenges the researcher is of the view that mentoring female academics should not be viewed as a “scarce skills” which only a few male academics possess.

Additionally, lack of mentoring for female academics is also identified as a major cause for leaking pipeline in academia. Quinlan (2006) states that many Universities are faced with the problem of supporting academic women and mentoring schemes are often proposed to improve their retention. A sense of professional identity and fitting in within the values, norms and beliefs that embrace both male and females in the University seem to be the missing puzzle. It is regrettable that the exclusion of female academics in mentoring and networking in universities is a persistent, continuous, vicious cycle and perpetuates the values, norms, customs, traditions and

negative attitudes towards female academics. It is vital that female academics are exposed to mentoring to develop their careers by getting encouragement, motivation, counselling from their mentors whether male or female. This will help them to develop a sense of professional identity, greater confidence and self-efficacy and eradicate gender stereotyping. Therefore, mentoring is an essential activity that can help towards retaining female academics in universities (Harris, 2007).

2.4.4 GENDER STEREOTYPING

The Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, (CEDAW) which is an international Bill of Rights of women defined gender discrimination as “any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women. It influences our perceptions of women and is a socially shared belief often based in reality (Women Leadership & Governance Institution, 2003: 31 as cited by Mugweni et al 2011). Recently it emerged that educating and developing females and achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) on gender equity will lead to a range of improved outcomes for developing countries (Schultze, 2002).

Using a comparative study of Australian and Mauritian Universities, Thanacoody, Bartram, Barker & Jacobs (2006) found that a major obstacle of female academics' career development is attributed to gender stereotypes. This is despite the emerging evidence that among top managers, academics, women are excelling as leaders and managers. Another comparative study was done by Johnson and Thomas (2012) on a similar marginal place in the academy, contextualising the leadership strategies of Black Women in the USA and SA. These authors concluded that though universities are strongly considered to be one of the few organisations that promote and embrace equity and equality in common practices, for academics in the new century, challenges related to the cultivating of diverse talent remain apparent because of lack of acknowledgement to give voice to the intersections of various dimensions of diversity such as race and gender. An equally perplexing issue is that universities have gone through numerous transformational changes on paper, but have brought no change to the plight of the female academics in practice.

Gender stereotyping in academia continues to be deeply rooted because of the ideology of transforming ideas and practices of private business spheres that are being applied into public spheres (Deem and Brehony, 2005). Within her writing, De la Rey (2008) concluded that the academia is yet to understand the density of gender stereotyping and discrimination levelled against female academics. Her sentiments are buttressed by a Zimbabwean researcher, Chinyani (2010) who posits that there is need for co-operation of learning communities and monitoring from the policy makers if at all learning institutions are going to be agents for change towards gender mainstreaming. On the other hand, April, Dreyer and Blass (2007) bring in a different dimension as compared to the above sentiments by De la Rey (2008) and Chinyani (2010).

These authors argue that if gender stereotyping is to be addressed in learning organisations, a holistic empowerment of male academics is mandatory if positive change is to be realised. In support of the above, one may argue that, gender stereotyping is still in existence, though universities claim to be learning institutions in which individual advancement is based on ability and achievement. The negative attitude, practices and organisational culture that prevails within the walls of these institutions accentuates the anti-female academics ideology. This is despite the fact that the South Africa Constitution, Act 108 (1996), and the new Constitution of Zimbabwe (2013) are both grounded on numerous values and principles, and gender equity and equality is one of those primary principles.

Apparently, gender stereotyping is not only experienced by females in universities but in different professions as well. For instance in his study Davis (2005) in Mugweni et al (2011), sought to find out through a comparative study the perceptions of male police officers towards female officers. The study revealed that male officers looked down upon female police officers. Therefore, perceptions towards career development of female (academics) is based on gender norms and the beliefs that the major role of the female is in the kitchen and home and their academic careers are secondary issues (Cortis & Casser, 2006; Gaidzanwa, 2005). Thus, the psychological differences resulting from male and female socialisation at an early age can generate stereotyping which leads to less confidence and self-efficacy in females. The factor that appears to be uniquely South African and Zimbabwean is the societal values and expectations to which women are subjected to and how

women respond to them. Due to the extensive gender stereotyping, many women acquiesce and abandon their ambitions, reject promotions and make compromises that limit their career success. This results in organisations losing a valuable pool for the future (April et al, 2007).

Therefore, challenging such stereotyping and discrimination within the universities can be an uphill task because male academics still consider female academics as different and of inferior quality (Wilson, 2005). However, Ryan, Haskim & Postmes (2007) refute the above statement and posit that the issue is not about treating female academics as inferior. These scholars further argue that the real problem lies in the fact that male academics are so steeped in the masculine and patriarchal culture they do not even recognise its existence (Mugweni et al, 2011). Given this set of circumstances, this writer opines that female academics may not always be a target of ridicule, scorn, condemnation, illtreatment, gender stereotyping and discrimination. Such instances can be by default rather than intentional (Odhiambo, 2011). However a study by Mabokela (2003) is at variance with the above authors. Mabokela (2003) concedes in her research that it is not about male academics being so steeped in patriarchal culture or gender stereotyping the female academics by 'default'. It is pure resistance to women authority in universities that male academics cannot fathom.

It can be noted from the previous paragraph that the impervious old values, norms and beliefs that society upholds towards female academics has led to a vicious cycle which has contributed to their relegation to the periphery of their career mobility within the universities (Bronstein, 2001). Hence, most female academics view their environment with suspicion (Mungweni et al, 2011) because instead of society and universities being in support of developing their careers, they are viewed as unfeminine objects of pity (Dominico & Jones 2006). Thus, academia is far from being a homogenous sector (Shaw & Casell, 2007). Maybe such a discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that both these countries under study appear to have failed to genuinely change their working culture to make it more attractive. As a result, many female academics may simply choose not to play this game of developing their careers within the academia and search for other opportunities where they can fulfil their ambitions (April et al, 2007 and Nani, 2011). From the above statement, the researcher posits that universities are not being used as a tool for emancipation and

transformation of female academics as advocated by liberal feminism but act as a form enslavement to their career development.

On the other hand, though gender stereotyping and discrimination is a global phenomenon and is not a new issue across developing countries, the experiences of female academics in universities points to the numerous ways that female academics continue to experience gender stereotype in these male dominated spheres (Mabokela 2002). In the seventies and nineties it was also argued that gender stereotyping should not be observed as a “thing” of an institution’s operations and structure, it is a pattern of behaviour and stems from the organisational culture (Kanter, 1977; Brooks, 1997; Kettle, 1996, and Kolodry, 1998).

For instance Lincoln and Guba (1980) stated that because of gender stereotyping, most female academics are forced to be “gipsy scholars”, moving from one university to another. These scholars state that female academics undergo exhaustive scrutiny in line with their professional abilities and they constantly have to prove beyond reasonable doubt that they can survive in universities because they are viewed as temporary job holders rather than career oriented employees. Thus, their discrimination by the majority is preordained because they are in the minority (Gaidzanwa, 1998).

Tsoka in Tsoka and Mathipa (2001), posit that gender stereotyping and discrimination in institutions of learning can only end if society regards the work of female academics as valuable as that of male academics. Though Nkomo & Ngambi (2009) state that to circumvent the seeming challenges, African female academics should be at the forefront in discussing gender stereotyping in universities and society at large because their status is poor as compared to developed countries.

Chuma’s and Ncube’s (2010), findings support the foregoing statement and posit that a lot of efforts have been put forward to promote and empower women, but gender equity and equality remains mysterious, multifaceted, misconstrued and fiercely counterattacked particularly by men. By and large, owing to the fact that male dogmatism resists adamantly the independent status of women in relation to their career development, females are likely to face an array of challenges which

might include conflict and devaluation of self-assured female behaviour. This in turn, will lead to isolation and career stagnation of females in the workplace.

The “voice” of the female academics on gender stereotyping in developing countries is in dearth. Female (academics) should be allowed to define and clarify the burning issues that continue to affect their career development in Universities. Hence this study also focuses on the “voice, perceptions and experiences” of the female academics on gender stereotyping as this will contribute to a positive attitude toward gender equity and equality so that an even playing ground for the female academics can be realised. In addition, Johnson & Thomas (2012) and Aiston (2011) posit that the missing “othered voice” of the female academics can be used to destroy structures that have always been used as a way of cementing the status quo of Universities by systematically marginalizing certain (female academic) groups.

According to the Nziramasanga Commission, (1999); Mabokela, (2002); Heilman; (2009); and Eagly, (2009), gender stereotyping of females (academics) in learning institutions is one of the major culprits for their under-representation. The subtle forms of discrimination are pervasive, deeply embedded, almost imperceptible, are prevalent and tend to hinder female academics career trajectories. According to Osongo, (2006), gender stereotyping of female academics can be traced back to school and universities enrolment. Osongo’s (2006) observations are consistent with the liberal feminist theory used in this study which claims that the different roles and responsibilities of females and males are moulded through family, education and the community.

In support of the above, Tjomsland (2009) also opines that the under-representation and gender stereotyping of female academics in universities of developing countries stems from these countries primary education system where they still struggle with gender equality. For instance, a study done by Mapolisa and Chirimuuta (2012), on the alternative university education for women at Zimbabwe Open University, shows that most women in Zimbabwe were deprived of University education. These researchers further add that cultural and historical impediments nudged the women out of the learning system leading to a prolongation of the current under-representation of female academics in universities. Mapolisa and Chirimuuta (2012) further state that in developing counties, girls are born for boys. Educating a girl child

in some Zimbabwean societies is not recommended because it would be advantageous to her future in-laws. Hence, putting pressure on higher learning institutions to curb gender stereotyping among academics may be viewed as a charade and a tip of the iceberg, considering that the problem originates from the foundation phase.

Though both countries under study are signatories to numerous international conventions on gender, the researcher believes the problem of addressing gender stereotyping in the education system stems from the weak policy implementation procedures and lack of approaches to empower females (academics) to make a difference in and out of the academia (Shackleton, Riordan and Simonis, 2006 and Rutoro, Jenjekwa, Runyowa and Chipato, 2013). Thus, the gender rhetoric should not just end on paper but should be put in its correct perspective by pursuing the implementation of policies in all sectors (Rutoro et al, 2013)

While the preceding relates to the problematic education system in developing countries which has cascaded gender stereotyping to institutions of higher learning, Odhiambo, (2011) states that the reality behind the veneer is that the bulk of development (through policies) and human rights work towards gender stereotyping ignores the role of universities that maintain female academics' unequal positions and treatment. These views echo the argument advanced by Wallace & Marchant (2011), that although the societal canon states that universities are seats of higher learning, critical inquiry and innovation and are expected to be more enlightened when it comes to gender stereotyping, this is not always the case. The career development of the female academics continues to be affected by the deeply ingrained and fatalistic beliefs in the inevitability and necessity of an unjust status quo (Freire, 1970). The researcher believes the efforts and the gender policies in place by the universities are used as "smoke screen" behind which female academics are said to be treated as equals within the academia, yet they suffer a dearth of development opportunities in their careers (Wallace and Marchant, 2011).

Cognisant of the foregoing, Johnson & Thomas (2012) and Aiston (2011) posit that though Universities profess to value diversity, they are failing to properly address issues pertaining to gender discrimination and stereotyping of female academics.

The researcher opines that it is important for female academics themselves identify strategies to overcome barriers they encounter in their career development.

2.5 STRATEGIES USED BY FEMALE ACADEMICS TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT

The Council of Higher Education (2002) in South Africa, stated that it is important that strategies are put in place to address the obstacles that female academics encounter in academia so that far reaching consequences for the community and the economy of a country are addressed by authorities responsible for the growth and development of HEI and its academics. In the African context female academics have received tremendous support from the ACU (Association of Commonwealth University) and the CS (Commonwealth Secretariat) World Bank Paper (1994) as cited by Chipunza (2003). However, this external support does not suffice because for effective change to take place, female academics themselves need to strategize and rally behind each other so as to “tip the hurdles” (Mungweni et al, 2011) of the system that has allowed male academics more and better opportunities in universities. In support of the above, Gentile, (1999: 63) posits that strategies for career development of female academics can only be re-written by the female academics themselves in their ‘own hands’ because they lack an authoritative ‘voice’ coming from the female academics within the walls of the universities.

Given this set of circumstances, one may argue that female academics have to be one voice if they are to overcome their barriers and ensure that their efforts are not fruitless. In addition Ummersen in Baker (2008) argues that female academics have to come up with strategies that are systematic and self-driven by themselves through enhanced individual attitudes, personal accountability for career development and management of ones’ academic career. Aiston (2011) citing Monroe, Ozyurt & Wrigley (2008), accentuate that the first significant strategy for overcoming barriers is the “cult of individual responsibility”. Female academics have to be responsible for their own career growth and must learn to see themselves as the centre of their own biographies.

In the regional sphere, Makombe’s and Geroy’s (2009) study revealed that some of the senior women managers interviewed stated that they had adopted the “cult of individual responsibility” by being assertive and aggressive to overcome resistance

and be able to cope with the demands of their work. However, the preceding sentiments are at variance with those of De la Rey who was a guest speaker at the South African Women in Science and Engineering (SAWISE) conference in 2002. She argued that even if one were to be assertive, the key strategy that was missing among the female academics were supportive structures such that isolation, loneliness and individualistic competitive institutional culture was rife and this mitigated against the development of co-operative relationships among the women academics themselves.

Studies done by Hakim, (2006) and Skelton (2005) show that despite the positive inroads that the female academics have made, the barriers they encounter will not disappear overnight. Hence, they have to produce personal solutions and take individual responsibility for their lack of progression within the Universities. Thus, it may be concluded that female academics need to be pro-active, develop a career plan and take time to understand the rules and the regulations of the culture of the structure of the Universities (Livingston, 2003) in Coronel et al, (2010). One way to achieve this is to remain principled and professional (Makombe and Geroy, 2009)

However, the foregoing statement may prove to be a colossal task for some female academics because research studies highlight that female academics have been impervious to taking risks, in and outside academia. This has led to their lack of assertiveness, self-efficacy and self-confidence which has contributed to their delayed mobility in the Universities (Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Chabaya, Rembe & Wadesango, 2009). Tsoka and Mathipa (2001), also postulate that what has intensified the situation of the female academics is that they have always been on the receiving end based on the assumptions that they fear competition and lack vision. These assumptions actually act as a negative foundation to their career development. Hence, the pragmatic way forward is revealed in Nemangambe & Ntayi's (2012) findings which confirm the widely held belief that female academics with high self-efficacy, confidence and assertiveness normally set higher standards for their career aspirations, put more effort and pursue career strategies that lead to the achievement of their career goals and managing their career growth properly.

In addition, using a sample of 105 female members and soliciting data from direct mail survey, Livingston (2003), discovered in his study that 85% of the female

academics identified more educational credentials as a strategy to use to overcome barriers to career development. 75% advocated that speaking up in a meeting was a vital strategy that female (academics) had to employ in their workplace. Recently, one female respondent in Yaxley's (2013) research, articulated that the best strategy in academia to use to gain respect, confidence and overcome barriers was not to display female responses to challenging situations among male academics. Thus, it is important that universities and society do not see women (female academics) as the problem lagging behind male academics and in need of special treatment, but, as individuals who are capable of coming up with various strategies at personal, societal and institutional level to overcome barriers to their career development that have held them back for a long time (Osongo, 2006).

According to Sheppard (1989: 149) in Powell, Bagilhole and Dainty (2009) and Whiltock (2000) the female academics at institutional level may use the "blending in and claiming a rightful place" and "boundary heightening" strategies. But, the perplexing issue about these strategies is that female academics are expected to or are seen as having no other alternative than to emulate the male academics in order not to be compared negatively or suffer from stereotypes that masculine hegemonic organisations (universities) reproduce (Knights & Keerfoot, 2004). Cognisant of the foregoing, this writer opines that adopting these strategies may be disadvantageous to those female academics who emulate masculine work roles as they may be labelled by other female academics as sell outs to "sisterhood" within academia.

In an attempt to rectify the foregoing problems Tjmosland, (2009); posits that female academics should be in a position to raise awareness of gender issues within the academia and the society at large with a view of eliminating degenerating socio-cultural attitudes and values. This will not only develop an institutional system that gives both male and female academics equal opportunities (liberal feminist theory), it will also help in promoting career development of female academics. These views were also highlighted in an earlier study advanced by Du plooy (2001) that providing female academics with more education, without changing the gender and the power structures that reinforce and perpetuate their failure to develop their careers will not facilitate their educational, employment and political opportunities to be the same as those of male academics. Therefore, understanding the secrets of the "academic maze" is important for the female academics so that they can

understand how it can impact on their career development in universities (McDonagh, 2010).

For instance, it is crucial that female academics strategize on how to build up on their academic reputation, being ethically perceptive and how to refine their research and publication skills. Linda (1995) makes specific suggestions that the strategies for addressing the dilemma of teaching vs. research are to create support writing groups, utilizing institutional resources to the maximum, becoming clear on what types of research and writing are valued by an institution and taking specific steps to gain control of their courses. However, putting all these strategies into use means longer working hours.

According to Bagilhole, (1994), during her research, most female academics admitted that one of the strategies they used to overcome barriers to career development was working harder and sleeping less hours. In support of the above, Livingstone (2003), found that a majority of female academics at 66% also stated that working longer hours and sleeping less was one way they used to overcome barriers and advance their careers. From the preceding paragraph, the researcher opines that such strategies can only yield results if female academics have strong support structures at institutional and individual levels.

Therefore, Ezzendeen & Ritchey (2009) state that it is important that female academics design comprehensive career and family strategies to overcome barriers to their carrier development. For instance availability of support at home and out-sourced domestic roles are associated with academic career development. The two scholars, Erikson-Zetterquist & Styhrer (2007), say that family, spousal support and work balance is important because it shows an achievement of role related expectation that are negotiated and shared between an individuals' role and related partners in work and family spheres.

Therefore, the point is that the work and family balancing strategy is associated with job contentment and organisational commitment which female academics can use to avoid experiencing a kind of drastic disjuncture between professional and domestic lives and ways of dealing with work related stress (Grzywacz & Carlson, 2007). The foregoing paragraphs lead the researcher to conclude that looking closely at some of the strategies that the female academics can use to overcome

their barriers to career development can help to illuminate their experiences and the culture of the Universities. Moreover, providing critical awareness of these barriers and action for change through professional support is the potential remedy for the female academics career mobility.

2.6 PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR FEMALE ACADEMICS

An extensive research done by Baker (2008) shows that providing support and assistance to female academics could give them more confidence with regard to their career development. Recently, Tessens, White, & Web (2011), argued that despite the growing numbers of on-the-job female academics staff development programmes, their career development and participation within the academia continues to be in dearth. Given these circumstances, it is the duty of the universities to provide strong formal and informal support systems and encouragement from organisational leaders. Professional support should include flexible and friendly policies which illuminate a workplace culture that supports career growth of female academics (Chesterman, Ross-Smith & Peter, 2004). For instance, evidence in Australian Universities reveals that 86% of their Universities have staff development programmes and support systems exclusively meant for female academics (Tessens et al, 2011).

However, de Villers, (2005) opines that professional support mechanisms meant for female academics have received criticism for their emphasis on teaching the female academics the “rules of the game” that has helped the male academics to maintain their status quo for a long time. The researcher shares the view that the career development of female academics is based on the notion that it is the role of the universities to provide opportunities for their academic (female) employees to develop across their range of different roles (Boud & Brew, 2013). To this view, Schalkwyk, Cillers, Adendorff, Cattell & Herman (2013) argue that the opportunities that Universities offer female academics should create a path towards scholarly excellence in teaching and research that academics can follow. Therefore, it is vital to realise that for professional support of female academics to yield positive results, commitment to teamwork must be a priority for all stakeholders within the university. Thus, universities, academics and non-academic personnel have to work towards a common stated purpose which must be the key driver for improving the female academics needs (Chowwen (2004). The lamentation epitomises a litany of

complaints levelled against the current University leadership in South African and Zimbabwean Universities (Makondo 2012; Matoti 2010)

Recently, Mabokela (2002) intimated that the emphasis on professional development and support for female academics should be on courses, training and workshops that will take academics out of their normal context of work and treat aspects of work, research, teaching and administration as separate entities. These views resonate with a study done by Brooks (1997) which indicates that for female academics to be retained within the system, the support offered by the universities:

- Must engage academics (female) in concrete tasks, teaching, assessment, observation and reflection which will illuminate the process of learning and development.
- Must be grounded on inquiry, reflection and experimentation that is participant driven
- must be collaborative
- Must be sustained, on-going, and intensive and supported by modelling, coaching and collective solving of specific problems pertaining to academics (female) practice.

The above views are in tandem with arecent comparative study of two Universities conducted by Tessens, White & Web, (2011) on female academics' perceptions of development and support in Universities conducted in Australia. Using a sample size of 204 senior female academics, these authors found out that female academics felt that professional support was important for their career development because:

- It provided role models for junior academics
- Provided learning about promotion aspects
- Provided useful training for leadership roles
- Learning how to deal with "bullying" and male dominance
- Encouragied shared learning
- Provided forum for discussion
- Helped with career planning

Additionally, Tsvere, Swamy and Nyaruwata (2013), using a sample of 440 full time academics (264 males and 176 females) adopted a quantitative descriptive research design to investigate the perceived competence of Zimbabwean Academics in the use of Information Technology (IT) in Universities. The findings of the study highlighted that the academics were fairly competent in using the internet for research. But, male academics perceived themselves as competent because most of the female academics were still facing challenges in using the internet as a teaching tool and most importantly as a research tool. Given this set of circumstances, these scholars concluded that it was paramount that the university management provide professional staff development programmes on the use of IT to its academics (female) lest they remain on the periphery of technology in education.

Meanwhile, Pienaar and Bester (2012), using a smaller sample of 93 academics in South Africa also had similar results as those found in Zimbabwe. In their study, it emerged that the success of IHL and career development of their academics was largely linked to adequate training and professional development so that positive effects on their job satisfaction could be experienced. Pienaar and Bester (2012) accentuated that it was critical that the leadership in universities realised that academics play a primary role in the functioning of any IHL since they get to train nearly all the professional cadres of the society. Hence, PSDP were imperative to avoid ill-preparedness of lecturers and compromising with quality education offered to students. Put in a nutshell, Hassan (2010) noted that some academics are ill-prepared to cope with higher education challenges which has resulted in most academics experiencing work-related stress as they fail to strike a balance between ill-preparedness and the ever increasing number of student population. Makondo (2012:117) feels that such academics are doing a disservice to the nation since such practices are unacceptable. Thus, his call for such academics to embark on staff development programmes offered by the universities so as to upgrade their academic and professional qualifications in order to “read and reflect” with a view to inform their pedagogic practices.

Cognisant of the foregoing, the researcher contends that an understanding of the female academics needs by the universities can facilitate the analysis of the professional support systems currently being offered to academics. Furthermore, strategies for promoting the support systems and enhancing the career development

of female academics can be implemented at a broader level than at faculty or departmental level. Hence, the pragmatic way forward is for Universities to structure the professional support offered to female academics as a continuum along the “3 I’s”, initial education induction (support upon entry in the academia) and in-service (continuous professional development) and out of the job professional support. Delannoy (2000) as cited by Pienaar and Bester, (2012) adds that such opportunities should involve interaction between experienced mentors, role models, inductees and mentees in the profession and the needs of the female academics must not be regarded as a ‘one size fits all approach’.

Zakaria and Daud (2010), buttress the preceding paragraph and postulate that one of the best investment of time and money that local, state, national and international leaders can make is improving the skills and knowledge of academics (females). The reason being that universities are the central nerve system of all professions, the one that trains all others. Given these set of circumstances, both South African and Zimbabwean scholars agree that the traditional “one-shot” approaches to professional development and support offered to female academics cannot be entertained especially with the current transformation reform effort that universities are currently undergoing (Hassan, 2009; Pienaar and Bester, 2012; Makondo, 2012).

Regarding the dimensions of the reform efforts, these scholars further endorse that the professional support exposed to female academics should not be intellectually superficial, fragmented and non-cumulative, instead, it should be a lifelong learning activity (on-going). Therefore, it may be concluded that universities must regard career development and professional support offered to female academics not as a static concept, but as a social construct that is fluid and flexible in nature. However, this researcher maintains that the issue of lack of resources especially in universities of developing countries affect the professional support and training of academics (female) so that they can be in a position to critically think, reflect and refine their profession (Harber and Mncube, 2011).

Meanwhile, it is also apparent from the above sentiments that the orientation and strength of the underlying professional support of female academics in universities is the principal variable in influencing their personal growth, strategic planning and

management of universities. Given this backdrop, Delannoy (2002), in Pienaar and Bester,(2012) are of the view that professional support given to female academics should not be viewed as a “piecemeal offering”, but should be driven by clear and coherent plans on how to improve their career development that has continuously led to their under-representation in Universities. In support of the above, Pienaar and Bester (2012), metaphorically assert that ‘new wine’ and ‘old wine’, needs new bottles. That is, both junior and senior female academics need to be exposed to some professional development approaches so that incentives and support structures meant for their career development will not be counterproductive.

For instance, in some universities, academics are offered incentives such as covering travelling costs to conferences and sabbatical leave which are used as motivation factors for studying, publication and research. An interesting observation made by the researcher is that the terms conditions of some university policies state that members of staff who have served for more than two years can apply for study leave to develop their careers (Bakari and Leach, 2007). But, Mabokela (2002), in her study in South Africa, reveals that female academics are worried that Universities do not provide adequate support especially on study leave and sabbaticals despite working in the same university for a long time. This author further posits that the paucity of a systematic efforts that supports career development of female academics (especially in junior ranks) means female scholars will remain locked in the lower echelons of the University rungs. Hence, one may argue that though most Universities have the policies that support career development of female academics, they are not given the support and opportunities for advancement based on merit, performance and talent.

On the other hand, Billimoira, Joy & Lianga (2008), note that any professional support offered to female academics in Universities should not be embedded on individual skills development programmes and opportunities. These scholars accentuate that a focus on individual skills can be less effective for their advancement if other organisational factors are not addressed such as lack of mentoring, training programmes and special job assignment. It may be recalled that earlier in this study, mentoring and networking were discussed as barriers to career development of female academics in universities. The researcher has observed that literature backdating to the eighties (Schulze, 2009; Stone and Coetzee, 2005;

Okurume, 2008; Mabokela, 2002, White, 2003) pinpoints to mentoring and networking as pivotal and vital roles that Universities can offer as a professional support structure to female academics' career mobility.

The above sentiments are supported by Xu and Martin (2011), who in their study on gender differences in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines discovered that networking was an essential tool for professional support of female academics because:-

- Novices can socialise with senior colleagues
- Professionally based relationships can be developed
- Peer evaluation and individual reputation and visibility in the field can be enhanced
- Source of diverse and current development in universities that may not be communicated in the publications and journals

It can be noted that professional support offered to female academics is a lifelong activity and a not static one and cannot be complete without networking. Thus, for academics to develop they have to network on national and international spheres so as to be able to identify and have contact with established scholars in their discipline (Ross, 1985 in Xu and Martin, 2011). However, Geber and Nyanjom (2009), postulate that universities may not readily provide the necessary support to female academics in universities that meet the challenges they encounter with regard to networking. In such situations, mentoring relationships among female academics themselves maybe necessary which provide growth and professional development.

Mentoring as a professional support mechanism should also be included alongside networking. Since universities in developing countries are experiencing transformational (Makondo, 2012; Hassan, 2009) reforms it makes sense that they encourage the adoption of transformational mentoring models that will help their academics (female) realise their career goals. According to Geber (2000), as cited by Geber & Nyanjom (2009), indigenous transformational mentoring models align very well with African countries cultural values which embrace the African sense of co-operation and the urgent drive for transformation of universities and society. In

addition, it embraces, supports and emphasises the holistic and systematic nature of mentoring female academics as a form of professional support as shown below:-

The Indigenous Transformation and Mentoring Model

Transformation

- Change agent
- Manage diversity

Role Model

Career development

- Advocate
- Coach
- Protect
- Prevent exploitation
- Provide challenging work assignment
- Exposure
- Give information
- Give political information
- Teach/ explore facilitate dimension

Psycho-Social

counsel
 acceptance and confirmation
 develop trust
 encourage
 guide
 engage in constructive confrontation
 manage transaction
 friendship

The Transformational Model. Source Geber, 2004

The researcher is of the view that the transformational model echoes the theoretical framework (liberal feminist) used in this study which advocates emancipation and transformation of female academics through providing them with equal opportunities that will promote their career development in and outside the universities. In addition , the researcher also supports an inclusive environment that enables organisational equity and support of career growth of female academics(Rossar, 2005). University structures and cultural norms should support relations between male and female academics without any gender seeking special privilege or attention.

Bexley, James & Arkoudis (2011) conducted a study across 20 Universities in Australia and 5 525 responses were received through questionnaires. These researchers found out that more than 40% of academics believed they received little or no professional support for their career development, which is one of the reasons they exit academia. The researcher believes the prevalent trend with regard to Universities of developing countries is the lack of resources and this leads to a complex and nuanced exercise for them to produce well rounded academics.

To circumvent the seeming challenges, (Cox, MacKenzie and Prichard, (2006), and Senge, 1990), states that one initiative of providing professional support to female academics is for Universities to be learning organisations (systems thinking, shared vision and team learning) and communities that connect academics (females) closely to mission, goals and challenges of the universities. Zajkowski, Sampson and Davis (2011) posit that professional support offered to female academics should be as natural as breathing, initiate change and address need for lifelong learning.

2.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

Firstly, this chapter presented the theoretical framework which informed this study. The chapter went further to discuss female academics's perceptions of their career development in Universities using the available literature. Moreover, issues in line with the research objective of the study were extensively covered. These include:

- Perception and experiences of female academics in Universities
- Barriers to career development of female academics
- career development strategies used by female academics
- Professional support to career development of female academics

The next chapter explains the research methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter investigates female academics' perceptions of their career development in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. Hence, the study derived its significance from the fact that the extant literature indicated that there was a dearth of comparative studies on career development of female academics in developing countries. To get an insight on why and how, the researcher systematically discusses the methodology under the following headings:-

- 3.2 Research paradigm
- 3.3 Research methodology
- 3.4 Research design
- 3.5 Population and sampling
- 3.6 Negotiating entry
- 3.7 Data collection instruments
- 3.8 Trustworthiness and credibility
- 3.9 Data analysis
- 3.10 Ethical Consideration
- 3.11 Conclusion

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGM : INTERPRETIVE PARADIGM

This study utilised the interpretive paradigm to investigate female academics's perceptions of their career development in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. According to Taylor, Kermolde & Robert, 2007; Weaver and Olson, 2006 and Blaikie, 2006) a paradigm is a principal model or a broad view, or perspective of something. It is based on beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing an outline, lenses, and processes in which a

research study is accomplished or takes place. Thus, the interpretive paradigm focuses on individual perceptions and meaning of a phenomenon or experiences.

The interpretive paradigm's main goal is to understand a particular situation or context as much more than the discovery of universal laws and rules which it views as biased and potentially fallible (Willis, Jost & Nilakanta, 2007, Bogdan and Biklen, 2003; Gephart, 1999; Schwartz, 1994). This paradigm addresses the important features of shared meaning, understanding, experiences and perceptions of the participants and seeks an actual reality in a specific situation (Yin, 2003). As such, using this paradigm meant the researcher had the chance to describe the events from the point of view of the female academics participants (Patton, 2002). In other words, the interpretive paradigm brackets unprejudiced realism and its main endeavour is to highlight how dissimilarities in human meanings (female academics) and sense making generate and reflect differences in a reified or objective reality.

Moreover, the interpretive paradigm emphasises that the researcher should be fully involved in the research under study and must be close to the participants being studied because what the world means to a person or group being studied is very crucial for a good research (Willis et al, 2007). Therefore, the researcher opined that the interpretive paradigm was pertinent to this study because it rejected the ideas that the same research methods can be used to study human behaviour because reality is viewed, not as single but multiple. Thus, lessons learnt from one context to another and views from a group that shares certain beliefs and expectations are all treated and viewed as important. In addition, the interpretive paradigm was used in this study because it supported that values are present in every research study and should be made explicit and presented word for word. This helped the researcher in the interpretation and analysis of data that was collected from the female academics of Universities in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

According to Willis et al, (2007) and Weaver & Olson, (2006), the interpretive paradigm rejects any form of foundationalism as a way of finding out the truth. This provided an opportunity for the researcher to question and probe the female academics about their general feelings, concerns, milestones and their hopes in the academia. The female academics were granted the opportunity for voice, and the freedom to express themselves within their natural settings. Using this paradigm

unravelling the practices of the participants (female academics) in Universities. Therefore, it may be noted that the validity of any interpretive paradigm is grounded in the return visit, when the past research findings are used yet by another researcher as a guide for entering the field and interacting with the participants described in the research. Thus, the interpretive paradigms' main focus is on the holistic perceptions of female academics and their environment which must be compatible with their career development in universities.

3.3 QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The qualitative methodology remains the most popular in building gendered understandings of how people in professional, familial relationships strategize to integrate different aspects of their lives (Cillers, Naidoo & Smith, 2011). The qualitative methodology is often used to answer questions about the multifaceted nature of a phenomenon, usually with a determination of describing and understanding this phenomenon from the participants' point of view (Leedy and Ormond, 2005). In this study, the researcher sought to find out using a comparative study, the perceptions of the female academics with regard to their career development in Universities of South Africa and Zimbabwe. Therefore, using the qualitative approach enabled the researcher the opportunity to discover in a flexible manner the participants' feelings with the sole aim of accessing specific information rather than making sweeping statements. In this regard, the research strives to understand the female academic's positions, experiences, challenges and opportunities within the academia and this will be conducted in their natural environment rather than in artificially contrived settings (Willis et al, 2007:235).

According to Morse & Richards (2002), qualitative descriptive approaches are extremely helpful because evidence of opportunities, experiences, beliefs, challenges can be easily missed when quantitative methods are used. Hence, they ensure that the authentic voice of the participants is well represented because they are inductive and flexible. Furthermore, the rationale for the use of qualitative methodology for this study has been profiled by Mertens (1998) in de Villiers (2005) who posits that research is a naturalistic interpretive science which is multi-method in focus and provides insights into cultural aspects, organisational practices and human interactions. In the same vein Myers, (2009); Denzin & Lincoln, (2003); Creswell, (2003) postulate that the qualitative approach uses different data collection methods

such as observations, interviews and documents analysis when studying educational processes. These are used to get answers about the current problem with regard to the dearth of extant literature (career development of female academics in Universities) to describe the behaviours, attitudes, needs and relations that are applicable to the analysed units (Du ploooy, 2001). In this case, the researchers' key role is to capture the processes rather than outcomes of interpretations by placing themselves (researchers) in the same situations as the participants.

On the other hand Krathwohl, (1998) and Liamputtong & Ezzy, (2005), argue that the qualitative approach has the advantage that open-ended questions can be used in interviews and this will enable the participants to respond in their own words, rather than choosing from fixed responses. This will provide an intuition on how people make sense of their own experiences. Therefore, the qualitative researcher does not remain remote or detached because they are the principal instrument in the research under study (Leedy & Ormond, 2005). Instead, the researcher enters the contexts and collects data through insights gained from actually being in the field and gaining thick, descriptive, rich and in-depth information (Domegan & Flemming, 2003). Thus, the meaning of events, occurrences and interactions can only be understood through the eyes of the actual participants in specific situations. Moreover, the qualitative methodology was ideal because it enabled the researcher to find out from the participants not only what happens within the Universities, but also how it happens and most importantly why it happens the way it does. This allowed the researcher the optimum moments to study intricacies and differences of the worlds under study with the hope of using this understanding to bring about a measure of social change (Herming, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004).

On the contrary, the qualitative methodology has the disadvantages that the researchers' bias can interfere with the data collection and analysis and that there are always chances that the participants may not all be equally credible (Merriam, 1998). Despite these criticisms the researcher believed this approach was relevant to the study. Therefore to avoid bias, plans regarding research procedures were applied in a homogeneous manner. For instance, all senior and junior female academics in Universities of South Africa and Zimbabwe answered the same interview questions through focus groups and semi-structured interviews. In

addition, document analysis was used for triangulation. This bracketed the researcher from additional personal impressions and interpretations.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Research design requires researchers to specify as clearly as possible what they want to find out and the best way to do it (Babbie, 2010: 121). Therefore, a research design is “the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with the economy in procedure” (Kothari, 2004: 31). Moreover, a research design serves to plan, structure and execute the research and to maximise the validity of its findings (Moun-ton, 1996: 175). As a result, a case study design was adopted in this study because it is an action plan for getting from “here to there” (Yin 2003:19). Thus, ‘here’, represents, the current position/stance of the career development of female academics in universities, and ‘there’, represents the future predictions and the answers to the research questions that were raised in this study.

3.4.1 CASE STUDY DESIGN

A case study involves studying social elements through comprehensive description and analysis of a single situation or case (William, 2006: 86). It is a method of study in depth rather than breadth (Kothari, 2004). In addition a case study is a very popular form of qualitative analysis which involves a careful and complete observation or examination of a specific phenomenon of a unit, be it individuals, family, an institution or entire community which is studied and described intensively (Maree, 2007; Kothari, 2004; Merriam, 1988). The case study design was relevant to this study because the researcher was able to use a variety of data collection instruments as part of the investigation. This design gave the researcher the opportune time to interact with the participants on a large scale of social structures and processes with the hope that certain aspects about the career development of female academics would be revealed during the data collection and analysis phases.

The case study design was utilised in this study because it had the following advantages:-

- Case study designs enriches the experiences of the researcher and this in turn intensifies the researcher analysing ability and skills

- Through a case study the researcher can obtain a genuine and a liberal record of personal experiences which would reveal the mans'(female academics) inner feelings , strivings, tensions, and motivations that drive him/her to action along with the forces that direct him/her to adopt a certain pattern of behaviour
- This design permits the researcher to trace out the natural history of the social unit and its relationship with the social factors and the forces involved in their immediate environment.
- Most importantly, case studies are an antidote (experiences, challenges encountered by female academics) for identified case problem.

However, there are some drawbacks of using case study design such as:-

- The danger of false generalisation is always there, in view of the fact that no set rules are followed in the collection of their data and only a few participants are studied and therefore may not be representative of the general group population.
- It is based on norms that may not be accurate at times, such as the usefulness of case data is always subject to uncertainty (Kothari, 2004)

Despite the limitations stated above, the case study design was used because it enabled the researcher to thoroughly describe the actions of the participants by quoting their words. This was used as tangible proof in finding answers to the current study because researchers have tended to look at the career trajectory of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean universities in terms of the constraints, demands, opportunities, chances and choices as experienced by female academics in developed countries. Thus, the role of the case study of the research under study is “not to prove but to improve” (Stufflebeam, Madaus & Kellagham, 2000: 282) and raise awareness using a comparative study, of the career trajectories of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean universities.

3.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

3.5.1 POPULATION

The population of the study is the total target group who would in the ideal world be the subject of research and about whom one is trying to say something (Punch, 2005). The selection of the population must precede the selection of the sample. Hence, the members of the population must be readily accessible to the researcher otherwise it will be difficult if not impossible to collect the necessary data (Powell, 1997). Choosing a population is one of the most difficult and essential aspects of the research design (Oliver, 2004:28). The study was based on the population of all faculty female academics gainfully employed be it on part-time, contract or full time basis in two public Universities of South Africa, Eastern Cape Province and Zimbabwe, Bulawayo Region.

The two selected public Universities constitute the research population of 11 faculties. Since the population is the entire group of people that the researcher desired to learn about (Stangor, 2011: 110), the researcher targeted Universities that are likely to share many organisational and structural similarities. Further to this view, the researcher selected public universities have not only stood the test of time but are generally huge and hence comprise of many faculties. This was beneficial to the researcher because there was strong likelihood of selecting a genuine number of cases from the population of the whole group (sample). The entire faculty of two Universities under study was too large to be studied; thus there was need to select a sample.

3.5.2 SAMPLE

Qualitative studies use non-probability sampling techniques. The items for the sample are selected deliberately by the researcher and the choice concerning the sample size remains supreme because no study can involve everything or everyone (Kothari, 2004; Punch, 2001). In this study purposive sampling was used because in interpretive and qualitative studies samples tend to be fairly small and the perceptiveness of facts is what the researcher sought from each individual. The researcher selected 6 out of 11 faculties in the selected public universities in South Africa and Zimbabwe based on the following justification and criteria:-

- The faculties selected by the researcher (3 from each University) represent commonalities regarding size, in terms of number of departments in each faculty and curricula being offered.
- It was not practical both financially and time-wise to interview all female academics in the 11 faculties.

Furthermore, the sample size comprised of 20 female academics based on the following specifications:-

- 5 senior female academics were purposively selected from each University for semi-structured interviews, and the benchmarks for selecting these female academics was based on:-
- Number of years of lecturing experience within the academia (this was done by choosing participants that have been lecturing for at least 10 (ten) years

The researcher was guided by the fact that senior female academics are not only experienced but have also been exposed to a lot of transformation and reforms that the universities have gone through such as growth in enrolments of students and academic staff and policy changes. The researcher also argues that the senior female academics are bound to be in a better position to give the researcher their views with regard to their career development and how they have managed to remain within the academic pipeline.

In addition, 2 focus group discussions each comprising of 5 female academics were conducted in each university respectively. The focus groups comprised of junior female academics and the motivation for selecting them was based on:-

- The researcher was of the view that pooling in junior female academics in one group and separating them from the senior female academics would reduce the chances of getting biased answers.
- The junior female academics also got the opportunity to voice out their feelings, expectations and experiences without feeling intimidated by their seniors.
- These female academics had the same commonalities, such as their ages and lecturing experience.

- The researcher also assumed the junior female academics still had a lot to accomplish; hence their views on the future of their careers within the Universities was paramount.

Therefore, a total sample of 20 female academics were interviewed. Furthermore, within the population of the Universities in South Africa and Zimbabwe, convenience sampling was used to identify the Universities that would participate in the study. According to Kothari (2004), when population elements are carefully chosen for inclusion in the sample built on the ease of admittance, it can be called convenience sampling. The universities that were going to be used in this study were conveniently situated and accessible to the researcher both in South Africa and Zimbabwe. This saved the researcher the time, effort and resources.

3.6 DATA COLLECTING TECHNIQUES

Data are typically thought of by researchers as a raw form of information, numbers, words, observations, measures or facts before being digested via human recognition use. In this way they are always thought of as the base of a hierarchy that includes information in the middle and knowledge on top (Case 2007:331). In interpretive studies, the sample size tends to be small, therefore the researcher used semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis as the central means for assessing information from the female academics with regard to their career development and these are discussed below:

3.6.1 INTERVIEWS

Babbie (2010 : 274) acknowledges that the interview is an alternative way/ method of collecting data. This scholar reveals that in interviews, researchers ask questions orally and write down the responses. In the same vein, Kothari (2004: 97) argues that the interview method of collecting data involves “presentation of oral-verbal stimuli and reply in terms or oral-verbal responses”. There are mainly three types of interviews that a researcher can choose to utilize. These are structured interviews, semi-structured interviews and unstructured interviews. This study adopted the semi-structured interviews.

3.6.2 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The researcher used semi-structured interviews because they are flexible and they gave the interviewees the chance to develop ideas and speak out more widely on the issues that were raised by the researcher. (Denscombe, 2003; Patton, 2002). In addition the semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to probe, clarify points made by participants and also build on questions that the participants raised during the interview process (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000). Five senior female academics were interviewed using an interview guide with the questions adapted from the research questions. An attempt was made to find out from the female academics how they have experienced and progressed in their careers in Universities. The interviews lasted approximately 1 (one) hour in which the researcher got the opportunity to pursue what Denscombe (2003) refers to as 'privileged information'. This is the value of contact with key players in the field who will give information being sought that the researcher would otherwise not know about or access without getting close or in touch with the participants. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews were made use of because of the inherent advantages outlined below:-

- The interview method can be made to yield an almost perfect sample of the general population.
- The researcher may catch the informant off-guard and thus secure the most spontaneous relations.
- The researcher may collect supplementary information about the respondent personal characteristics and environment which is often of great value in interpreting skills.

Meanwhile, (De Vos, Strydom, Fourche, Delport, 2002; Kothari, 2004) identify some of the weaknesses of face-to-face interviews as costly, time-consuming and the possibility of both the researcher and respondent bias. Nonetheless, the advantages outweighed the weaknesses which provided solid reasons for the researcher to adopt this data collection technique.

3.6.3 FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Focus group interviews are a way of collecting qualitative data. They are conducted with a small group of people through an informal group discussion or interaction in order to identify perceptions, thoughts and impressions of a specific topic of investigation in a non-threatening environment (Silverman, 2010; Kairuz, Cramp & O'Brien, 2007; Wilkinson, 2004; Patton, 2000). In focus group interviews, the researcher acts as a go-between for the group by ensuring that the discussion flows and that all the members in the group interrelate with each other. This study used the focus group discussions because they tend to bring out what is hidden to the surface. For instance, sensitive issues can materialize through groups and the researcher believed that the junior female academics would accomplish this as they are a new breed of academics and may view university set up through different lenses as compared to senior female academics.

In addition, this data collection technique builds confidence of participants and reveals ideas that an individual may have been sceptical to raise on their own or would not have thought about. Moreover, focus groups interviews were used in this study because they helped the researcher to access and generate information from the junior female academics (Kruger & Casey, 2000). Further to this view, the focus groups offered the researcher the chance to explore the “gap” between what the female academics say and what they do (Beoku-Betts, 2005)

Though focus groups may be difficult to ensemble and group dynamics such as power struggles may occur, Bagilhole (1994) posits that qualitative researchers should use focus group interviews because they create a sense of belonging to group members. In addition, they increase the participants' sense of cohesiveness and helps them to feel safe to share information with their peers. 5 junior female academics from each University were interviewed using focus groups as a way of triangulating data from other sources. All interviews were tape recorded and the researcher also took notes during the interviewing process.

3.6.4 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Organisational documents are important as a means of collecting qualitative data because they are in a position to project rich and tangible data. They bring out the values and beliefs of individuals in a particular setting and also act as a form of

communication between female academics and the University. According to Maree (2005), use of documents analysis means focusing on all types of written materials that can help the researcher to identify themes and patterns of a phenomenon being studied. The researcher used document analysis because they are tangible and they can be reread repeatedly. This gave the researcher the opportunity for numerous readings and better understanding of the documents being analysed (Yin, 2003). The document analysis was done according to the availability of documents that were given to the researcher. The researcher was mainly interested in:-

- Timetables for teaching (workload)
- Documents that show professional support offered to female academics

The researcher also took cognisance of the fact that document analysis have disadvantages. irretrievability may be difficult and access to documents may be blocked (Yin, 2003). However, the importance of using documents analysis in this study is that it enabled the researcher to compare documented information with what the female academics said in universities.

3.7 NEGOTIATING ENTRY

The principle of informed consent was applied when enlisting the participation of the female academics in this study. The researcher ensured that all the necessary forms were completed in line with the regulations in order to gain entry into the Universities. A letter from the researchers' supervisor containing the details about the research was handed over to the Dean/Faculty Manager of the respective faculties covered by the study. The researcher explained to the Dean/Faculty Managers the purpose of the research and what it entailed.

Faculty managers were requested to act as gatekeepers in helping identify the most suitable participants to be interviewed. After the identification of the participants, the researcher asked them for the suitable time, date and venue to conduct the interviews. The participants were asked to sign a letter of consent which showed the purpose of the research. The letter of consent clearly stipulated that confidentiality and utmost care would be observed to avoid any disruptions with their lecturing schedules.

3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS AND CREDIBILITY

3.8.1 TRUSTWORTHINESS

There are numerous ways and measures that can be used to promote trustworthiness and credibility of a qualitative study. According to Rule and John (2011), citing Guba & Lincoln (1981), trustworthiness in a study is achieved by giving attention to the study's transferability, credibility, dependability and conformability. The role of trustworthiness in a research is to ensure that data and data analysis are believable, and trustworthy and that the findings are worth paying attention to. To provide a more complete and multidimensional understanding of the issues relating to the career development of female academics, a triangulation methodology design was employed (Taylor, Kermode and Roberts, 2007).

Triangulation is concerned with the application and combination of several research methodologies in one study. Halcomb & Andrew (2005) are of the view that using multiple data collection instruments and methods to cross-check and validate findings will multiply the depth of the study and make the research findings rich with thick descriptive data. In addition, this will increase consistence, accuracy and quality of data presentation. The researcher triangulated semi-structured interviews; focus groups interviews and documents analysis to provide valuable guidance and awareness on the career development of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities and to overcome any problems of bias. Thus, the researcher triangulated so that the experiences of the female academics would be captured in a more holistically.

3.8.2 CREDIBILITY

Credibility refers to the idea of internal consistency where the core issue is how to ensure rigour in the research process and if the research measures what it is set out to study. It is the true exemplification and explanation of the phenomenon under study (Gasson, 2004; as cited by Babbie 2010). To ensure credibility of the study, the researcher used the audio tape recorder in all the interviews that were conducted. Moreover, a draft report with a thorough description of the sources of data was given to the participating female academics for corrections and comments through member checking. The researcher used member checking because it is one of the most critical techniques for establishing credibility in a qualitative study

(Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Therefore, the participants feedback served as an excellent check that the researcher had achieved the desired balance between partiality and flexibility within the study (Williams & Morrow, 2004).

Therefore, the researcher carried out a pilot study with the hope of making amendments where necessary to the main interview schedule. This included re-phrasing and redrafting some questions that participants in the pilot study may have had difficulties answering. In addition, the pilot study was more of a trial run in which the researcher monitored the length of the interviews, omitted questions that solicited the same answers and also checked for the accessibility of the participants within their natural settings. Moreover, conducting a pilot study highlighted to the researcher whether the data collection instruments that were going to be used would solicit enough information for data analysis.

Thus, 3 senior female academics and 1 focus group of junior academics par took in the pilot study and these were drawn from the faculties tha were not participating in the main research study. It emerged in the pilot study that some of the question had the same answers though they had be asked in a different way. Moreover, some of the questions were pre-empting forthcoming interview questions. As a result to enhance the quality of the interview guide all the interview questions that were ambiguous and not clear were re-worded and repetitions were removed. This was conducted in line with the comments and suggestions made by the participants.

3.9 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), every researcher needs to consider the mode of data analysis to be employed in a research study. Creswell (2002) and Mertens (2005) argue that data analysis occurs simultaneously and is iterative with data collection, interpretation and report writing. This should involve working with the data, organising, breaking them into manageable units, coding, synthesising and searching for patterns (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). The researcher in analysed the data according to instrumentations used to collect data which are semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and documents analysisUniversities. In addition, Yin (2003), posits that it is important that the researcher searches the data for patterns which may explain and identify links in the database.

Hence the researcher's aim in this part of the study was to organise and categorise data, compare the emerging patterns, concepts, themes and meaning, through the female academics' responses Universities. These would be done in line with research questions which sought to investigate female academics' perceptions of their career development in the Universities of South Africa and Zimbabwe. Moreover, data was analysed to identify the similarities and the differences in the perceptions Universities. This helped to evaluate the effectiveness of the research because the researcher had the opportunity to be immersed in the data and look through it numerous times so as to deduce meaning and compare what was said by the participants universities. Female academics (senior and junior) from both institutions were given identification codes to ensure anonymity during data collection and analysis.

3.10 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Research in the real world has to deal with people and the things that affect them, such that, ethical issues are bound to rise at the planning, implementation and reporting stages of research (Gray, 2004: 58). This study adhered to professional ethics and standards during the conduct of the research since it involved human beings. In this regard, the researcher protected and preserved individual privacy and the real identity of the specific persons was not revealed. The researcher assured participants that their identities would remain anonymous and all information provided would be treated as confidential. The researcher also undertook to report the finding as accurately as possible and followed the principle of full disclosure of intent of the participants. All research participants' ethical rights were considered, they had the right to confidentiality, to give or to withhold information. The researcher obtained Ethical Clearance from the University of Fort Hare and other participating Universities in order to conduct the study.

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter looked at research methodology that was used in the study. The interpretive paradigm and the qualitative approach were discussed in detail. This study employed the purposive and convenience method of sampling. The data collection techniques used by the researcher were semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews and document analysis. While these techniques might have had certain inherent problems, their numerous advantages persuaded the researcher to

utilise them as the most appropriate data collecting techniques for this study. Data analysis and ethical consideration were also covered in this chapter. The following chapter focuses on data presentation analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides presentation and analysis of data. The results present a comprehensive picture of female academics' perceptions of their career development in Universities South African and Zimbabwean Universities. The data was gathered using semi structured interviews, focus group interviews and documents analysis with a view to establish :-

- a) How South African and Zimbabwean female academics perceive their their career development in Universities
- b) The factors which female academics perceive as barriers to their career development
- c) Strategies used to overcome barriers to their career development
- d) Support mechanisms they deem necessary for their career development

The collected data is presented according to the objectives stated above. The University in South Africa was identified as University **X**, whereas the University in Zimbabwe was identified as University **Y**. The respondents were junior and senior female academics from both universities. The senior female academics were identified as **P1 – P5** from University **X** and **P6 - P10** from University **Y**. Focus group interviews were used for junior female academics and these were identified as **FGP1** from University **X** and **FGP2** from University **Y**.

The personal attributes and biographical data of both the senior and junior academics in both universities is given first. These include age, marital status, the number of children they have, their respective faculty, year of appointment in current position, their current qualifications, year of attainment of current qualification and working experience. This information was sought by the researcher for the sole purpose of giving information on their personal and career backgrounds with the view of coming up with suggestions, implications and suppositions in relation how they perceive their career development in universities.

4.2 BIOGRAPHICAL DATA OF SENIOR FEMALE ACADEMICS IN UNIVERSITY X AND Y

4.2.1 Age range of senior female academics in Universities X and Y

In order to establish the age range composition, the participants were required to indicate their age range in the sample that was studied from both universities.

Table 1: Age range of senior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X					UNIVERSITY Y				
Age Range	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+
No of respondents			3	2				2	2	1
Percentage			60%	40%				40%	40%	20%
Total	100%					100%				

In University X, 3 (60%) participants belong to the age range 40-50 years, whereas 2 (40%) participants are between 50-60 years. In University Y, 2 (40%) participants are between the ages of 40-50 and another 2 (40%) participants are between 50-60 years; 1 (20%) participant(s) are over 60 years old. The above statistics show that both universities have more or less the same age range of senior female academics. A glance at these universities may imply that both countries have 40% of female academics in the age range 50-60 years and it may be inferred that they are near retirement age. Further to this, University Y has 20% of its senior academics over 60 years old which may be assumed that they are past the retirement age, but due to the brain drain that the IHL has experienced in Zimbabwean Universities, the (Ministry) may not have had any choice but to retain these female academics.

On the other hand, these results further point out that there is need for both universities to come up with initiatives and innovations that will ensure that they manage not only to retain but also lure more academics into their institutions because the current percentage of female academics nearing the retirement age is very high.

4.2.2 Marital Status of senior female academics in Universities X and Y

The senior female academics were also asked to provide their marital status as part of the data collection procedure.

Table 2: Marital status of senior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X			UNIVERSITY Y		
Marital Status	Married	Single	Total	Married	Single	Total
No of respondents	2	3	5	4	1	5
Percentage	40%	60%	100%	80%	20%	100%

Table 4.2 indicates that 2 (40%) participants of the senior female academics in University X are married and the majority 3 (60%) participants are single. Although available claims that most female academics are not married, Table 2, based on the situation in University Y proves otherwise. 4 (80%) participants of senior female academics are married and 1 (20%) participant is single. There is a huge gap in respect of the marital status of senior female academics between the two Universities.

4.2.3 Senior female academics with/without children in Universities X and Y

The research also sought to find out if senior female academics have children from both universities under study.

Table 3: Senior Academics with/without children

	UNIVERSITY X			UNIVERSITY Y		
	With Children	Without Children	Total	With Children	Without Children	Total
No of respondents	4	1	5	4	1	5
Percentage	80%	20%	100%	80%	20%	100%

Table 4.3 revealed that 4 (80%) of participants from both universities under study have children and 1 (20%) participants do not have children. These results reveal

that most female academics are single in University X as compared to University Y. Those in University Y have the dual responsibilities of work and children. This may imply that their time tends to be divided between these two roles which may affect their career development because it is usually the career of females which suffers if there is a family and children involved. The study also noted that from the two Universities investigated the percentage of female academics with and without children indicates an equal representation from the respondents. Therefore, it is quite possible to make fair comparisons of the results with confidence.

4.2.4 Faculties of Senior Female Academics in Universities X and Y

The question required participants to state which faculty they belonged to as it was important to gauge if they were a true representative of the research sample.

Table 4: Faculties of Senior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X				UNIVERSITY Y			
Name of Faculty	Sci & Agri.	Mgt & Com.	Ed.	Total	Applied Sci.	Mgt & Com	Ed	Total
No of respondents	2	2	1	5	2	2	1	5
Percentage	40%	40%	20%	100%	40%	40%	20%	100%

KEY

Sci & Agric. = Science and Agriculture

Mgt & Com. = Management and Commerce

Applied Sci. = Applied Sciences

Ed. = Education

Therefore, the table above indicates that the number of respondents and the percentages shown in Table 4.4 are a true representative of the sample size as highlighted in Chapter three (3) that the number of the respondents from both universities under study would be selected from the population. These faculties represented commonalities in terms of size, number of departments in each faculty, curricula offered and the nature of organisational structures.

4.2.5 Position of senior female academics in Universities X and Y

The participants were also required to state their position with the university system so as to be able to deduce any commonalities or variances. Moreover, Staff positions at university, faculty and department level determine the leadership roles and responsibilities that one is given.

Table 5: Position of senior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X				UNIVERSITY Y			
Position	Prof	Sr. Lecturer	Lecturer	Total	Prof.	Sr. Lecturer	Lecturer	Total
No of respondents	-	3	2	5	1	1	3	5
Percentage	-	60%	40%	100%	20%	20%	60%	100%

The distribution of participants by occupation showed that Universities X and Y have the same typical University traditional staff positions. The results showed that 1 (20%) participant of female academics at University Y at are professorial level, while another 1 (20%) participant, is at senior lecturer level. On the other hand, University X has 3 (60%) of its female academics at senior lecturer level. In addition 2 (40%) participants at University X are at lecturer grade, while in University Y 2 (60%) participants are at lecturer grade. The information provided by the respondents show that they have been in the academia for more than ten years. However, their career development in terms of their current position within the universities paints a different story. Both universities show that a substantial percentage female academics are still at lecturer grade. It may be concluded that they may not have done much publications and community engagement to be promoted to the next level. This also reinforces what has been written by other scholars that in the higher echelons of Universities, there is still a want for female academics. The objective of the study is to find out why these female academics have been stagnant or moving at a snail pace for such a long time? Considering the age of some respondents, chances are that they may exit academia without fully reaching the full potential in terms of promotion.

4.2.6 Year of appointment in the current position for senior female academics in Universities X and Y

The researcher also sought to find out the year in which the senior female academics were appointed to their current position.

Table 6: Year of appointment to current position

	UNIVERSITY X					UNIVERSITY Y				
Year of Appointment	2004	2006	2009	2010	Total	1991	1999	2006	2010	Total
No of respondents	1	2	1	1	5	1	1	1	2	5
Percentage	20%	40%	20%	20%	100%	20%	20%	20%	40%	100%

Table 4.6 indicates that the years 2004, 2009 and 2010 not more than 1 (20%) of the academics in University X were promoted. In 2006 there was a significant increase, 2 (40%) of the female academics were appointed to their current position. These statistics show that some female academic are developing their careers and being promoted. However the worrying fact is that the percentage of new appointments to higher grades remains the same at University X. On the other hand, the statistics in University Y reveal a very interesting picture. From as early as 1991, 1(20%) of these female academics were already appointed to their current position. In 1999 1 (20%) was also appointed to the current position they hold to date. A further 1 (20%) were appointed in 2006 and in 2010 there was a significant rise which saw 2 (40%) of the participants being appointed to their current position. Even so, what is alarming is that 22 years down the line, these female academics are still in the same position and have not attained even a PhD. A consoling factor is that the percentage of the female academics moving from one position to another appears to be on the increase in University Y. It may be inferred, to a certain extent, that academically, career development of female academics that were sampled in this is taking place.

4.2.7 Highest qualifications for academics in Universities X and Y

The quality of education offered in any IHL sorely depends on the academic qualification of its academics. The respondents were asked to state their highest qualification.

Table 7: Highest qualification for senior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X						UNIVERSITY Y					
Qualification	PhD	MA	BA	PM	OTHER	TOTAL	PhD	MA	BA	PM	OTHER	TOTAL
No of respondents	2	3	-	-	-	5	2	3	-	-	-	5
Percentage	40%	60%	-	-	-	100%	40%	60%	-	-	-	100%

Table 4.7 points out that the higher the requirement of an academic qualification, the lower the percentage of female academics. University X shows that 2 (40%) participants have PhDs and 3 (60%) participants have masters' degrees. Ironically, the same results were revealed in University Y. 2 (40%) of the senior academics have PhDs and 3 (60%) participants as their colleagues have master's degrees.

Though most of these senior female academics have been in the system for 10 plus years, they still lecture with their master's degree. This may mean that universities need to come up with strategies and incentives that will attract the female academics to also develop their careers academically. It is almost a universal truth that the level of education and professional qualification are a pre-requisite for promotion in universities. Therefore female academics may need to make an effort to upgrade their qualifications if they are to realise their career growth in Universities.

4.2.8 Year of Attainment of Current Qualification

The respondents were asked to state the year in which they attained their current qualifications.

Table 8: Year of attainment of current qualification

	UNIVERSITY X						UNIVERSITY Y				
Year	2002	2003	2007	2008	Total	1991	1999	2003	2008	2010	Total
No of Respondents	2	1	1	1	5	1	1	1	1	1	5
Percentage	40%	20%	20%	20%	100%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	100%

In University X, 2 (40%) participants got their masters in 2002, 1 (20%) participant had her PhD in 2003 and in 2007, 1 (20%) got their masters and in 2008, 1 (20%) were capped with their PhDs. In University Y, Table 4.8 above shows that 1 (20%) of the female academics attained their master's degree in 1991. Another 1 (20%) in 1999 had their PhDs and in 2003 and 2008 1 (20%) respectively also had their master's degrees and in 2010, 1 (20%) attained their PhDs. The results above show that most of the female academics have not made an effort to develop their careers despite some of them getting their master's degrees as early as 1991, 2003 and 2007.

If the age of these senior female academics is put side by side with their current qualifications and the number of years they have been lecturing in Universities, the pattern that emerges shows that their chances of reaching the higher echelons of the Universities are bleak. Therefore, one may ask, are these female academics content with their present qualifications and positions or they have faced a number of challenges that have hindered their career growth within the Universities? Thus, one of the aims and objectives of this study is to establish the cause of the lack of upward mobility among female academics.

4.2.9 Lecturing experience of senior female academics in Universities X and Y

In chapter three (3), the researcher indicated, under the population and sampling section, that the senior female academics in both universities will be purposively selected according to the number of years they have served in their universities.

Table 9: Lecturing experience for senior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X				UNIVERSITY Y			
No of years	2 – 5	5 – 10	10+	Total	2 – 5	5 – 10	10+	Total
No of respondents			5	5			5	5
Percentage			100%	100%			100%	100%

As can be seen from Table 4.9, both Universities have the same results (100%). This shows that all the respondents interviewed had lectured for 10 or more years in a university setup. Thus, the longer an employee stays at an institution, the more they become well versed with how the system works and also become well versed with the culture of their workplace. The study assumed that those with more working experience would be the possible informants on the career trajectories of female academics in these universities.

4.3 Biographical Data of Junior Female Academics in Universities X and Y

4.3.1 Age range of junior female academics in Universities X and Y

The junior female academics were also asked to state their age as their senior counterparts in both universities under study.

Table 10: Age range of junior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X					UNIVERSITY Y				
Age Range	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+	20-30	30-40	40-50	50-60	60+
No of respondents	4	1	-	-	-	1	4	-	-	-
Percentage	80%	20%	-	-	-	20%	80%	-	-	-
Total	100%					100%				

Table 4.10 shows that junior female academics in University X are concentrated in the 20–30 years age band and comprised 4 (80%) participants of the total population, implying an economically and academically active age group. The table also indicates that 1 (20%) in university X of the junior academics are between the ages of 30–40 years old. The above data does not only elicit hope of female

representation within the University but also depicts that the University X academic profession still comprises a relatively young profile of female academics.

On the other hand, Table 4.10 also shows that junior female academics in University Y are concentrated in the age range of 30-40 years of age, representing 4 (80%) of the University population. The table also reveals that 1 (20%) of the academics are within the 20-30 years age band. The age range of junior female academics in University Y needs to be viewed in the context of the extensive challenges that IHL have endured since the economic meltdown. As such, brain drain has robbed University Y of an economically active age group of 20–30 years as compared to University X. On the other hand, Table 4.10 shows that both Universities indicate that their junior academics still have the opportunities of developing their career within the academia because they have already started on an early academic path and may be the next generation of female leadership in Universities X and Y.

4.3.2 Marital Status of junior female academics in Universities X and Y

Information pertaining to the marital status of junior academics in both Universities under study was also solicited from the participants.

Table 11: Marital Status of junior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X			UNIVERSITY Y		
Marital Status	Married	Single	Total	Married	Single	Total
No of respondents	2	3	5	4	1	5
Percentage	40%	60%	100%	80%	20%	100%

The results reveal that 3 (60%) of junior female academics in University X are not married and 2 (40%) are married. Whereas in University Y, 4 (80%) of the junior female academics are married, and 1 (20%) are single. Therefore it may be inferred that those junior academics who are not married in these Universities have the chance to progress because they do not have family responsibilities as compared to their married counterparts, who, it may be assumed, have to juggle their attention between work and family.

Though the above table indicates a considerable difference in terms of the marital status of junior female academics in both Universities, there are striking features that have to be taken into consideration. For instance, the age range of the majority of junior academics in University X is between 20-30 years which may explain why the majority of them are not married. Yet when we glance at the University Y junior academics, the majority age range is 30-40, a range in which most women, culturally and naturally, from an African context are expected to marry and have a family.

4.3.3 Junior female academics with/without children in Universities X and Y

The research also sought to find out if junior female academics in both universities under study had children or not.

Table 12: Junior academics with/without children

	UNIVERSITY X			UNIVERSITY Y		
	With Children	Without Children	Total	With Children	Without Children	Total
No of respondents	1	4	5	5	-	5
Percentage	20%	80%	100%	100%	-	100%

According to Mertens (2005), female academics are less likely to have children when they have not done so at the start of their career path. This view corresponds with the results in Table 4.12. Although most of the junior academics in University X began their career between 2 –10 years ago, the majority of them 4 (80%) have no children and only 1 (20%) have children. Their age may explain why they do not have children. This may also be coupled with the fact that research shows that childlessness tends to be prevalent among female academics that have entered into academia (Baker, 2008). Data from University Y indicates that all junior female academics have children. These results tie with the information in Table 4.11 which indicates 80% of the female academics are married and hence, it may be inferred they are likely to have a family.

4.3.4 Faculties of Junior Female Academics in Universities X and Y

For purposes of comparing the institutions being studied, It was necessary to know the number of participants per faculty. The question required the respondents to state which faculty they belonged to.

Table 13: Faculties of junior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X				UNIVERSITY Y			
Name of Faculty	Sci & Agri.	Mgt & Com.	Ed.	Total	Applied Sci.	Mgt & Com	Ed	Total
No of respondents	2	2	1	5	2	2	1	5
Percentage	40%	40%	20%	100%	40%	40%	20%	100%

KEY

Sci & Agric. = Science and Agriculture

Mgt & Com. = Management and Commerce

Applied Sci. = Applied Sciences

Ed. = Education

Their responses show that the faculties of Management and Commerce in both Universities represented 2 (40%) of the junior academics. The Faculty of Applied Science in University Y represented 2 (40 %) of the academics, whereas the Faculty of Science and Agriculture in University X also represented 2 (40%) of the academics. Both Universities under study had 1 (20%) of the female academics who represented the Faculty of Education in each university respectively. All the faculties mentioned above were purposively selected on the criterion based on their commonalities such as size and the curricula being offered in these institutions as indicated in the research methodology in Chapter 3 of this study.

4.3.5 Position of junior female academics in Universities X and Y

Participants were also requested to indicate their positions within their respective Universities.

Table 14: Position of junior female academics academics

	UNIVERSITY X				UNIVERSITY Y			
Position	Prof	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer	Total	Prof.	Senior Lecturer	Lecturer	Total
No of respondents	-	-	5	5	-	1	4	5
Percentage	-	-	-	100%	-	-	-	100%

Both Universities under study had a typical traditional staff within their faculties. The above table 4.14 points out that all the junior female academics in both Universities X and Y are in the lecturer grade. Thus, it may be inferred that, these junior academics may not be in a position to acquire leadership positions within the academia as this goes with the research and the number of research publications, teaching and community engagement if one is to move to the next grade.

Table 6

4.3.6 Year of appointment in the current position for female academics in Universities X and Y

The question required the respondents to state the year in which they appointed their current positions and their responses are tabled below.

Table 15: Year of appointment into current position

	UNIVERSITY X					UNIVERSITY Y				
Year of Appointment	2005	2007	2008	2009	Total	2007	2008	2009	2010	Total
No of respondents	1	1	1	2	5	1	1	2	1	5
Percentage	20%	20%	20%	40%	100%	20%	20%	40%	20%	100%

Table 4.15 reveals that 1 (20%) of the participants in University X were appointed in the years 2005, 2007 and 2008 and have been stagnant in the same position for 8, 6 and 5 years respectively . On the other hand, 2 (40%) of the participants in University X were appointed to their current position 4 year ago. Both Universities

under study have commonalities in the above table 4.15 because a look at University Y also shows more or less the same results. 1 (20%) of the academics have been in their current position for 7 and 5 years respectively. Only 2 (40%) of the academics were appointed in 2009 and 1 (20%) just recently in 2010. Though University X has a younger generation as compared to University Y, still their progress seems to be slow considering their number of years in the system. Moreover, these results are consistent within literature which states that female academics continue to be populated in the lower echelons of Universities despite being in the playing field for quite some time. What could be causing these academics to be stagnant in their career trajectory in universities? One of the major objectives of this study was to find answers to these emerging results.

4.3.7 Highest qualifications for academics in Universities X and Y

The table below gives information pertaining to the highest qualification of FGP1 and FPG 2 of the junior female academics who participated representing Universities X and Y respectively.

Table 16: Highest qualification for junior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X						UNIVERSITY Y					
Qualification	PhD	MA	BA	PM	OTHER	TOTAL	PhD	MA	BA	PM	OTHER	TOTAL
No of respondents	-	5	-	-	-	5	-	4	1	-	-	5
Percentage	-	100	-	-	-	100%	-	80%	20%	-	-	100%

Their answers show that 5 (100%) female academics in University X have a master's degree, whereas in University Y 4 (80%) have master degrees and 1 (20%) Bachelors' degrees. Promotion within academia is dependent on academic achievement which is also gauged through a number of research publications that an individual possesses. Thus, these results suggest that the junior female academics in both Universities have managed to develop their careers academically. However, in universities, this really does not count much and it may be assumed through the results that not much research and publications, teaching experience and community engagement has been done. Hence, most of these female academics remain in the same position as indicated in the preceding table.

4.3.8 Year of Attainment of Current Qualification

The respondents were also asked to state when they attained their current qualifications

Table 17: Year of attainment of current qualification

UNIVERSITY X					UNIVERSITY Y				
Year	2007	2010	2011	Total	2007	2009	2011	2012	Total
No of Respondents	1	2	2	5	1		3	1	5
Percentage	20%	40%	40%	100%	20%	-	60%	20%	100%

Both Universities had 20% of their academics receiving their current qualifications in 2007. In University X, 2 (40%) participants received their Masters in 2010 and another 2 (40%) participants in 2011. While in University Y 3 (60%) of the participants attained their qualifications in 2011 and 1 (20%) in 2012. By and large, it may be assumed that the “dry season” of University Y between, 2007 and 2011, may be ascribed to the economic meltdown that the country underwent when most individuals dropped out of their studies as the conditions were not favourable. The results projected above clearly show that there is a steady growth of career development based purely on academic achievement of the female academics in University X.

4.3.9 Lecturing experience of junior female academics in Universities X and Y

The respondents were requested to indicate their current work experience within the Universities they were attached. The question required respondents to state the number of years that they have been lecturing in as junior female academics

Table 18: Lecturing experience for junior female academics

	UNIVERSITY X				UNIVERSITY Y			
No of years	2 – 5	5 – 10	10+	Total	2 – 5	5 – 10	10+	Total
No of respondents	4	1	-	5	5	-	-	5
Percentage	80%	20%		100%	100			100%

Table 4.18 shows that 4 (80%) of the participants have been lecturing between 2 – 5 years and 1 (20%) between 5 – 10 years in University X. On the other hand, Table 4.18 also points out that in University Y 5 (100%) of the participants have been lecturing between 2 – 5 years. Once again, purposive sampling was used to select the junior female academics from both Universities based on the number of their lecturing experience. However, the information above paints a sobering picture in both Universities because there seems to be a considerable gap – time frame of junior female academics in the range of 5 -10 years with only 20% being represented by University X. This figure is very low and it may in the future limit the possible pool from which the generation of senior female academics can be drawn.

The next section of the study will focus on the verbatim narratives of the junior and senior female academics in Universities X and Y. commonalities and the disparities in their responses will also be highlighted.

4.4 The experiences of senior and junior female academics on Universities X and Y.

4.4.1 Choice of career in a University

The education and career choice of females is largely shaped by the cultural values norms, beliefs and the environment in which they grow. The traditional beliefs with regard to women's role within society seems to be ubiquitous. The study sought to find out from senior female academics in both universities under study what factors led to their career choices. Their responses indicated that when they entered academia, it was not their choice, but the circumstances did not give them many options to choose from because the opportunities for teaching were abundant as compared to other professions. Moreover, the early childhood socialisation had an impact on the careers that they chose later on. Respondents from Universities X and Y had the same comments. They articulated that the environment in which they grew up made them choose to be teachers because they felt the society needed their skills. P1, P4, and P5 are from University X and P8 and P10 are from University Y. Their comments are presented as follows:

P1 commented:

I grew up surrounded by four walls of the University; somehow I knew I was going to go to the university and later become a teacher and teach other people my expertise.

P4 articulated:

My role model was my aunt and she was considered as educated in my family.....I admired everything about her, especially her feet because they had “cones”, I really thought that was how feet of educated people (teachers) looked like, so I worked very hard and wanted to be an educated teacher and have feet like my aunt.

P5 simply said:

It was providence, I believe it happened just like that.

P8 highlighted:

My parents were so much involved in church issues and so I attended missionary schools and these shaped my career choice, I admired missionaries, their love and how they worked passionately, and when I finished school I vowed to light the youth and put them on the steps to a brighter future as the missionaries did for me, so I choose teaching.

In her response P10 explained:

My surroundings were educational, both my parents were teachers, my father, especially was very particular about us girls (me and my sisters) and did not want us to disregard education and he used to say, once you get married you will realise that your certificate will become your best friend who will never have mood swings.... Education was a priority to him and so I became a teacher.

However, P2, P3 from University X and P6, P7 and P9 from University Y had different circumstances which led to their career choice, and these are their sentiments:

P2 opined:

*It was not by choice, it was the circumstances of the then ruling government, by then they had a mission to make sure that people joined agriculture.....
But then even if it was chosen for us we grew to love it!.*

P3 also explained how she got to be in academia:

It was an unforeseen opportunity..... I had just finished my masters and I was offered a lecturing post and with time I fell in love with the job.

P6 articulated:

My father was policeman during the colonial era and education came first, so this career was chosen for me because he heard through a white man that there was an opening for scholarship in Europe for engineering which really I had no idea what it was all about, eventually I went and it was the best thing that my father did for me..... today I am a female professor .

P7 explained:

I grew up among my brothers and so became inquisitive a lot, guess this is what led me to journalism in the first place, I started off my career as an editor and raised up through the hierarchy and eventually I got tired of being in the media, so I heard of a vacancy to teach in academia, I applied because I needed a job..... but when I started lecturing I enjoyed it!.

P9 opined:

I really wanted to be a nurse, but the opportunities were so restricted so I ended up being a teacher through the influence of my father who was a teacher himself.

Research findings from FGP2 of University Y were similar to those of senior academics in both Universities X and Y under study. Their career choices were influenced by family backgrounds and the environment. They argued that their parents were not educated and came from poor backgrounds and hence, did not want to experience the same life as adults. A member of FGP2 reinforced the foregoing comments and stated:

I grew up in an environment where as a female you became either a nurse, a teacher or a secretary because these were professions for women. The environment was poor with big families such that our careers choices were basically shaped by our parents and relatives because all that was needed was a job where one could be paid while being trained so as to support the family.

4.4.1.1 Graduate employment within Universities

Meanwhile, responses from FGP1 of University X on career choices were partly contrary to those of senior female academics in both Universities and FGP2 from University Y. They explained that they never went looking for a job in Universities, instead the career in academia had found them. Rather, these were opportunities that came unexpectedly and they decided to take them up considering the job market was flooded and there were a number of graduates with no jobs. This is evidenced by the responses made by a member of the FGP1:

considering the history of our country most of us grew poor so we did not want the same life as adults and being educated was the only way out..... but this career found us because we are all products of this University It was not by choice but because of being jobless after graduating with degrees we accepted the offers made by the University.

The above responses probably explains one of the major transformations that Universities in some developing countries have gone through. Most Universities have been employing their students soon after graduation. FGP1's sentiments resonate with the observations made by the researcher that there are few female academics in Universities. This may be a strategy that universities may be using to ensure that female academics are well represented in academia. However, it is quite disappointing that the majority of participants interviewed in University X and University Y pointed out that academia was not their career choice. They landed into it through parental influence and environmental background. Moreover, the responses from senior academics in both Universities and FGP2 in University Y evoke a sense of gender stereotyping because the type of profession they chose to do were clearly spelt out for them by society.

4.4.1.2 Intellectual Growth and knowledge expansion

On the other hand, all the respondents in University X and University Y said intellectual growth was the reason why they liked being in the academia . They stated that working in IHL had developed their cognitive levels because they were exposed to different and diverse types of students with different and unique academic needs. The participants 1 – 4 of University X opined that knowledge was expanding within the IHL; hence it was important that they elevated not only the students but themselves as well. Below are the feelings shared by all the participants from the Universities X and Y under study:

P1 had this to say:

You get to interact with people, you research for the students, it's like my mind is always engaged.

P2 conceded that:

I get to do new things all the times..... I have to put my mind together to get solutions and answers to my students' needs and problems.

P3 stated:

It gives me the chance to explore and understand how people think..... I have the opportunity to get more knowledge about the world..... every time there is always something new that I have to look into, it really keeps my mind working overtime, which I really enjoy, though it can be tiresome.

In the same vein P4 commented:

I love the fact that I get to do new things all the times and that keeps my mind busy. it is not monotonous, like when I am dealing with Masters students, each student usually has a different topic and this gives me the chance to read widely and deeply around that research area(s)".

Consequently, P5 from University X, P7, P8 and P10 from University Y also shared similar views which indicated that through their intellectual growth and knowledge expansion, they had respect for the knowledge that students brought into the lecturer rooms. They made their comments as follows:

P5 explained

It's the kind of job I love doing, as I said earlier my career was just meant to be, I get the satisfaction in helping students, opening fresh and new minds.

P7 revealed that:

it is about the research aspect, the finding out of things.....preparing for lectures and getting students to have a passion for what they are studying for..... that eagerness when students submit their first assignment and finding out their capabilities, is quite amazing.

P8 commented:

"I enjoy the chance to light the youth and leading them on the right steps into succeeding in life"

P10 said:

The interaction I have with the students has helped me to develop in my career..... I have seen that a professional qualification at times may mean nothing because what I have learnt from my students is immeasurable and unquantifiable.

The interview with P6 from University Y drew the researchers' attention to why she enjoyed being in academia. Her comments portrayed the importance of self-belief and confidence and commitment, if one is to progress as a female academic:

The most important thing about being in the academia is that you promote yourself, no-one should pin you down..... if you work hard, promotion is automatic, you can elevate yourself to be a professor and demote yourself to be nothing, it's all about determination to work hard, to teach passionately and research passionately and the results will be pleasant.

4.4.1.3 Academic freedom and flexibility

A divergent opinion was expressed by P9 from University Y who stated that she derived joy in being an academic because of its flexibility and freedom. This was demonstrated by the participant's comments as follows:

P9:

I love the freedom because you get to teach what you want, the best way you see it fit for the students as long as you cover the course module..... You don't have to be worried about the lesson plan or scheme book like in primary and high schools.

FGP1 comments from, University X echoed those of P9 from University Y. They unanimously stated that it was the freedom and the flexibility of working in the academia which could enhance their creativity and innovativeness. In line with this, FGP1 stated:

It is the liberty, the independence of being able to express yourself and the flexible environment which is so diverse with students from different backgrounds....., the suppleness of the working hours which can allow you to develop your career if the organisational environment permits....., the excitement that there is no-one policing you in class to see how you do your stuff as long as you produce the results is what is important.

4.4.1.4 Knowledge sharing in Universities

The FGP2 were more or less on the same page with senior academics in Universities X and Y and FGP1 in University X. They also highlighted they enjoyed being in the academia because it offered them the elasticity to improve their careers formally and informally. However, FGP2 in University Y emphasised the importance of knowledge sharing between academics and students. They added this gave them the freedom to research, to teach and learn and at the same time acquire continuous scholarly knowledge and information within the academia. The following is the response from one member:

It is the freedom of sharing information and knowledge with other academics and the students and learning something new every day..... our students tend to research and reveal and share information that as a lecturer you are

not aware of, so even if you are not doing a formal course to academically develop your career we still learn from our students informally..... it gives you the chance of working at a comfortable pace with the learners as long as it is within the time line, rules and regulations of the institution.

The content from the above extracts indicates that both senior and junior female academics in both Universities X and Y value academic freedom and flexibility because it enables them to voice their opinions and publish their ideas without any fear of reprimand. Moreover, the theoretical framework used in this study aligns with the importance of academic freedom and flexibility within the universities. It supports that females should be allowed a fair playing ground so as to dismantle the negative institutional and societal structures that have been used in the IHL for a long time. Therefore, the autonomy and the freedom to use an individual's creativity and initiative, the flexible working hours and variety of work act as solid indicators of the attractiveness of working in a university.

Additionally, from the above sentiments, one could get the impression that the respondents in FGP1 from University X and FGP2 from University Y, and some senior academics enjoy being their own “bosses”, and they feel liberated to be able to showcase their capabilities. In the above accounts, it can be deduced that all the participants value scholarly stimuli and growth, not only for them but for the students as well.

4.4.2 Isolation and Male egocentrism

Working within the academia can either make or break the most able academics because of its working environment. In the interviews with senior and junior female academics from both Universities X and Y, their experiences were considered by the researcher to be critical to their career development when this study was conceived. Therefore, their opinions were also sought on their general experiences of working as females in Universities. Patriarchy and working in isolation, which promoted fragmentation and individualism, were sighted as some of the experiences they encountered as they strove to develop their careers. In University X, P1 elaborated working in isolation as follows:

P1:

Eish!!!, honestly when it comes to experiences, you feel so alone, there is no team work, you work in isolation most of the times, asking for help to other is more like taboo.... you are in your own island, you have a problem, you will suffer over it alone and solve it alone surrounded by these four walls, the issue of selfishness, the spirit of I can do it alone has to go, especially among female academics if we are develop our careers.

On the other hand, participants 2, 3, and 4 from University X, and 6 and 9 from University Y felt that male ego; lack of respect and inferiority complex among the female academics had made their experience a very slippery slope which was hard to climb. The remarks mentioned below represent the unanimity of the participants' views:

P2 said:

You know when you deal with males it's about ego and so you really have to struggle to gain your position, you have to work harder otherwise no-one thinks you can make it, when we talk in meetings it's as if we are speaking a foreign language to each other, you really feel caged in its painful to have your wings clipped when all you want to do is fly high.

P3, expressed her feelings as follows:

You tend to be undermined and disrespected, I was once asked to take minutes in a meeting because there was no-one to do so, yet I was their chairperson during that time..... they have a way of making you feel inferior especially when you are their HoD..... It's easy to issue directives over the phone; at least they won't smirk directly to your face.

P4 also shared similar views and stated that Universities should emphasise on respect of female academics by male academics and students, if they are to promote equal treatment. She opined:

It has not been an easy road and one area that needs to be addressed within this University is respect for female academics by male students and academics.....much as you can say we are free and are fighting for women

rights and equal treatment, I have seen it first hand with the years that I have worked here that there is little value or respect for female academics.....if only you could see what happens in meetings then you will see into ndithetha ngayo (what I am talking about), I wonder why we allow ourselves to be belittled this much,, there is lack of respect.

Additionally P6 and P9 from University Y also echoed similar sentiments:

My profession made me realise how Universities were male dominated, I was the only female academic in my profession in the late 80s for a long time and in such a space I quickly learnt to develop a thick skin. I worked extremely hard just to show them that I was just as good an engineer as they were.

As an example P9 said:

When I got here, I was the only female academic, the faculty was new so were most of the departments, the atmosphere and the environment was very hostile just walking in the corridors of male infested academics was torture, I was totally secluded and treated with sarcasm on many occasions.

Though FGP1 from University X also expressed the need for respect in Universities. Their cry was, however, a bit different from that of senior female academics from both Universities under study and FGP2 in University Y. They highlighted how being in the same age range as their students had resulted in some students not respecting them and this was hindering their acceptance as capable female lecturers. One of the respondents phrased the issue on a more personal note and said:-

It's not easy, we are young female academics and nearly the same age as our learners....at times they do stupid things in class, come late for lecturers and ask stupid questions such that when you teach you actually think, are they seeing us as lecturers or the school mate in me?. You don't want to be strict or you become that infamous lecturer in the university your capabilities are tested and questioned by many you just have to learn how to sit, crawl, stand and walk and be stern overnight if you are to survive.

From the above citation, it may be inferred that being offered graduate employment in the same University where one studied tends to activate an array of complications: prejudice, stress and tension that may affect the professional growth of junior female academics. Moreover, being frequently undermined is a serious concern for them as they are still novice academicians who are still trying to find their feet. Thus, the situation seems to be compounded when one is female which may lead to one being excluded from certain activities. One respondent in FGP1 in University X explicitly expressed her feelings on how female academics still find it difficult to be trusted or respected. She asserted:-

We went for a conference with my colleagues, I was the brain child of the paper that was going to be presented and they were co-authors, it was agreed before we left I would present the paper.... But when we got there they all ganged up against me and said I was an amateur and they had never seen me presenting papers in conferences or workshops before..... they were scared I would humiliate them and the name of the University.....never in my life have I felt my efforts and expertise being so belittled!.

From the above sentiments, one could get the impression that gender stereotyping and lack of acceptance in IHL is still prevalent. The issue of females being expected to be submissive to males and giving them acclaim even if they do not deserve it, is very explicit in the scenario above. Despite teachings on impartiality and egalitarianism in the workplace and the liberal feminist theory used in this study which advocates equality between men and women in and out of the education sectors, female academics are still expected to take second place.

4.4.3 Female academics as equal partners in Universities

The importance of gender equity and equality was raised by most of the female academics. The responses given by FGP2 in University Y appears not to be tainted with lack of acceptance and respect as that of their counterparts (FGP1) in University X and some of the senior female academics in Universities X and Y. The participants in FGP2 narrated that in their institution, positive changes were slowly but surely being experienced as the IHL were beginning to accept and appreciate their presence and contributions within the academia because they were hard workers and deserved to be treated equally. It was also evident from their

responses that though there are challenges, they did not seem to be as pronounced as those in FGP1 or what some of the senior female academics had experienced. The following are FGP2 remarks relating to their experiences:-

Quite interesting and challenging at the same time..... as a younger generation of women the opposite gender is beginning to appreciate our presence, guess they now know we are here to stay.... We are the same, no one is more capable or more intelligent than the other, we are beginning to be appreciated for who we are.

Some of the FGP2 respondents were of the opinion that proving that they could work hard and were also competitive in developing their careers had made it easier for them to be accepted as female academics especially for those who were in male dominated “fields”. Gender stereotyping was still being experienced in other academic fields. They explained:-

You know my sister you have to teach yourself to work hard day in day out we just need to prove we are just the same as the male academics)..... some of us have been asked if we couldn't find any other professions that we could have done as women than being a scientist..... just having someone utter those words when they know very well you have the same qualifications as them, shows that they believe there is a career path which is simply tailor made for female academics but we have proved them wrong and it appears we are beginning to be on an equal footing!

The above sentiments may indicate that though there are optimistic changes in other academics fields, junior female academics in both Universities under study still experience disenchantment and votes of no confidence from other academics. This appears to be largely dependent on fields of expertise. The researcher is of the opinion that age range is the main contributory factor that exacerbates the challenges that the FGP1 are experiencing in University X as compared to University Y.

Senior female academics, P7 and P10 from University Y, shared the same views as their colleague P5 representing University X. They argued that whatever an academic experienced within the University should not be used as a gender

identification tool. They emphasised that it was solely an individual task to deal with the challenges and the opportunities. P5 account is as follows.”

Experiences have nothing to do about being female or male, for instance this department that I working under, had I not stood my ground it could have been closed a long time ago or we could have stopped taking more students because we are understaffed, but I have learnt how to plan my staff around such that I am able to teach, supervise, do administration, research and publish, I attend conference and seminars.... So really it's all about putting more effort.

Additionally, P7 from University Y concurred:

Aaaah, I would say being a female academic has not stood in my way..... from the time I was growing up I simply told myself there is no difference between people, we are all the same, what really matters is the inner self belief that you are a capable human being..... this is what has led me to be where I am today as an Head of Department in a University.

Relating to the above aspects, P10 said:

When we talk about the experiences, the issue of male dominance always come up, but I am that type of a person who is very assertive..... what I want to do I do it and nobody can stop me because I am not that kind of a person who views male dominance or any challenges as an impediment or a negative situation at all, I fight my own battles and so far I have managed quite well.

On the other hand, the following is a comment from P8 from University Y who highlighted that the perversity of some female academics was disturbing and unacceptable:

It has been challenging, especially when male academics and even other female academics imply you cannot do much..... being sabotaged at work by other people you work with is callous, having incompetency thrown at my face in front of other academics is absurd, being put down by female academics who always align themselves against female leadership is like being stabbed in the back by your own blood.

While comments from P5 from University X and P7, P8, and P10 from University Y and FGP2 also from University Y show positive inroads, the foregoing comments raise the concern of seclusion and lack of solidarity between male and female academics in Universities. These are factors that tend to affect career development for female academics. Lack of support from other academics maybe the reason why some academics perceived their experiences in negative light. Worth noting was a contradiction from some participants who noted that gender should not be used as a quantifying tool on how females experience academia because one could still develop or choose not to.

4.4.4 Transformation in Universities through female professoriates and doctorates in higher echelons of Universities

Within the Universities, the attainment of a PhD by an individual is recognised as very fundamental for career development. Information was sought from the participants as to what their career goals were and how they might contribute to their career development considering their experiences in Universities. Participants P2 and P5 from University X and P10 from University Y indicated that attaining a PhD and being professors were their career goals. They highlighted that this was the only way that transformation within the universities could take place- better female recognition and representation by females with better academic qualifications. This is typified by their opinions, which are as follows:

P2 said:

You know I always told myself that my goal was that by the time I turn 50 I must be a professor, I applied for professorship and it looks like it is going to happen.... This is going to open even more door for me, when I got my PhD my status automatically changed for the better as an academic, but, this is not the end, I still want more.

P5 opined:

I would say the career goals of academics are the same, its either you want to have a PhD (if you don't have one) or you want to be a professor, my goal is to be professor, you just cannot teach in academia without advancing your career.

On a lighter note P10 from University Y supported P2 and P5 from University X's views and said:

If Maslow were still alive, I would shake his hand, I have not yet reached self-actualisation, when Maslow suggested the hierarchy of needs he knew what humans needed..... once you reach a certain stage as an academic you always wish for more.....I am directing my needs on professorship"

On the other hand P3 and P4 from University X responses revealed that academia should not be only about getting a PhD but to do research and publication as this would even promote their chances of reaching their career goals:

P3 added:

My goal is to get a PhD and then try to publish until I became a professor, this will surely increase the number of female academics who are professors.

P4 was of the view that.

Hopefully one day I will be a professor, right now I am focussing on finishing my PhD and publishing research papers, this will get me promotion.

The above comments were supported by P7 and P8 from University Y whose comments also reveal that research and publications are a crucial part of their career goals:

P7 emphasised:

The best goal is a higher degree, hopefully and eventually professorship, but we have to remember the issue of research and publications..... It is a positive step to go that direction of research and publications.

P8 also stressed:

My goal is to publish because even if you have a PHD but you do not have any publications then you are good as nothing.

But, P1 from University X took a slightly different curve from the other senior female academics and FGPs in both universities. Although the participant also reckons that a higher academic degree is crucial, the researcher deduced from the response that

she saw getting a PhD is the only way female academics can be respected and accepted in academia. Below is a representative of her views:

My major goal is to develop my career even better, I really need to finish my PhD because that is the only way I can move from my current position and when I am Dr so and so I believe I will be respected and people will begin to take notice of my presence, because in academia its about titles, I have seen that those academics that are tilted get to be treated with so much respect and give first class preference at seminars, conference is always given to them.

Furthermore, the researcher took particular interest in the comments made by P8 and P6 from the University Y. P8's comments brought to the surface the pains of trying to reach for one's career goals as a female academic. she phrased in an more emotional way:

P8 narrated:

I have been studying all my life and really do not have much to show for it, my career goal has always been to attain a PhD and it has taken me forever to realise this dream, I started my PhD early 2000 when I got a place to study outside the country but could not go. I got my master degree in 1991 and that is 22 years ago and I used to think that by late nineties I will have gotten my PhD, but, i am yet to reach my goal. Last year I decided to register again for the third time to do my PhD and this time around my proposal has been accepted (ironically, the participant had received communication the previous week that her proposal had passed and could proceed with her research), this is actually the first time in 22 years that I have moved a step further towards reaching and realising my career goal..... Sometimes I want to give up because I have been through a lot trying to develop my career as an academic.

On the other hand, participant 6 had somewhat different views from all the other participants in both Universities under study. It may be assumed that since the participant is already a professor, he has perhaps 'seen it all', and that could be why her views were a bit divergent. The participant stated that it would be absurd if one

did not have any career goals. But, the problem was that a lot of transformation was taking place worldwide and any goals that an individual made were quickly being overtaken by the knowledge which was being created every day globally. She added, as an individual one had to be very competitive to attain those carer goals:

Everyone has goals whether in academia or not, but at times I feel as if goals are not enough..... there is knowledge explosion out there. You learn A and there is B already, you get to B and C is already existing. Because of that one can never be self-sufficient, it frustrates me because even if I have goals it is hard to stick to them because they are being overtaken by the course of events that change every day because of globalisation and technology.

Generally, comments cited above reveal that getting a PhD and career development within the academia are not individual entities but are interrelated and integrated and have a positive effect on the career trajectory, representation and advancement of an academic in a university.

4.4.5 Exiting the academic pipeline

However, most of the participants in FGP1 from University X as compared to those from University Y opined how it was not their desire to remain within the academia as their career goals did not have anything to do with teaching in IHL or attaining PHDs but to venture out. Though most of these respondents liked the idea of flexibility and autonomy, they felt research and publication was taking precedence of everything and the University failed to understand that not all people could be researchers. They expressed why their career goals are not in academia:-

Developing your career in the academia is not easy..... you realise that the chances of growing are next to none. Teaching only as a way of developing your career is not recognised here, exiting is better because there are no intervention programmes that the University is putting across to help those who are just good in teaching only and not research.

From the above, it seems as if working in the university for some of the junior female academics is more of a stepping stone than anything else. should they get better offers or working conditions elsewhere, they will exit academia unless the

Universities starts excluding research and community engagement and considering teaching only as a promotional tool.

These remarks reinforce what literature states that the leaking pipeline continues to be experienced in universities at high rates especially from female academics. But again, all hope is not lost because some of the respondents in FGP1 in university X expressed their wish to remain in academia and develop their career as expressed by some of their senior female academics in Universities X and Y. They lamented that academia really created avenues for career development and that they wanted to be role models to other female academics because it is possible to reach the higher echelons of the University. The following are representative of some of responses from FGP1:-

My career goal is to remain in the academia and climb the academic ladder..... I want to research more, I believe this will make other female academics realise that it is possible..... some of us got into academia by chance and we have seen from some of our seniors how through hard work and dedication and commitment one can progress, it's about being focused.

Regardless of the number of challenges that have already been cited by the junior female academics from both Universities, the above findings substantiate that there are still some female academics who strongly believe that avenues and role models do exist in Universities to guide them into developing their careers.

Interestingly, FGP2 responses from University Y, on career goals, were different from those of some of the participants in FGP1 in University X. The participants stated that their goals were in attaining their PhDs as soon as possible. Although, to some extent, the FGP2 wanted to attain PhDs as senior academics, their career goals seemed to be under duress because the Ministry of Higher Education had laid down a mandate that every academic in Zimbabwean Universities should have a PhD by 2015. All the same, though they agreed that it was a good move made by the Government, the participants lamented that such a decree had come at the wrong time and it was a short notice. They added that, this was causing pressure and stress to the academics. It became clear how the participants were so much under pressure to attain their career goals as can be seen in the following interview extract. FGP2:

A PhD is needed sooner than yesterday and that's our career goal right now, we are actually running out of time, the government gave a ruling that we are supposed to have PhD by 2015..... it really is a good way of trying to upgrade the academics in the country but this is at short notice because by 2015 most of us won't be having those PhDs. If we are to have those PhDs by 2015 it means one has to maybe resign from work and study full time, but then it's not a good option because by the time you finish your studies you will be jobless.

By and large, the excerpt above suggests that junior academics in University Y as compared to junior academics in university X have no intention of exiting academia instead they want to reach their career goals. A further possible interpretation maybe that attaining a PhD may not have been all of the participant's career goals but because of the flooded job market, these junior female academics may be realising that this is the only way they can be able to retain their jobs in IHL in Zimbabwe.

4.4.6 Lack of Collaboration and Collegiality by female academics in Universities

The researcher also enquired from the participants what they considered to be the major constraints faced by female academics in their career development. Participants 1, 2, and 3 from University X and P10 from University Y argued that collective investment of ideas is very important in universities especially among female academics. They added that the lack of unity and not having that one voice has led to the perpetuation of their low status in Universities. The remarks mentioned below embody the participants' views from both universities:

P1:

I think we lack the spirit of oneness, we have the fear of opening up to each other, we are not also supported by the leadership here, I think they see us unreliable, remember the African proverb "in times of hunger and drought if a women comes and tell you that she has found a well, do not listen to her", there is still a huge chunk and mentality of patriarchy which is in existence and is exercised in this university.

P2 was of the opinion that:

We need sessions which will specifically look at how to develop female academics not only in our institutions but in SA Universities. We need ideas that are coming from a female perspective in and out of this institution”.

P3 echoed and said:

“ the problem is that as female academics we do things on our own, it is very rare to find female academics making suggestions that we meet and see how we can help each other, I have seen we tend to derive joy when one of us is having problems, most of us female academics have PhDs’ (Pull Her Down Syndrome), I think we are our own constrictions, because as long as we do not cry out and or reach out for help then we cannot develop our careers.

P10 from University Y was in support of P1 and P3 from University X and echoed:

We are our own enemies, very few women are interested in advancing themselves. We have totally taken in the issue that for a long time we were marginalised financially, economically, politically, emotionally and educationally and so we are scared to voice out and to get out of the cocoon, the equal opportunities among male and female academics must be promoted.

From the researcher’s point of view, this group of senior female academics could influence positive changes in terms of shared vision among junior female academics. However, the above data, by and large, indicates that a professional learning forum among the senior female academics is lacking.

The researcher noted during the course of the discussion that the FGP1 and FGP2 from both Universities X and Y did not agree with the senior female academics. It was deduced from the data collected from the two focus groups that under-representation of female academics and teaching workload vs. inflexible policies for promotion in Universities were the major limitations faced by the junior female academics in both Universities.

FGP1 responses in University X were related to overload of modules to teach, frigid policies for promotion and lack of support and teamwork from other academics:-

“The teaching workload is just too much, especially administration work, it takes a lot of time and we have less time to prepare for class, again the issue of promotion is a bit tight in this institution as compared to other institutions.

Some of the FGP1 felt that the major constraints with progressing in their institutions were not solely dependent on too much work load or the promotion process being too demanding. They felt no IHL would be reputable if academics were just given promotion on a silver platter. They articulated:

Each IHL has its rules and regulations and policies that have to be followed, this University also has to keep up its standards, they cannot just give promotion otherwise everyone will be in the same position, our major constraint as female academics I believe lies in the lack of support for each and working as team, it's not the promotion policies or process or too much workload because one way or the other, you end up strategizing on how to cope.

It became apparent from the statement above that the constraints the female academics encounter in Universities differ and they depend on how an individual as articulated by FGP1 in University X deals with them. However lack of female solidarity in Universities also stood out as one of the reasons female academics continue to face challenges in the academia.

4.4.7 Under-representation of female academics in Universities

The extant literature reveals that female academics continue to be under represented in Universities especially in the higher University echelons. Therefore, it also emerged from the FGP2 in University Ys' chronicles that the major constraint faced by female academics in Universities were under-representation of female academics which stood out to be the major constraint that FGP2 talked about as compared to the rest of the participants in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. FGP2 postulated that male domination intensified the plight of female academics who continued to experience pathetic leadership support from males in power. FGP2 also reflected on some of the FGP1 comments and said

We do not support each other..... we vote for male academics into positions that we know other female academics are capable of leading, being in the

minority has also exposed us as being scared to lead or voice our thoughts. This is a very big institution and the population of both staff members and students is seriously male dominated so you will find that the culture of developing our careers here may seem insignificant as we do not have many active senior female academic to help us here and there.

Furthermore, the following was also highlighted by FGP2:

The fact that at the inception of this University it was strictly a science and technology University only, and most males during that era were science oriented makes male dominance here even more pronounced than other Universities, though other faculties which are not science oriented have been included over the past years, still lack of transparency is missing and male dominance continues to exist. We get to hear stale news most of the times and the roles and responsibilities are passed from one male academic to another..... just being excluded or not being given information on time causes slow footing and progression in our careers. Don't they say a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single foot step?, we need that footstep also as junior academics",

Lack of transparency in communication by male academics may be viewed as a way of undermining the existence of female academics in Universities. Moreover, the passive participation of senior female academics who are expected to act as role models and mentors seems to aggravate their under-representation. Although these concerns were raised by the majority of FGP2 respondents in University Y, one of the respondents echoed the sentiments raised in FGP1 representing university X and stated that problems being encountered had nothing to do with under-representation but were individually inclined. She expressed her feelings as follows:

"I believe our major constraint is about lack of individual effort, once one becomes a lecturer, we tend to be too relaxed and content with where we are positioned, we do not really strive for more.... This issue of under-representation will always be there, it is a known fact in most Universities, that men surpass women".

Thus, a comparison of the responses of participants in X and Y Universities shows that it is important that female academics take control and be involved in their career development from the inception of their academic life as academicians instead of being consumers of what they found in existence.

4.4.8 Opportunities for career development of female academics

4.4.8.1 Promoting female representation and academic exposure in Universities

Opportunities that the female academics had encountered as part of their experience in their career development in both Universities were also explored. Participants P2, P4 and P5 in University X stated that opportunities to enhance their careers and representation in universities were good as they were getting the chance to attend seminars and workshops on how to develop their careers. However, it was not all the academics who had encountered such opportunities. On the other hand P1 and P3 stated that though the opportunities were there, it was a bit hard for them to attend because of too much work load. Below are examples of the comments made by P2, P4 and P5

P2 revealed that:

In South Africa they are very serious about transformation and making sure there is female representation in all management positions and levels so that alone is an opportunity because I have had the chance to attend workshops in and out of the country specifically meant for females only..... These are opportunities that every woman should get, but, we must also realise that every opportunity comes with responsibilities, it's not about getting what you want because you are a woman, you still have to work hard.

P4 alluded:

Though we do have constraints as I stated above, I have also had a lot good opportunities to develop my career, I got opportunities to present in conferences and seminars, got scholarship to further my studies and my name gets to appear in books something that I never thought would ever happen.

P5 cemented the above assertions and stated:

Attending conferences regionally and internationally has really put me on the map... I have had the opportunities to network on my own and have had the opportunity to collaborate with other Universities in writing research papers.

However, P1 and P3 highlighted that though the opportunities were there, too much workload was forcing them to forgo some of them:

P1 stated:

The opportunities in academia are very good especially at presenting papers; the University does finance everything, with evidence of course that you have been invited and whether the money is there, so you get the chance to network. The problem is that because of too much work and other responsibilities and the timing of these conferences, sometimes you just can't go.

Likewise P3 remarked:

I really think that our under-representation sometimes work to our advantage especially in other fields such that if opportunities come you can be lucky and get to attend a lot of colloquiums and workshops, and with this leadership role that I have now, it is also a very good opportunity because it is developing me as an individual and also my career and to be a better leader for the department.

It emerged that all the participants in University X were convinced that the opportunities presented to them had helped to develop their careers. They could attend conferences and seminars locally, regionally and internationally. The female academics in University X took pride in showing the researcher some of their research publications they had presented in conferences over the years. Additionally, evidence was also produced by the participants that there were workshops for in and off the job posted by the university's intra-mail in which they were free to apply to attend as long as they met all the requirements.

Nonetheless, for the female academics in University Y the situation was a bit different. The senior female academics in University Y stated that the opportunities

for developing their careers were excellent on paper but lack of funding was a handicap to their career enhancement. One of the responses from P10 of university Y are presented below:

The opportunities to attend the seminars, training and workshops are plenty... the main issue in this institution is funding, the University pays for a few individuals, most of us fund ourselves when going to present papers, if we don't do this we can never develop.

However, P7, also from University Y, had different views on the availability of opportunities to develop her career. She intimated that opportunities in academia should not be gauged as to how many papers an individual had presented; just the opportunity to stand in front of a lecture room and teach the future generation of academics and leaders of Universities and the country was an opportunity itself. Additionally, the participant also elucidated that being in university committees and doing all the necessary paperwork that aligns itself with being an academic was the icing on the cake:

Opportunities in academia are not only about attending workshops regionally and internationally and presenting research papers. Just being able to teach the students different modules and courses is in itself an amazing opportunity. Being involved in the University administration has created a firm foundation for me with regard to leadership skills and it has taught me to be versatile and innovative, It is obvious that career development of an academic should not only be focused on research and attendance of conference, but teaching, University committees and administration are also important faucets.

It is obvious from the above extract that the opportunities presented to academics to promote their careers should not only be measured by how many seminars, workshops or trainings they have attended. Teaching, university service, administration and community service are also important facets that can create career enhancement for academics. Participants 8 and 10 from University Y showed the researcher evidence of their personally made bookings and payments to attend an international conference in which they had to present a paper at a South African University. A further possible interpretation is that participants in University X have had more opportunities to develop their careers than participants from University Y.

4.4.9 Challenges of being a female academic

4.4.9.1 *An overview of academic workloads and research factors and how they shape the status of female academics in Universities*

Regardless of the opportunities that the female academics had encountered in their Universities, the participants were asked to state what had been their biggest challenge in working as female academics in Universities. It was revealed by P1, P2 and P3 from University X that too much workload coupled with lots of administration left them with less time to do research and publications. It also emerged from the participants in University X that those female academic with leadership positions felt they did not have enough time to execute their duties efficiently. The participants from University X qualified the scenarios as follows:

P1 lamented:

Its teaching many modules, I have six modules that I take, plus supervision of postgraduates, that means as an academic you are unable to develop your career, my time is divided between lesson preparation and teaching and administration work, which I must say it's too much. P1 further added, I think there is lack of transparency at departmental level with regard to number of modules that one has to teach because some staff members do not seem to be overloaded as we are.

P2 confirmed what P1 said and also commented:

Publication, publication, publication..... I am sitting on a lot of data which needs to be published but because of teaching and administration it's hard to do that". P2 went on to say that : "it has become worse ever since I became deputy-dean, you see the deputy dean in this University unlike the dean, also teaches, supervises and does administration which I must say is more demanding than any other category..... at the end of the day you find yourself doing things that you are not good at "jack of all trades master of none",..... I believe my own situation is a bit sensitive because as deputy dean I sometimes go on acting capacity as the dean and during that period I feel as if I have to constantly look over my shoulder because I am not so sure about what other academics think of my leadership as a female.

Meanwhile, P8 from University Y had the same sentiments as P2 in University X and said:

The biggest challenge is research, it needs time because you can have so many ideas and even abstracts that are accepted, but getting the time to do a full paper before deadline is another story, the workload is too much.

Another senior female academic from University X, P3 concurred with P9 from University Y and described the unpleasant and inevitable situation that they are in:

There are only two permanent staff members in my department this year, I teach five courses, there is high workload and high staff turnover, mostly it is the administration and the marking part that is taxing, its hectic, time consuming, we are the biggest faculty in this University and I have about 500 students for one session of first years, 250 for 3rd years and 280 for another group 3rd year class, 20 honours students and 8 masters students..... I don't even have the me time because there is also administration to do.....this University does not even give us people to help us to mark as other Universities do, here it is a different story.

Thus, shortage of staffing emerged also as a big challenge to P9 in University Y. Her views were in similar to those of P3 in University X:

The work duties here are more challenging...I am the only full time member of staff in my department and this year alone I have been called back on leave twice over which I had taken to work on my research papers and my PhD, finding time to do research is problematic and as the literature says it's either you publish or perish, trust me I believe I am current on the latter side.

P5 simply articulated:

There is too much administration and that is my biggest challenge, I am failing to cope.

Comments from Participants 1, 2 and 3 in University X and 8 and 9 in University Y draw attention to too much teaching workload. It seems other academics have less workload load at the expense of others. P3 from University X showed the researcher hundreds of assignments on the office floor that had to be marked. P9's timetable

also showed that it was over loaded. Although the participant did not have many students in all the classes, she had to teach almost all the courses, and deal with the students' grievances because some lecturers came on part-time basis only. These comments and the tangible evidence presented to the researcher during data collection raise concerns about lack of transparency in the sharing of modules to teach. Such a situation impacts career development for female academics negatively.

Further to the foregoing views, the participants in FGP1 from University X and FGP2 from University Y had similar comments. They stated how having adequate time was an intermittent but valued commodity in academia, because teaching, administration and research took all their time and this had affected their personal lives and career development. The following is an extract from FGP1:

Being an academic takes a lot of time, it's funny you know it's kind of flexible but at the same time eats away your time, there is a lot of reading to do such that if you are not careful you end up not having a social life because you just have to spend most of the time reading so that you deliver quality lessons.

Furthermore FGP1 argued that their lack of teaching experience was their biggest challenge because they did not have a teaching qualification and preparing for lessons was not easy. Relating to the above aspects, this is what emerged from FGP1 from University X:

It is the preparation of lessons, that is the main challenge, for senior academics life is easy, they are so used to teaching in a University set up, they have notes and slide presentations that just need to be updated here and there. Just to prepare and adjusting for lessons was a nightmare and this was worsened by the teaching loads we have..... Its so painful that not a single academic comes forward just to say, I was teaching this module here is some teaching materials to help you out.

It is clear from FGP1's comments from University X, that there is sharp distinction between an academic who is trained to be a teacher in IHL and one who is not. In addition, the above excerpt shows that there is a lot of individualism and fragmentation in universities.

The workload was a sore issue for nearly all the participants. It was an issue of work load vs. classes' sizes. Some of the respondents had few courses to teach but huge classes and vice versa. In FGP1, it was also observed that they were worried about not having time to do research, administration work or even supervise learners on their projects. They felt powerless to challenge the status quo. The following responses precisely illustrate the feeling of FGP1:

We have an average of four courses that we teach and there is administration and supervision to be done. In some faculties we have between 120 to over 600 student for first year and third year modules and these are spread over different campuses. It is these high numbers of students that make it so difficult for some academics to make any positive development, research and supervision of learners ends up taking last precedence.

In the same vein, FGP2 from University Y, echoed the above sentiments from University X and said the high rate of student enrolment in their institution was making it hard for them to cope and to prepare fully for their lessons. In addition, the issue of having to teach different modules every semester cropped up as one of the challenges for FGP2:

having to teach a class that has so many students has proven to be difficult, you can't help but think that your own expertise is being challenged, one has to go out of their comfort zone to do their best, you will find that everyone is overloaded one way or the other..... it's hard keeping a balance (research, administration and community engagement) because there is no time to recover. Changing of modules every semester and coming up with material to teach plus the big classes lead to lessons and lecturer unpreparedness”.

The issue of too much teaching workload and pastoral duties is associated with negative connotations within the academia. For most academics, too much marking and supervision leaves them with little or no time to promote their careers. Furthermore, the above comments from the junior female academics in University X and University Y demonstrate how too much enrolment of students puts too much pressure on the lecturers. It appears that the number of students is not equivalent with the employment or expansion of academic staff. The sentiments of FGP2 bring out the interconnectedness with what one respondent of FGP1 said during their

interview “..... *It is not about the modules you teach it all about the large number of learners we have in class*”. The researcher had the opportunity to analyse the documents on workload of FGPs of this study, which the participants had as evidence from both Universities X and Y under study. These included the timetables of the modules they taught and class lists with the number of learners.

Indeed the documents corresponded with what they alluded to. For instance, in University X some of the junior female academics had extra loads because they had to go and teach students in other campuses situated 80kms away from their main work station, which on its own, was a huge challenge. Whereas in University Y the FGP2 said the large number of classes (as evidenced by the class lists and timetables) was compromising teaching quality and learning resources offered to students as these were very limited.

4.4.9.2 Inferiority complex and gender stereotyping in Universities

On the other hand, one of the common challenges among the academics in both Universities was male supremacy in Universities. In University X it was established from P3 and P4 that their biggest challenges was the inferiority complex and gender stereotyping by male academics. In University Y, P6 and P7 revealed lack of support and an elusive gender stereotyping. The extracts below are confirmation of their views:

P3:

The main challenge is being undermined as female academics because it crushes your spirit and demotivates you, male academics have a perception that a female cannot answer back in meetings.... I have experienced resistance stemming from ignorance which in one case it escalated to HR matters because I had aired my views which unfortunately rubbed one senior male academic the wrong way, I had to be called into a disciplinary hearing for insubordination.

As an example P4 stated:

I was harassed by a male professor because of teaching venues for a very long time.... I remember I ended up asking him if it was because I was female

such that he felt he had the right to torment me and harass me in front of my students by asking me to vacate the venue that I knew he was the one who was supposed to be using.

P6 added metaphorically:

Being an H.O.D. in a male dominated field has taught me to be tough, I have had to dedicate myself 101% to achieve and conquer all my challenges... I have had to put my soul and mind in academia, I have to be on top of the situation all the times, I can't afford to lag behind for fear that my rivals have a field day and get a chance to wash my dirty linen in public.

P7 revealed:

The first time that I became an H.O.D. was in 2008. It was a very challenging time not only for the University but for the whole country because that was the time when we had a severe brain drain, I came back from leave to find that I had been appointed H.O.D. it was like having a new born baby dumped on you, yet you have never been a mother/parent before, why I was chosen I don't know, but both male and female academics were not happy at all and they did everything to try and make me inferior, to make matters worse, the outgoing chairperson had left without showing anything to me, then the academic staff went on strike and it was during exam time..... as H.O.Ds we were not allowed to go on strike it was very challenging but I managed to pull through.

Ironically P10 from University Y felt her biggest challenge was not about administration, or research, or workload, but her relationship with the male and female academics in her department because she was not being given room to showcase her skills:

My challenge is both the male and the female academics in this department, they see me as fierce competition, as I said earlier I am a go getter and this has created a lot of tension with them..... and if I come across any challenges from any direction male or female I push them aside and forge forward.

By inference, it can be concluded that female academics continue to be subjected to open discrimination and marginalisation and they are expected to behave in a manner that continues to promote male supremacy within Universities.

4.4.10 Redressing equity and equality for career development of female academics in Universities

Gender equity and equality plays a crucial role in learning institutions. It enables both males and females to participate as equal partners and develop their careers. When questioned if they felt they were being given fair and equitable chances to develop their careers, P1, and P2 from University X had mixed feelings. Just like their counterparts, P6, P8 and P9 in University Y, they felt the chances were not fair because of lack of support from top management. Interestingly, they pointed out that nearly all the senior positions were male dominated and it was hard to pin-point if female academics were being given a fair playing ground because most decisions got to be made by those in high echelons of the University. Below are responses by participants from both universities under study::

P1 highlighted:

Definitely not, especially in this University because we are not given enough support... I don't want to give names but some Universities ensure that their female academics' needs are taken into consideration especially if you have kids....the university does not make an effort to understand our plight as academics.

P2 also shared similar views and said:

You see, though policies do not distinguish, but then the policy planners and makers have to understand that our social roles are different, so long as they do not understand that, then we cannot say we have fair and equitable chances, the policies are impartial, what is needed is plain support for female academics in the workplace whereby there are policies that accommodate women and their social responsibilities if they are to realise career mobility.

In support of the above P6 also stated:

There are no fair and equitable chances and that is why we have gender mainstreaming today..... 2015 on MGD is around the corner and what has been done by the Universities to increase the number of female academics in IHL?, there is a lot of imbalance in academia.

P8 felt:

Fair and equitable chances means being given the chance to lead which is not happening to us..... developing as an academic is not only about teaching and research it involves a lot of issues.

P9 believed:

On paper the equity and equality is in existence, it is the acts that still have a lot of grey areas around them.

There are indications here that even if the policies in place are fair, as long as there is lack of will to adhere to those policies, female academics cannot have a fair chance to develop their careers.

Nevertheless, P3, from University X and P10 and from University Y had somewhat different views as compared to other participants' views. They emphasised that the female academics were being given fair chances because some of them had managed to develop under the prevailing circumstances. They explicitly expressed their feelings as follows:

P3 disclosed:

I believe we are given fair chances, all we are given is the ground, so you have to fight the battle on your own.

P10 explained:

I want to believe the fair and equitable chances are there but not always and it may depend on your department or faculty, the problem especially in this University is that there are few female academics so it may be hard to see if changes are there.

The FGP1 and FGP2 echoed the sentiments raised by P10. Both focus groups from Universities X and Y agreed that there were fair and equitable chances, however, under-representation of female academics was their major hurdle. FGP1 explained why:

The University does give fair chances, despite the gender policies, honestly these days it's all about hiring and promoting the person with the best qualifications.

In the same vein FGP2 stated:

The University truly follows the country's policies and its own policies.... Everything appears to be done on merit.

From the above sentiments, one gets the impression female academics from both Universities are not excluded but given equal opportunities to develop their careers. By and large, it can also be assumed that what is lacking from some of these academics is individual effort to take up the available chances. But, on a more sombre note, P4 from University X had different experiences and mentioned that:

The majority of senior positions are held by males, so you really would not know if we are really being given fair chances to compete especially when it comes to promotion because we do not have one of our "own" to represent us fully.

From the above collected data, it can be derived that the perpetual under representation of female academics in Universities makes it hard to tell if meritocracy exists. However, it is important for Universities to address the issue of male dominance in leadership and promote meritocracy.

4.4.11 Formalising mentoring, role modelling and networking in Universities

4.4.11.1 Closing the "cavity" between theory and practice by formalising mentoring, role modelling and networking in the 21st century Universities

To shed more light on the experiences of female academics in universities, the participants were questioned if they had been exposed to mentoring, role modelling and networking in their careers. The findings from University X were the same as those from University Y. The majority of the senior and junior female academics

complained that they were expected to perform miracles when they entered academia because they did not receive any guidance from those already in the system. The following responses from P1, P2, P3 and P5 from University X and P6, P7 and P9 from University Y precisely illustrate patterns of lack of mentorship, role modelling and networking experienced by these female academics in both Universities. P1 divulged:

I was never exposed to all these things that you are talking about, we are not allocated mentors, no role models, you are on your own as I said earlier and you are thrown into deep end my friend, if you are not a good swimmer you certainly drown. I feel as if I am a signpost of this department because I don't go to any workshops, conferences and seminars as much as my male colleagues do, so how will I network?.

P2 had this to say:

No! no! no!, nobody mentored me and this made the situation even worse because I am in a male dominated field, I didn't have anyone to look up to....I found my way up the ladder.

Likewise P3 stated:

Mentored by who?. If I can tell you my first experience as a lecturer in this University was the most difficult, horrible and torturous experience for me.....I was just taken to the lecture room of about 650 first year students and the lecturer who was leaving said to me "this is your class and class this is Miss so and so your new lecturer, it was a huge reality check for me, I didn't even know where to begin.

P5 said:

There was no mentoring, I was just given my office and told the module I was expected to teach without anyone taking time to tell me what I was supposed to do and that included being tasked to compiling a learning guide for a course I have never taught before.

On the other hand, senior female academics from University Y alluded to the importance of mentoring and stated that despite not having been mentored when

they entered academia, they felt it was their duty to mentor junior academics and other seniors in universities should do the same. P6, P7 and P9 presented their comments as follows:

P6:

I think I mentored myself. I had absolutely no-one to mentor me, I had to stand on my two feet and looked around to see what was happening around me..... despite my own experiences I take pleasure in mentoring other academics.

P7 echoed the same line of thought and said:

Unfortunately I was not mentored; the University does not have any formal way of mentoring or role modelling.... But then if one gets the chance to attend workshops then the initiative to network should come from an individual..... Though I was not mentored, I have taken it upon myself to mentor my juniors that I am in contact with on a regular basis. It is sad that some senior female academics have the muscle power to reach out and help the junior female academics, but they dont....it is very rare to find senior female academics doing that.

P9 echoed :

No, I was not mentored when I started working here, what Universities do not realise is that mentorship is important, it should actually be added to the three pillars of the University because being mentored I believe gives birth to having a role model and learning how to network.

Some of the participants in FGP1 and FPG2 also shared similar views with senior female academics from both Universities on lack of mentoring. In FGP1 the participants pointed out that there was some sort of mentoring/induction for new employees within their university, but, it was too generalised because it included both academic or non-academic. They further added that though they had seniors who could be their role models and mentors, the organisational environment clearly spelt each man for himself. The FGP1 representing University X commented:

We had to find our own feet, who has time to show you what has to be done or to act as your role model, we do have senior female academics here both male and female but they just do not offer to help, you even get scared to go and ask for help at times there is just a lot of individualism in this institution..... it's you do your stuff I do mine..... you stick to your modules and I will do the same attitude". They further added " so many things are done wrongly here, because even during induction week, which is supposed to give us a chances to meet and network just as academics, you will find that the University makes it a mixed affair of academic and non-academics. It is high time that the University creates an awareness about mentorship and networking. This will even promote knowledge sharing and teamwork among academics.

It also emerged from the voices of FGP2 representing University Y that most of them had also not been exposed to mentoring, role modelling and networking. FGP2 mentioned that what they read on mentoring, and networking in literature was in sharp contrast with what they endured practically.. The following narrative is representative of sentiments from FGP2:

What was most frustrating from the beginning and even up to now is the lack of mentoring and not having role models. There are humps that you meet along the way that you do not know about and you need someone to warn you before you get there and we lack that direction. It's like a maze with a lots of twists and turns and if you're not careful you will really get lost because you do not have anyone to help you play the game and find the exit point..... the mentoring we have here is not what we read about in the books.

The above responses show that though some of the junior academics from University X and Y had not received any mentoring, they also lacked the confidence and self-assertiveness to approach their seniors for help. On the other hand, the researcher felt these junior female academics believed it's only the female academics that have to mentor them or be their role models. The lack of mentoring appears to be a "bad habit" which is passed on to new academics. The majority of the senior female academics responses also revealed that there is no guidance from

academically sound and experienced academics. No one took time to show them how to develop their careers when they first entered academia.

However, the policies of these Universities clearly stipulate that all academics have to be mentored the moment they start work. There is need to mentor female academics and create better opportunities for them to further their careers. These comments ostensibly show that the careers path of junior academics will continue to be marred with obstacles as that of their predecessors, thus the possibility of their career development seems to be bleak.

Some senior and junior female academics from Universities X and Y made important comments that are worth noting. P4, from University X and P8 and P10 from University Y opined that mentoring, networking and role modelling was largely dependent on whether senior academics in an institution wanted to mentor you or not because the University had not made it official. Looking closely at the participants' responses from both Universities, the researcher believes that mentoring and role modelling is largely dependent on individual departments or faculties. For instance, the following extracts from P4, P8 and P10 are evidence that mentoring is there in Universities but does not cut across all faculties. The participants articulated that they were lucky to be exposed to the benefits of mentoring and role modelling:

P4 revealed:

When I first started as a new academic in this University, the then HOD was male and we really worked well together, he took me under his wing, showed me what and how to do my academic work, I was his shadow in everything that had to do with being an academic.

P8 had similar views:

Yes there is mentoring in this institution and it comes from the fellow colleague, really one thing I appreciate is that there are some academics that are ready to assist be it male or female and this has given me enrichment in all areas, she added metaphorically, but that does not mean we do not have "rotten apples" who won't even help no matter how desperate you are.

P10 also stated:

Yes I have been mentored and still have an amazing role model, she helped me a lot when I was coming from high school and entering Universities as a lecturer, she really went out of her way to guide me and explain what was expected of me..... the two of us made a great team and came up with great ideas that were of course met with resistance..... She taught me to be competitive.

One of the respondents in FGP1 concurred and said:

My case is very different , I have a mentor who is a male academic, though he is not a patient somebody, I really appreciate that he has been very helpful and he really pushes me to realise my potential, and he introduced me to a number of people who are in the same field as ours in other institutions when I attended a conference with him.

Further to the views above, one of the participants in FGP2 explicitly drew attention to the importance of being mentored and having a role model who is a senior academic. She stated:

Oh yes I have been mentored and I am still being mentored by a female professor..... she has been amazing and has gone out of her way to help me network a lot, she is my role model, when I look at her as a female professor, she is mother, a wife, and a grandmother, well renowned publisher... this is what has also given me the guts to get married and have a family of my own (during the time of the interview, the participant was preparing for her wedding in December).... She has shown and proven to me that through hard work and no matter how stressful our career maybe, as a female academic you can actually have it all, great career, great family and move from one academic rank to another.

It is clear that there are a few rare cases of junior female academics who are mentored by male academics as evidenced by some of the comments from FGP1 and FGP2 representing Universities X and Y respectively.

Mentorship is crucial and it impacts on the career development of female academics as illustrated above. Thus, it is evident that being mentored can arouse the intrinsic desire for career development among female academics. However, it is disappointing that nearly all the senior participants from University X and University Y and some junior female academics from both Universities under study stated that they had not been mentored. This is despite the fact that the policies in the respective universities, which the researcher had the opportunity to analyse, state that mentoring should be provided to all members of staff from inception into the university.

4.4.12 Impartiality on recruitment, promotion and appointment of female academics in Universities

The study also sought to find out through the female academics in University X and University Y how they perceived recruitment, promotion and appointment of female academics in their institutions. In both Universities under study most of the participants felt that there were no negative factors that influenced how they were recruited. For instance P2, P3 and P5 from University X shared the same view with P6, P7, and P9 from University Y. They felt their Universities were indeed following the set rules and regulations and hiring deserving candidates. They added that the problem was not about being hired, but how to develop within the system so that one could be promoted. The following quotations are representative of the assertions made by participants from both universities:

P2 articulated:

Honestly, I do not think there are any factors that influence the manner in which we are hired as female academics.....it is never about male or female, but of course most of the applicants that get to be promoted tend to male because there are few ladies entering into academia.

P3 also supported the above and stated:

There are no factors that influence recruitment, selection and promotion of female academics, you see getting into the system is not a problem that is if you qualify, because it is a situation of saying let the best candidate win, the problem lies in the failure to develop our careers within the system.

P5 also cemented the other participant's feelings and added a thoughtful note about recruitment and promotion in Universities, she stated:

It depends on what is needed in the field, I strongly believe that when selecting , recruiting and promoting the best person must get the job whether male or female, because it will be of no use hiring someone who is not proficient because of gender issues, we are equals and hence I believe that parity and fairness is being used.

P6: articulated:

Yes, here it is on merit, but then there are few female academics who take up higher education to develop their careers, Fine there is the AA but we should take it with a pinch of salt because there is no reason or point of taking stupid or dull women into a leadership positions because there will be no progress..... If female academics are to be taken into leadership positions, there should be capable and deserve those position fair and square otherwise they will perform dismally.

P7 postulated:

I am privileged to sit in in some of the interviews committees and we really do have equal opportunities, everyone is hired on merit.

P9 elucidated her colleagues' views but added that the problem was climbing the ladder when one entered academia:

There is nothing wrong with the recruitment, selection or promotion of female academics.... It is only after we enter the academia that the progressing tends to be very hard.... I believe the best person is always given the job.

The FGP2's responses, from University Y precisely illustrate the emerging recruitment pattern in University X and University Y:

Well, the recruitment, promotion and appointment is very fair and equitable... it is on merit and nothing else. It is even now better now as compared to what other SFA say it was before.

In both Universities under study female academics seemed content and confident that recruitment, selection and promotion in their University is transparent. Participants from University Y had sentiments similar to what the researcher read in their University policy which articulated that all recruitments were to be done strictly in accordance with the University policy on employment. Furthermore, the policy highlighted that it promotes the use of best practices and principles in recruitment (which most of the participants articulated to) in recruitment and selection regardless of gender, race or nationality.

Conversely, relating to the above aspects, FGP1 appeared not to be on the same footing with some of the aspects highlighted by FGP2 and those of the senior academics. They alluded:

The recruitment is now based on AA and GEE and Universities are simply following the government constitution which stipulates that there should be certain number of female representation in IHL, but the promotion is a different matter, its "fair and it's all about the qualifications you have and the progress you have made in research and community engagement from the time one is appointed to their current position.

The comments made by FGP1 and FGP 2 aligned with the employment equity policies of their Universities which indicated that employment practices and policies were to be in line with the constitutions of the respective countries (Universities) under study. Moreover, these employment equity policies advocated transparency, even-handedness and non-marginalisation in promotion, selections and recruitment of academic staff regardless of gender, race or nationality.

However, P4 narratives from University X revealed a different perspective from what other senior and junior academics in Universities X and Y alluded to. The participant felt that fairness in recruitment, promotion and appointment of female academics was just lip service and window dressing. The participant explained the challenges that militated against female academics who sought recruitment and promotion.. This is exemplified by the following excerpt by P4:

A lot of factors do come in to play when being promoted and I think it depends on your HoD and line manager. Because, my own promotion was a bitter

experience. Initially I was told that as soon as I get my masters I would-be promoted, but I do not know what happened because of University politics our head was male professor who was not popular with the top management here, he knew administration like the back of his hand so it was easy for him to tell the top management that so many things were being done wrongly and because of that our department suffered....it took a long time for me to promoted to lecturer position in this University let alone to be made permanent.

P4 repeatedly phrased the issue from a more personal front and said:

I was a victim of circumstances, despite the motivational letters that were sent to the HR, all was in vain.....they just did not care...my experience did not count and that was very painful, I had been in this University for a long time yet I had nothing to show for it.

It may be concluded that female academics in both Universities are given equal opportunities regardless of gender in the recruitment and promotion processes. However in some cases as shown by P4 above, in-house fights and University “politics” can hinder the career development of other academics.

4.4.13 Implementation of strategies for retention of female academics in Universities

The researcher also sought to find out from the participants if they had any advice they could give to their institution in terms of their career development. The female academics argued that the University had to come up with strategies such as mentoring and role modelling to preserve the already few female academics within the university system who may be future leaders and role models for junior academics. They added that the reason why they were failing to make an impact was because there were more female academics exiting than entering into academia. The comments cited below represent the views of participants P2, P3 and P5 from University X.

P2 had this to say:

I believe there is a huge gap between junior female academics and senior female academics, less females are coming into academia and the only way

to retain them is to target junior academics the moment they enter academia, give them mentors, role models and a chance to attend as many workshops, conferences, seminars as possible to network and to develop their careers.

P3 also added:

Honestly, I think the University needs to take stock and realise how they can not only attract female academics to join the academia, but they also have to come up with means and strategies to keep the few of us that are remaining in the system.

P5 also posited that

Female academics should be given the chance to showcase their capabilities as this promote their recognition Universities and will create a foundation in which to build their careers and remain in the system.

Meanwhile, the participants in University Y proposed that the University should be a bit relaxed in some of their policies so that they can be able to progress especially now that they were expected to have PhDs by 2015. They also advised that the situation could be better if there was enough funding. P8 and P9 raised pertinent issues that their colleagues in University X had not talked about:

P8 opined:

The University has to consider sponsoring those female academics who have not yet served the required number of years in the institution so that they can also develop their careers. Most of the academics do not even know what they fate is going to be come 2015 because of the ruling that was made by the ministry because they do not have money to fund themselves to study.

P9 added:

They should also look into the issue of study leave; only full time lecturers are allowed to go on study leave..... But if you take a quick survey you will see that most of the academics here are on contract basis and that tends to hinder their career progression.

From the preceding statements, one gets the impression that senior female academics from Universities X and Y feel the only way that Universities can maintain and improve the number of female academics is through substantive awareness strategies that will attract and act as an incentive in, developing the career of female academics in universities. On the other hand, a glance at the FGP2 respondents show a different picture compared to comments by FGP1 and senior academics in Zimbabwe.

The FGP2 articulated that the huge age and professional gap in their institution was the one issue that the University needed to address. They further added that the institution had old academicians who made it quite impossible for departments and faculties to implement or even accommodate newer concepts from their juniors. The country had experienced extensive brain drain such that middle aged academics were few. The FGP2 lamented:

The issue of age gap in this institution is a huge problem, we have very old academics who are male, they are the old school type and so you can imagine the atmosphere most of the time. Some of them are so rigid and do not accommodate any new ideas at all, the age gap is making it difficult, the only time that they ask for help or we get to raise our points is on issues that have to do with technology because on that area they are a bit lost, most of the time they take the stance of saying I am old enough to be your “father” not colleague and all we have to do it to listen to them.

In short, there is need for University Y academics to promote collegiality and collaboration among each other regardless of age or experience. This points yet again to the issue of mentoring. If mentoring was a laid down rule, the older academics could be mentoring the junior ones because they have the expertise and experience. The researcher also noted through document analysis that University leadership at University Y as compared to University X has already put a plan in place to introduce a Tenure Track System (TTS), which would give the University the chance to strengthen its ability to attract and retain erudite faculty members at its university.

4.4.14 Summary

This part of the chapter looked at the experiences of senior and junior female academics in University X and University Y. The main concern was to capture their voices as they narrated their experiences in Universities X and Y. The chronicles of these academics in both Universities unfolded the challenges, the barriers and the opportunities that they have encountered as they strive to find an equal footing within the Universities and to develop their careers. In trying to make sense of their career growth, these academics pointed out how they wished the issues of funding, mentoring, teaching, gender stereotyping, teaching workload were addressed. The next section of this chapter will now focus on the barriers to career development of female academic in both Universities under study. Some of the barriers have already been highlighted in the preceding section, therefore they will not be re-told.

4.5 BARRIERS TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF SENIOR FEMALE ACADEMICS

Most scholars have raised the issue that being in the academia is quite taxing. This has seen some of the best academics who could have reached great heights and made a difference fail to do so. The first question under this section required female academics from both Universities under study to state the barriers to their career development and how they have hindered their career development. Most of these barriers have already been highlighted in the first part of this chapter. Therefore, the researcher will not dwell on them again. A comparison of the results of the two Universities under study revealed a range of similar concerns from lack of mentors, too much work load, lack of funding, lack of organisational support to lack of female solidarity just to name a few. Below are samples of some of the extracts from the participants, P6 and P7, from University Y which the researcher thought would shed more light to other barriers that the female academics encountered. . The responses are presented verbatim below:

P6:

I sense a lot of lack of self-esteem, we have female academics that have done a great deal of work but they do not ask what to do with the information..... I plan retreats with female academics for research writing but because of lack of self-confidence, family responsibilities and largely

ignorance, the number of female who attend is always disappointing....., the participant alluded, the retreats that we go to, can female academics who are breastfeeding or with serious family issues come?, no they can't, there is no questioning about it.

The following sentiments were also a representative of the impediments that P7 felt were affecting female academics in University Y:

Unfortunately our problems have to do with what our country is currently experiencing..... there was just too much brain drain and those that are remaining are overworked and those that have left are likely not to come back, no staff members are being employed, also the Universities requires that you have a track record of publications which sound more like a fairy tale judging from the circumstances in which we are working through..... Funny enough our PVC (Pro Vice Chancellor) always says that we are not different from high school or primary school teachers because we are not publishing but just teaching.

Subsequently, from responses emanating from the participants, the researcher went on to ask if they felt the barriers that they have cited would persist or not. The participants P1, P4, and P5 from University X felt the barriers continued to persist because change was taking a long time to be realised. Female academics continued to be stereotyped and under-represented in Universities. Their sentiments were supported by FGP1 and FGP respectively. Some of the senior female academics from University X concluded as follows:

P1:

If these barriers were receding then I would not be sitting here and pouring my heart to you about my (our) lack of progress in Universities.

P4 comments revealed that she also believed the barriers would persist and she asserted:

It is something that will always be there, the barriers that we encounter are really a continuous circle.... They are being passed from one generation of

academics to another and this cycle needs to be broken, but the question is by who?

The above sentiments were echoed by P5 who stated that:

The barriers continue to persist and the University needs to grow and find ways to address these barriers and see how they can help us to forge forward.

FGP1 from University X supported the above and stated that the barriers were not receding because if they were, they would not be going through the same problems and challenges that their predecessors went through. Concern was shown that the University had failed them by not formalising crucial issues such as mentoring, teaching workload and big classes. Below are FGP1 responses related to the above issues:

The barriers are not going anyway, if they were we could have found the system a bit relaxed, friendly or different because we are the new breed of academics yet change seems to be stagnant.... The institution has failed us by not formalising mentoring and role modelling.

Additionally, FGP2 from University Y stated that barriers such as male domination, gender stereotyping and knowledge retention continued. They expressed their feelings as follows:-

This issue of being treated unfairly will never end. Its only that some academics and our leaders are now so good at covering up their tracks and holding back crucial information to us because some still have the notion that we are not supposed to know everything that is taking place in our departments because we are juniors.

From the above sentiments one could get the impression that though Universities, regionally and internationally, are said to have gone through a lot of transformation. This transformation seems to be on paper only because positive change is yet to be realised due to male dominance, lack of support and mentorship.

However, some of the participants from University X were of the view that the boundary fences have been crossed with regard to the barriers faced by female

academics in Universities. These participants gave a different perspective on the position of female academics in IHL. For instance P3 said that she had observed that:

The barriers do not continue to persist as they are not as pronounced as they were before, I believe our presence is beginning to make a mark in the University circles, I think they have realised that we are here to stay and that they can also learn from us.

On the other hand, P4 from the same University X indicated that she was sitting on the fence on the issue of barriers to the career development of female academics. She pointed out:

I do not see much of a change, although I know there are gender policies I really do not think it's making much of a difference, but at least the fact that there are slight changes shows that they want to address these challenges that we encounter.

Meanwhile, a comparison of the responses of the senior female academics in Universities showed the barriers persisted due to socio-cultural beliefs and norms in and out of academia. Moreover, they bemoaned that such persistence was also being intensified by the “penny-pinching” economy of their country: The following remarks stood as a true representative of P6, P7 and P9:

P6 articulated:

Currently the barriers continue to persist and for how long have we heard of the MDG but nothing concrete has taken place, gender equity is not yet fully operational, maybe in Canada yes it is receding, but in Africa we will always be affected by the cultural backgrounds and norms which also come into the work place and these are difficult to eradicate.

P7 also added:

We have been in the system for a long time and we are not seeing much change at all. It is the same male dominance that was there when we first entered the system. The barriers we have will continue to persist until the country stabilizes and more staff members are employed..... the ministry is

not taking more people, apparently their salary bill is overloaded, we have staff members that have left with scarce skills and expertise and replacing such members has not been easy.

On a more personal note, P9 added:

As women we go through a lot of trials and tribulations.....I cannot even work late, I have a 93 year old mother who stays with me so you can imagine the situation I am in..... I am not married, and my sons are now adults but they have the notion that I am not supposed to work late and they will always phone where I am, so you see these barriers that affect us are not going anywhere because they come from in and out of the academic world.

The forgoing perceptions by P7 in University Y, distinctively draws attention to what has already been highlighted in this chapter, that unlike University X, University Y's education system has been severely and brutally hit by the economic meltdown. Both junior and senior female academics saw it as responsible for predicament they are currently experiencing as they try to develop their careers. The persistence of barriers to career development of female academics in both Universities cuts across all spheres of life. Although change is there, most participants see it as slow paced. It may be concluded that the perceptions that have since time immemorial differentiated roles and responsibilities for men and women within the work place and outside continue to persist.

4.5.1 Disjuncture between research and publications efforts by female academics in Universities

The importance of research and publications within the Universities as a form of career development cannot be over-emphasised. It is a pre-requisite and is used as one of the main tools for promotion. Additionally, it also promotes recognition of an academic in professional circles. When the participants were asked which barriers had affected their research and publication efforts, participants P1, P2, P5 and FGP1 from University X answered that they felt they lacked enough training on academic writing. Though they stressed that training was available, they were quick to indicate that it was not adequate. Furthermore, they explained that they have very good researchers (male and female) in their University but it was very rare for them

to co-author with them unless one was highly versed in their area of study. In this respect, the participants in University X remarked as follows.

P1 disclosed:

I do not think that the training that the University gives on academic writing is enough because they keep repeating the same programmes every year and they tend to forget that not everyone can just wake up and be a writer and publish, we need new ideas from them so that our papers can be accepted in international journals. in this University, male academics are researchers and female are teachers. If you see yourself being roped in then you must be exceptionally good in your area(s) of stud..

To add on to that P2 explained:'

Well, writing a paper is not an easy thing you know.... There are number of factors involved, if you have not been schooled to scientific writing it is always going to be difficult to write a publishable paper, which is what I think we are lacking as female academics.

The senior academics in University X also added that there was no miracle to overcome barriers that affect their publications beside enough training, and having a mentor or role model who has tested the waters of publishing. In this regard, P5 explained:

It is not easy to make a break though, and that is the biggest barrier you can have when you start out as an academic, one needs lots of coaching to be able to come up with an academically sound paper and having someone who has published a lot, besides research and publications is about space, which we do not have.

In the same vein, FGP1 argued that they did not have the time to slot in research because it was sorely dependent on which field one belongs too. The typical comments were as follows:-

Even though we are interested in research, we just do not have the time because we have lots of academic activities to do besides research. In some of the departments they are not doing so badly because they have created

awareness about research and help each other to publish. The University does try to come up with workshops on research writing but all the same we still get rejected by the publishers because as novice researchers it is not easy to make a break through and create a name for yourself.

The above comments draw attention to the fact that University X needs to come up with more workshops that target the different needs of their academic staff in scientific writing. However, it was established that not all female academics at University X agreed that lack of training, role models and rejection by publishing were barriers to publication efforts by female academics.

4.5.1.1 *Lack of commitment and sincerity on publication efforts by female academics*

On the other hand, some of the senior female academics had a different perspectives with regard to research and publication in their Universities. As such, Participants 3, 4 from University X and 6, 7 and 10 from University Y felt that lack of confidence and commitment among female academics was the major problem.. Below are the views of participants from University X which will be followed by those from University Y:

P3 views were as follows:

I think for female academics it is a matter of being afraid..... that fear alone of saying I am a woman and I have to write and produce a paper is affecting our career development, the University is doing everything that they can to help us, in fact they are so very serious about research because it increases its rankings among other Universities, it is us who are not serious and committed, teaching workloads will always be there we just have to be committed and confident that we can publish, I think we are just nervous to fly our wings.

P5 also emphasised how it was important for female academics to be confident and committed to their research and publication efforts:

I would say we are our own barrier when it comes to research and publications, we are not sincere in this issue, there is that element of looking down upon ourselves With research you need to bold, which I know I am,

there is lack of seriousness, how come some junior academics are publishing and even students for that matter.

The participants from University Y echoed their colleagues' sentiments and articulated as follows:

P6 commented:

Here at this University (Y) research is extensively promoted, seriously why female academics are not writing papers I don't know (that is why earlier I said I now organise retreats) they just do not ask around, some have very good masters degrees and can publish from them but they do not ask how.....there is need for female academics to be inquisitive.

In the same vein, P7 echoed:

We can put the blame on this and that, but these days there are numerous organisations calling for female academics to do research and they pay for funding, so really it is up to us to apply to such organisation and get the opportunities.....I believe a bit of laziness has crept in on us the glue that holds the University and its staff members together is research because on one hand you develop your career and on the other hand the University also grows..... the University has to come up with plans because we are running the risk of academic suicide and burnout, the tasks we do are so mundane such that we do not have anything to motivate us.

Likewise P10 stated:

Let's put the issue of funding aside because well know it will be a long time before it is solved, I believe the problem is ignorance.....I totally ignored the issue of research until I started my PhD and that was when I was educated that I could pull out papers from my thesis and publish, it is the ignorance of not wanting to find out what is going on out there.

The above sentiments by senior academics from both Universities understudy were opposed by some of the FGP1 and FGP2 participants from University X and University Y respectively. These, participants felt that besides the issue of time and lack of extensive scientific writing workshops, it was up to them to get assistance on

how to publish. Lack of passion and will power and self-belief were raised as some of the reasons why the female academics efforts were not yielding any results. The FGP1 participant commented:

We need to embrace the idea of publishing because it is the only way we can free ourselves and grow academically. Research is like driving, even if you do not like driving or hate it, if you are faced with situation that demands that you have to drive, you will do it..... It is a matter of wanting to learn and being committed.... When you are committed to something and you know it will bring in rewards, you create time for it no matter how tight your schedule is..... It's a matter of wanting to learn, it goes with the drive, the passion.

The FGP2 echoed their counterparts and said

Our efforts in research and publication are hindered because we are a barrier to ourselves, as long as we sit in the office and we don't mingle or voice out my challenges people won't guess. We are just so scared to venture out, just to see how far we can go..... if senior academics are not taking the step to help, then we have to approach them, chase them around, they have published and they can show us the way.

In other words, the preceding comments from Universities X and Y show that the barriers in research and publications are aggravated by lack of self-confidence and passion in learning how to research and publish. Instead, female academics seem to doubt their capabilities before they have even put an effort because from the above, it seems both Universities are doing everything to promote research and publications of its academics. For instance at University X the employment policy shows that it is the duty of the University to provide training and re- training and progression programmes for academics.

However P8 and P9 and FGP2 from University Y felt that lack of funding surpassed everything and undercut all the efforts that their University was making to promote research and publications:

P8 was of the opinion that:

Even if the University does give us research seminars and workshops it is of little use because everything is about money..... there is no funding.

Furthermore the following was highlighted by P9:

The issue of funding is a thorn in the flesh, I have papers just sitting because I do not have the money to send them to the publishers., we are given (\$USD200.00), equivalent to nearly R2000.00, towards research but it is a drop in the ocean, it does not suffice at all because it is meant for stationery, communication and when I need to go and collect data I end up using my own money.

The junior female academics in University Y stated that lack of funds made some of them loose interest in publishing. The following are FGP2 remarks:

Lack of adequate funding is killing us, in most cases if you are really interested in attending a conference and presenting a paper the money has to come from your own pocket most of the times. We know that without publication and research in academia you are as good as nobody but what can we do, the circumstances in and out of academia just do not permit us to development our career.

Relating to the above aspects, it can be deduced that lack of funding is to a certain extent creating some form of pressure for these academics as they realise that it may be difficult for them to be fully fledged academics without any research publications.

4.5.2 Socio-cultural role expectations for female academics

Many academics exit academia or fail to progress due to the challenges they encounter. Some, as supported by literature choose not to have families at all. Data were sought on the extent to which the external factors have affected female academics in their career development. The participants opined that cultural beliefs and labelling by the society was affecting them, as they were expected to put the needs of the family first before their career. The biographical data of the female academics in both Universities X and Y revealed that most the senior academics

(participants) interviewed were either married, single with children or are surrogate mothers. Hence in their responses, they cited these external factors as affecting them negatively. Thus P2, P3, P4 from University X and P7, P8, P9 and P10 from University Y had similar sentiments which are exemplified in the following citations:

P2:

I would say gender stereotyping within the society has affected us in one way or another, the way we are brought up and the expectations from the society leaves little room for us to see ourselves anyway else besides being home and taking care of the kids and not travelling to conferences and seminars.

Similarly P4 stated:

Culture is the main culprit here, the fact that there is still that belief that we have to look after the family will continue to affect us negatively in our career, we have internalised the cultural influence such that it is hard to let go.

Some of the participants felt that the various challenges and external factors which affected female academics were due to the fact that they had to think about family before they could make whatever decision to enhance their career:

P3 articulated:

Whenever we make decisions, the family come first in everything especially for those who are married. Sometimes you can get an offer that is very good in promoting your career but one would opt to stay because uprooting the family from A to B is not easy, so at times you would think this career is a bit flexible for single female academics that do not have family obligations.

P7 responded:

Lack of spousal support and family support has serious consequences on ones' career development..... I am lucky though, I have a very supportive husband but the general comments that you get from the extended family and sometimes the community about "neglecting" the family can tear you to pieces if you are not careful.

P7 stated:

Lack of support within the family structures can break you and your career.

P8:

It's all about family..... I postponed my own studies because of my family, it is the way we are brought up that influences the way that we think, for a woman who is married to study you need the consent of your husband, if it is not there you end up rejecting the whole idea no matter how painful it is..... culture comes into play in everything that we do.

P10 said:

It is the lack of family support and dual responsibilities, we always put our families first, and if you are not strong willed you can never progress.

Worth noting is that both FGP1 and FGP2 from both Universities under study unanimously agreed that family responsibilities were the major external hurdle affecting their career development in Universities: FGP1 argued

Family is the major issue whether you are married or not, because for some of us who are single, the moment that you start working you are expected culturally to help out in the family by taking part of the siblings responsibilities and that can be very draining.

In the same vein FGP2 added:

Just the mere fact of being a women makes everything different for us because we are expected to be hands on all the time and the judgement we get especially from extended family can affect one career development..... They don't understand that being in academia can be hard, instead you are expected to attend all the family gathering, entertain them when they visit.

One participant in FGP2 reinforced the above:

In our culture, visitors do not make an appointment to come and see you, they just come, my husband comes from a very large family such that it is very rare not to have one or two visitors every weekend and they is no way I

can take my books and go and read in one of the bedrooms because they will go around other relatives houses saying she thinks working in a University is out of this world..... so and so's wife did not welcome us warmly when we visited.

P3 from University X argued that being an academic is better for single females, yet on the contrary P1 from the same University stated how she has to continuously try and cope with the task of being a single parent and develop her career. A typical comment by P1 was:

I am single, have no spouse but have kids and that alone plays a minus in some of my effort in developing my career.....I have to play mum, dad and at times nanny and that alone is a huge factor that eats away the already deplorable opportunities and time that are to there to develop my career.

Interestingly, P5 from University X felt that whether one is married, single, with or without children, that should not prevent an individual from developing their career. The participant stressed how it is important that female academics don't hide behind external factors as one could always make arrangements that do not completely hinder making progress in one's career. P5 stated:

First of all it is an individual matter and it depends on what arrangements you make, one really needs to know what their responsibilities are and how they will plan their cases, external factors just as male domination in Universities will take a long time to go..... these external factors are very common among female academics, we all have families, kids, spouses and partners and as long as you do not stand your ground then it will be hard.

The majority of the comments and suggestions of the other senior and junior female academics in Universities X and Y suggest family obligations are a common variable that contributes to the female academics' failure to have successful careers or slowdown in their career growth as they appear to be caught in between work and family obligations.

4.5.2.1 *Negotiating career development as a female academic in the 21st century.*

The research under study also sought to find out from the academics if they had failed to negotiate their career development at one point because of family responsibilities. Nearly all the senior female academics in University X and University Y emphasised through their stories how they had at one point put their careers on hold because of other responsibilities which ranged from lack of family and spousal support, attending school and family functions, starting family as newly married or being mothers. The accounts of P1, P4, P5 from University X and P6, P7 and P8 from University Y drew a sombre picture of the pains of being a wife, a mother, and female academic and these are epitomised below by the quotations from the participants:

P1 bemoaned:

Of course I think some very good opportunities have slipped past my fingers because of family responsibilities..... lack of family and spousal support hurts, I do not come from around here so my family is far away. I am a one man army. At one time I was set to go and my baby got sick and I had no one to help and so it was back to square one, I could not just leave the nanny with baby when he was not well". She continued "you know we lack that one voice to fight for what is right for us, some Universities have made plans with day care centres to look after their personnel kids until the end of the day... family responsibilities also eats away a lot of time such that at times the issue of trying to develop my career ends up being the last on my to do list.

P2 comments also offer some insight on how she had to negotiate her career at one point:

Yes, on numerous occasions I have had to compromise my careers with family issues and it made me realise that that we need as female academics to convince the management that in a sense our responsibilities with male academics are different certain things that need to be considered in order for female academic to develop.

During the discussion P2 added:

Definitely as a women you negotiate there is no way out because at times you are needed in two or three places at once and you really have to let go one or two engagements and at times its work that you forgo and ficus on family.

Similarly P4 explained:

Of course you negotiate, you see I got married and the next thing I said to myself I have to conceive children for my husband, be there for my in-laws, be active in the family church.... I just had to start with my new family expectations as a newly married person before my career needs...but at some stage I realised how important it was to develop my career and I left my two year old to do another professional course, but really speaking I started having progression in my career after I had my last child.

P5 had this to say on a more personal note:

I have lost how many times I have let go of very good opportunities some to even study abroad just for peace to reign in my house and for the "best" interest of a united family, as a mother, wife, daughter in law or and a sister to your siblings.

P6 stated:

Yes for my PHD I had by then, two kids and the girl was just a baby and my husband opted to give 6 months' notice at his workplace so I could continue with my studies, meanwhile I suffered with kids, I had to suspend my career and studies from those six month and this also delayed my graduation..... I was literally dying on the inside here I was with a blessing from God but my mind was just not there, I needed to get back to my studies and graduate.

P7 expressed:

I do not have children and I am not married, but I have had to step in and take care of my sister child and be a mother figure..... frankly speaking it is a problem as I have to deal with so many issues now that she is a teenager, I have to make plans every time and at times I end up forgoing some

workshops so that I am not continuously absent..... which was different when I was alone.

P8 articulated:

If you look at my age and my career path, these two do not tally at all.....have had to let go of many things but I have told myself I am not supposed to blame my family... but at times I wonder, without all these responsibilities that I have where could I be with my career?.

On a sad note P9 stated:

Mine is a sad story I think, remember earlier I said it had taken me 22 years to make progress at all with my PhD and these 22 years have been filled with putting everyone needs before mine..... There was a time I worked in Botswana and had to come back home because my sister was going away who had been looking after my kids, so I left Botswana and came back home to no job and I stayed for two years without a job that meant everything was on hold, I became a full time mother.

The results show that most of the female academics in University X and University Y felt that familial issues were the most controlling factors as they tried to develop their careers. The female academics' comments reveal that they are more concerned about what the society and families will say about them at the expense of developing their careers. Their experiences and sentiments show that the challenges are likely to continue and there is need for society to understand their trajectories.

Interestingly, P3 from University X showed through her narration that negotiating one's career was not only because of family responsibilities. One could also fail to negotiate their career because of workplace problems. Relating to the issue this is what P3 said:

In my case there was a time when I had to put my studies to a standstill, I am single and don't have children, so it was the working environment that was making me negotiate with my career development, I was so stressed and I nearly had a nervous breakdown, I just had too much workload, eventually I told the department in a meeting that I was not going to teach more than three

course.....i was frustrated, nothing seemed to be moving..... I did not even ask to be relieved it was more of as command, i needed to take one step forward towards developing my career.

There are indications that the career development of female academics is more often than not interrupted by family issues such as child birth. However, a conducive working environment is also central and critical. It may also be assumed that negotiating one career can be difficult in and out of the academia. Therefore these comments indicate that one needs not only family support but also organisational support they are to climb the University ladder and develop their careers.

On the contrary, P10 and one of the participants from FGP2, both from University Y were the only female academics from both Universities under research who were very adamant that under no circumstances could hinder them from negotiating their professional development. This is shown by the following citation from her:

What!!!!, I wouldn't even want to negotiate that is why I admitted that most of the academics hear think I am too competitive, and I know when it comes to my career I am very selfish, I have never negotiated with my career and I will never do that..... That is why I am even against these AA policies because they make female academics look as if we are being given amnesty and you negotiated your way to "progress.

Interestingly, among the FGP2 participants one of them said the following:

When I was doing my masters, I was expecting my child and I had the baby through caesarean section one week before the exams began, but I still wrote the exams and I got my master's degree. From that moment I told myself, no matter what it is possible to develop in your career, so I would not put or negotiate my career for anything.

From the foregoing comments, one may surmise that it takes a strong willed and assertive female academic to put aside all the challenges and responsibilities and focus on their career development.

4.5.2..2 *Balancing work, family and progressing as a female academic*

To gain further insight into the participants' views concerning their career development in Universities, the senior female academics were questioned on what they would sight as barriers that hinder their professional and personal development. One of the shared perspectives from all female academics was lack of time in and outside academia. They all acknowledged that their day was too short because of excessive workloads. Some of the participants added that they had become strangers to their own children. Others stated they were forced to work over weekends even though it had negative repercussions on their families. Below are extracts of in-depth interviews with P1, P2, P3 and P8, senior female academics from University X and University Y:

P1: complained:

I am failing to manage time effectively, my day is just too short, I leave the office late every time because of the workload issues which I sighted earlier, and every time I have to rush home to see my small baby before he sleeps, I stay 30kms away from campus and normally when I get home he is sleeping and at times I leave the house before he wakes up I end up coming to the office over the weekend to try and do research on my PhD. Honestly socially I have suffered as compared to professionally, at times I wonder if I was married whether my husband would have tolerated my job. Putting a demarcation between my social life and my professional life is proving to be difficult..... What pains me most is that I have lost out on all the milestones that my baby has gone through because I am an absent mother.

P2, also added:

Wow!!!, do I even balance, does the word balancing in academia exist? You know during the week it is very hard to meet deadlines because there is class, meetings, supervision, marking and administration to do and so the only free time is weekend, so I come to the office and I lock myself in and work, the time that I should be spending with my kids I am here, but then it's better for me because I am single, just think of a married female academic! She really is going to have a tough time if she has to come to the office Sunday to Sunday

and at the same time trying to make her husband, in-laws and children happy, it's not easy all!

P8:

It is time and at the end of the day you get caught in-between work and family....balancing is out.

Likewise, P3 from University X, elucidated that within academia balance between work and family cannot be achieved because there are no working hours in Universities. Academics have to be in constant contact with their work even after normal working hours. P3 intimated thus:

When you are an academic it's like there are no working hours or personal hours because even if you are driving you think work....., I cannot work in the office because of the number of students I told you I have and you can imagine at the rate at which they come knocking on my door, so when I go home I work extra hours, I sleep late and I wake up very early....there is no time for resting, even during semester breaks or vacation, we use that time to cover a lot of ground with the postgraduate students, so even if you plan you can never balance.

On the contrary, P4 and P5 from University X felt that their shortcomings were more personal than professional. They added that they had not played their wifely and motherly duties properly and had a sense of guilt but they were too committed to their work to let go. Their comments were as follows:

P4 posited:

As a way of trying to find balance, I have neglected my family, I have put my family interests aside countless times and this has affected my social life and that of other immediate relatives, though my partner is very supportive, I have a terrible guilty conscience hovering over me because I have to ask people to do simple things for my family that I should be doing myself, the problem is I focus too much on my career and there is no way I can neglect my work, so the other part which my family is paying the price.

In the same vein, P5 stated:

My problem is trying to keep everyone happy at home which is virtually impossible because I hardly spend time with them, professionally yes I do have “minor malfunctioning” here and there, but I am focused and committed in my work so I am covered in that area but my family has suffered in exchange for my career development.

The junior female academics also agreed that trying to find a balance both at personal and professional level remained a mammoth task for female academics. They have to negotiate their careers in a bid to find balance between work and family responsibilities. The female academics that were married in FGP1, from University X, and FGP2 from University Y, lamented they had to put aside their career most of the time in exchange for stability in their families and homes. The participants explained their predicament thus:

Having a family is really a blessing, but then again with the kind of job that academia is you have to constantly negotiate not only with your spouse but with the kids as well why you can't be there all the time... so many times you end up thinking this is not meant for married people.....though we are professional we have not stopped being mothers, or mother and doing our wifely and motherly duties.

One of the FGP1 participants said:

It is I who has to negotiate all the time to see how best I can be there for the school meetings of the kids and sports activities..... my husband works out of town so he comes home on Fridays and leaves on Sundays, so where do you get the time to focus on developing my career, attending conferences for me is totally out, I am sitting on the fence.

The FGP1 respondents further expressed their feelings and said:

This profession is hard, if you take a quick survey on female academics, especially those who are advanced in their careers, you will find that they are single, divorced or on separation with their spouses, we are young academics and we don't have a social life.

Similarly, FGP2 articulated:

You just don't get the time for everything.... Lecturing in a University is not child's play, you really need to know your stuff very well to avoid being labelled the worst teacher..... that means more reading and reading and less time with the family..... the drawback here is time, the feeling of guilt is always around you and this can negatively affects one's career development.

The FGP2 did not view family responsibilities and children as hindrances. On the other hand, junior academics in University Y brought the issue of HIV/AIDS which other participants had not talked about. This is shown by the following comments:

This scourge of HIV/AIDS has not spared us at all, we are the ones who tend to do all the caring for the sick relatives who come to the city for better medical help and these are relatives our husbands so in the long run you put aside the notion of trying to enhance your career to better heights, you get so desperate to start on your PhD on numerous times but every time its family and the extended family that has to come first.

Similarly another participant in FGP2 from University Y added on a personal note:

When my husband and I were students I was the one who had to defer my own PhD because it was a financial burden "so he said" for both of us to study with kids to look after... he graduated three years ago and I just resumed my studies... I had to let go despite the fact that I was ready to study and it was going to be easy for me during that time because he was studying abroad whilst I took care of the family. I felt I could manage even if he was not around, to but I had to step down and let him progress.

Ironically even those FGP1 participants from University X who happened to be in the same field as their partners highlighted how they had to deviate from their own work schedule in an effort to keep the marital bliss. The following comments are representative of their feelings:

Take for instance in my case, we are in the same field as my husband.... I break early everyday so that I can go home and cook, we stay near the campus and I don't have a maid, I leave him working in the office, he calls me

to come back and collect him when its late because we have one car.....all this while he has been working and I am at home stuck with the domestic chores... just can't work beyond 7pm everyday It's not possible to work late it is just not understood.

The inability of junior female academics to satisfy their professional and personal lives was omnipresent in both Universities. The narratives indicate that women can subtly positioned in a subservient role where they may be expected to put their career on hold and take care of family need ahead of their own. The above sentiments show that in a bid to find balance between work and family and develop their careers, most female academics ended up putting their career aside.

In summary, it is clear that finding balance between work and family for female academics is a mammoth task. Some academics have inferred that when one is single it is easier to put pursue ones' career than when married. It also emerged that academia does not have working hours as one is forced to work even during weekends. Although these academics seem to have a positive disposition towards their families, it may be established that they are insistent on career advancement. However, participants from both Universities lamented that their career development continues to be marred by societal expectations.

4.5.3 Persistence of male domination and patriarchal control in Universities

Lastly, the researcher also sought to establish from the participants if they viewed Universities as male dominated and patriarchal, taking into consideration the opportunities, challenges and barriers they had encountered in their career development P1, P2, and P4 University X and P6, P7 and P8 from University Y argued that although the Universities had gone through a lot of transformation with many gender policies being put in place, the Universities continued to be strongly male dominated. The comments from University X participants were as follows:

P1:

Male domination will continue because female academics lack the zeal and the fighting spirit to voice out and question some of the issues that we know are wrong but we keep quiet". P1 continued "go out there and you will see that leadership is in the hands of men in Universities, female academics are there

with even better qualifications by why we are not given the chance to lead I really do not know!.

P2 responses suggested that as long as strategies were not identified change will take long time to be realised. According to P2:

One can easily count how many female academics are in senior management.... As long as the situation stays like that then it is going to be difficult to come up with policies that accommodate female academics because top management is male as they do not understand the issues and the situation on the ground.

In similar terms P4 concurred:

Universities will always be male dominated because instead of having more women come into the academia you hear the remaining few wishing they could find other less demanding jobs and leave.

P6 from University Y described Universities as male dominated because:

Gender mainstreaming is not being taken seriously.

P7 opined:

We still have male dominance at the top of the University hierarchy they are all men..... funny enough you will find that even the most basic things like official forms that have to be filled in still have chairman printed on them, this is despite that female academics have been heads of departments for some time now..... Such documents should have been changed a long time ago.

P8, on the other hand, said:

We are scared to challenge the status quo, simple, there are women who are capable of leading but are not given the chance and some turn down such opportunities.

Worth noting was a contradictor response by P3 from University X, who stated that Universities were now experiencing slight changes. She mentioned that the junior female academics had the responsibility to try and delete the already engrained

indoctrination that Universities will always be led by males because they are the future senior female academics. She explained:

I believe female representation is becoming more visible in some parts of the University than before, all we need to do is to create awareness to future female academics because they are the future leaders of the University and change must come from them as well.

P5 from University Y, also offered a different perspective from the rest of the participants and maintained that Universities were viewed as male biased and dominated because female academics have failed to take up leadership role:

Many a times I have asked myself why as female academics we have failed ourselves, why can't we stand in what we believe in?, why are we not voting for each other into leadership position?..... male academics may hate each other's guts but when it come work situation, they play and dance to the same tune most of the times yet with us female we cannot stand to see another sister rise up to the ranks.

P10, on the other hand, summed up the issue of male dominance in Universities by stating that there was need for a new generation of female academics and students to work together and to be thoroughly informed and educated on the perils of defending the status quo

She articulated her points as follows:

Universities will continue to be biased for a long because we are just not there, while we may want to tilt the tables in our favour, we are just not there.....until such a time that our junior academics, those who will enter the academia in future and the female students are well educated on how to challenge the present situation that has been the bone of contention for a very long time then maybe we can foresee a change..... as female academics it is important that we work together. At faculty level women get nominated to lead some projects but happily turn them down....it is the gossip that goes around led by the women and the resistance they know they will encounter that makes them turn down such great opportunities.

Responses from the majority of the participants revealed that male domination is still in existence in Universities. However, a minority of the participants noted that failure by female academics to challenge male domination in institutions of higher learning explained why Universities continue to be viewed as men's club.

4.5.4 Summary

In view of all the barriers that the senior and junior female academics explicated in their chronicles, the focus question at this point in time will be "what strategies are these senior and junior female academics using to overcome the barriers they encounter as they strive to develop their careers in both Universities".

4.6 STRATEGIES FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE ACADEMICS IN UNIVERSITIES

There are many barriers that hinder the career development of female academics in universities. These range from teaching workloads, research and publication, lack or absence of funding, and lack of organisational support. The question is how these problems that have continued to hinder the career development of female academics for a long time can be addressed.

4.6.1 Self-confidence, commitment and collegiality among female academics

Information was sought on the strategies that female academics use at societal and institutional level to help develop their careers. There arose different themes among the senior and junior female academics from University X and University Y on the strategies that they have adopted. The strategies ranged from being committed, and confident, working extras hours, family and spousal support, sacrifice, self-efficacy and hard work, collegiality, collaboration, and organisational support. These will be discussed below. Some of the responses from University X participants were a bit divergent from those that were highlighted by their counterparts from University Y. Below are the strategies that P1, P3 and P4 from University X spoke about :

P1 said:

Here at work we need to be confident in ourselves and show commitment to our work, if we are to grow we need to speak out, our voices need to be heard as a united front because that is what is missing". P1 also added, even at societal level,

we need to believe in ourselves and prove that being a working mother does not mean that you cannot develop your career.

P3 was also of the opinion that

Female academics need to be confident; we need to put ourselves in a frame of mind that will fight all the barriers and that needs serious discipline and commitment..... it is also about making an effort to be known, try and attend the workshops and the trainings that are organised by the university so that you are remembered as someone who fights for a worthy cause, we have to give ourselves exposure.

In the same vein ,P4 asserted that:

It is simply, we need to strategize both in and out of the academia by showing confidence in all that we do then we can conquer, one really needs to show a lot of discipline, because if you lack that then you cannot progress.

Through their various accounts, some of the female academics, namely P2 from University X and P7 from University Y, felt that one of the strategies at institutional level was to have mentors and role models, people with whom they can have frank discussions about career development.

P2 noted that:

I think most of the female academics have taken it upon themselves to have a role models who are not even in their institution or same field as them, but just to have someone that you can have a heart to heart talk with about life in the academia.

P7 reiterated:

I believe mentorship in and out of academia will help a lot so we can be aware of the opportunities that are there.....seeking out some people can help you to navigate some opportunities and problems that we face.....we just have to carve out time specifically for that.

On the other hand P5, from University X, and P9 from University Y, brought in a different dimension and stated that what was needed at professional level was the platform for female academics to share their predicaments with others.

P5 also commented:

I have a lady that I met at a conference and she is from another institution, we are study buddies... we push each other and she is my strategic partner.

P9 narrated:

We need to collaborate as female academics in and out of academia. Change starts from outside, if we support each other, winning the fight in organisations will be a "walk in the park"... Let us be a representative of one voice because no-one is going to come to us and say let us be united.

Meanwhile, P10, from University Y, also revealed that working hard at professional level surely paid dividends and maintained that in the process quality education given to the students must not be compromise. She added that:

I work extra hard and I put in extra hours every day, I try by all means to be the teacher that I was taught to be years ago. I do not compromise quality, though it is quite cumbersome, but as an ethical academic I always want to have a clear conscience when explaining to the students why they have failed or passed.

P10 phrased the issue on a more personal front and mentioned:

I remember during my book launch when my only son gave a vote of thanks he said to the guests, 'at one am you hear the alarm going off and you think the phone went off by mistake but mama (mum) waking up', the family and friends around me said, 'what will you be doing at 1am?, are you now part of the owl family? P10 continuously posited, as you know owls are birds of the night and in the African culture they tend to be associated with those who 'work at night', you see because of this profession those who are not in it will not understand why you have to be up in the middle of the night and working.

On the other hand, respondents in FGP2, representing University Y, also supported the senior female academics from Universities X and Y. Their responses singled out hard work and self-confidence as strategies that could be used at professional level

It's all about working flat out, tell yourself there are no office hours or home hours... you just have to bold and confident in yourself , then everyone around you will see how determined and confident you are about your job and that way it becomes easy to ask for help in and out of academia, it is about soldering on and being content with the negatives and the positives that you encounter as you try to develop your career.

The foregoing discussion with the participants revealed that self-reliance, discipline commitment, sheer hard work and role models were the key strategies to career development of female academics. Participants in the above extract emphasised the importance of hard work, confidence and self believe in developing their careers.

4.6.1.1 *Family and Spousal Support*

Further to this, family and spousal support was also identified as one strategy that female academics used at societal level to help develop their careers. In University X, participants 2, 3, 5 were of the same opinion as P6 from University Y and FGP1 from University X. The participants were of the opinion that emotional support, constant praise and positive inter personal relationships were vital.

P2 indicated:

I believe it is important to make your family understand your kind of job and what it entails, so at societal level asking for and getting family and your partner support is very important.

P3 articulated:

You need to let everyone at home know your goals step by step, tell them what you wish to accomplish in your career and wht there is need to do that, you have to ask for their support as you may end up giving up on your goals.

P5 stated:

When the home front is very supportive you can reach greater heights with your career.

Additionally, P6 from University Y, had this to say with regard to spousal support.

P6 stated:

"First of although sad, the strategy that most female academics are using at societal level is that you do not bring up your own children, you employ someone to bring up your kids for you so that your profession is covered for you..... family support is very important, you see when I had my first child I left her with my husband and mother in law to go and study my masters abroad, what kept me going was the support that I had, though what pained me most was that when I returned I was total stranger to my daughter.

Similarly, FGP1 who represented junior female academics from University X also valued family and spousal support. They added that for female academics multitasking was crucial. They added that strategies of career development were interrelated at professional and personal level and for one to develop they had to be used together. FGP1 opined:

Family support is very important whether you are married or not, involve them, let them know what you are dealing with at work... throw around ideas to them at least they will have an idea of what is expected of you at work, you just have to ask for family and spousal support, these strategies are integrated because they affect both our performance at home and at work.

In this example, interpersonal communication and psychological support in the family are seen as vital strategies in developing one's career in academia. FGP1 respondents further postulated that multitasking also helped them balance their work and other responsibilities. The following extract shows the importance of multitasking as an academic:

At work we prepare for class, we supervise, we do community engagement, mark the scripts, attend meetings and when you have a class test, you are also busy doing something else, it's about teaching yourself that every

minutes counts and should be well spent, even at home while you are working on something on the laptop, you cook and also help the kids with homework, so multi-tasking at home and at work helps because whatever happens at work does affect the situation at home and vice versa.

The above experts show that female academics are conscious that in addition to spousal support they have to adopt many roles at once to try and find balance between work, home and career. Thus endurance, determination and diligence were needed.

But, FGP2 from University Y, seemed to be a bit wary and sceptical about family support because they had negative experiences. They were open in their descriptions and said:

Support at home is important, without that oneness as a family one can really break and it can seep out all the energy you have towards your career. We have to distribute our tasks at home and at work as best as we can.... But then on the home front distributing tasks may mean having a nanny or a relative and this has caused problem to most women. Instead of coming to help, either, they abuse the kids in our absence, they can really cause more harm than good in our marriages by taking over our homes and husbands..... Some of us here already have fragile relationships with our spouses and in-laws because of the extra hours we have to work here.

The participants in the above extract disclosed the importance of hard work, confidence and self believe in developing their careers. One cannot but fail to realise that there appeared to be a lot of hidden conflicts and negative tensions among some FGP2 female academics with regard to using paid domestic help as a strategy for career development. Instead, most academics in FGP2 talked about their negative experiences (off tape). They said that is why they preferred not to have any domestic help. They would rather lose out on some opportunities for career development than put their family lives at risk especially with the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. From the above, one can infer that without the psycho-social support and positive family and spousal support, female academics may find it hard to progress in their careers.

4.7 Strategies used by academics in key management positions

4.7.1 *Hard work and sacrifice as basic instruments to career development of female academics*

It is common knowledge supported by extant literature that the higher the leadership position in a University, the lower the number of female academics. The study also sought to find out from the participants the strategies that they thought had been used by female academics in key management position to develop their careers. Responses of the participants from both Universities showed that hard work is positive and useful for career growth. P1 stated

I think they worked very hard, they tried to manage their time especially professionally, they just put in a lot of effort and did not give up

P2 echoed:

"I believe these female academics encouraged themselves, they worked hard and did not necessarily allow themselves to be discouraged to go for what they truly believed in..... they just did not give up.

P3 likewise also reiterated:

They preferred to miss out on the personal and sentimental issues and worked very hard to prove that they can be leaders despite being female.

P4 supported the above and said:

I would say hard work and a lot of sacrifice is the answer.

P5 :

I must say it is through hard work, confidence and self-belief that they managed to get to the top and to continue developing their careers.

On the other hand, the senior female academics representing University Y, namely P6, P7, P8 and P10, also embraced the comments made by participants from University X. Below are some of their comments

P6 commented:

It is hard work and self-belief, here we have a female librarian and our deputy registrar is a female and these women have demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that they are hard workers, capable and knowledgeable.

P7 also opined:

"Its hard work and being organised using available opportunities.

P8 cemented the above assertions and said:

The key instrument is hard work, you just have to sacrifice, I think they let go of some of the family issues not because they did not care but they did not want to remain stagnant.

P10:

Its sheer hard work, without these they would not be where they are today.

Although comments made by junior female academics from University X and University Y were similar to those of the senior female academics, they also added that diligence and assertiveness are a driving force in reaching higher echelons of the universities. Below are verbatim responses from FGP2:

Just being up there especially in academia means you have seen it all, its thorough hard work because the more you grow and are promoted the more that you have to prove yourself that you deserve such an office or title and position , on some part they must have neglected their families and socially they strategized by missing out on their social life, they must have traded in and sacrificed a lot in place for their career development.

FGP2, on the other hand, mentioned that:

They were not scared to take up the challenges and at the same time being assertive and embracing constructive criticism all the time... they worked hard and were clever enough to find out what worked for them by not doubting their capabilities so as to develop their careers... its all about compromising a

lot in regard of their personal lives.... Sacrifice and professionalism was the name of their game.

During the earlier part of the interview FGP1 and FGP2 respondents noted that working hard, self-confidence, sacrifice and assertiveness in academia were central to their career development. The above accounts depict that through hard work, self-determination and sacrifice nothing is impossible with regard to reaching key positions within the university. A major discovery which was made by the researcher in the above responses is that none of the participants (both junior and senior academics) mentioned mentoring or role modelling or networking as one of the strategies that the female academics in key positions had used to develop their careers.

4.8 Creating awareness and supporting feasible strategies for career development among female academics in Universities

4.8.1 Isolation vs. solidarity among female academics in Universities

In order to make sense of the strategies that the senior female academics used at societal and institutional level, it was important to find out if all the female academics were aware of the strategies that they used. What emerged from P1, P2 and P3 from University X and P9 from University Y was that team work was missing. Moreover, female academics tended to be evasive about their plans or even the problems they encountered. The accounts of participants from University X were presented as follows:

P1 had this to say

Personally I think it would be great if as female academics of this institution we work as a team , yes we are aware of the strategies that we can use, but then what is one voice compared to all; we need to put away that separation, that delineation that says I am from science, humanities, law or management, we just need to team up.

P2 also agreed that awareness was there but teamwork was missing:

To a certain extent we may be aware of the strategies..... but if there is no teamwork then we cannot progress, what is needed now are those strategies that will fit with the transformations that the universities are experiencing.

P3 stated:

We need to increase the awareness programmes through collaborative and awareness meeting to keep abreast with what is happening within our university.

P9 articulated:

We are aware of the strategies but when support is lacking those strategies are weakened.

Creating awareness to help female academics to develop their careers was viewed by the respondents as imperative especially for junior female academics.

Nonetheless, FGP1 from University X stated that lack of support among female academics was a problem. They expressed their concerns as follows:

Female academics are aware the strategies that can be used but the strategies that are being used here to help us female academic are not enough, the missing link here is us as female academic, some female academics know the system and how it works better than others and if we were to come together we could really be a force to be reckoned by the leadership of this University.... We do have great and brilliant ideas but when it comes from another lady it's met with contempt.

The main issue is not that female academics are not aware of the strategies they can use, rather there seems to be lack of communication and implementation of those strategies. Meanwhile, P5 and P4 from University X stated that even though one might be aware of the strategies, this was totally dependent on an individual's situation, whether it allowed those strategies to be put into use or not because some female academics still preferred to work in isolation. They clarified their views as follows:

P4 revealed:

To some extent it really depends on ones' situation as it may not permit career development at all, but then other women are content with what they have so they sit back and do not seek help or even come together with others.

P5 also stated:

Even if you are aware of the strategies, the problem here is that it is each man for himself..... naturally women are so secretive and jealous we don't even make an effort to help each other we don't talk about our problems or career progress to each other, we watch from the side-lines because we always want to be the first to accomplish something that other female academics have not been able to do..... when that happens we close the doors completely to others.

In addition, P6 from University Y had similar sentiments as P4 and P5 from University X. She responded as follows:

The reason I decided to have a female academics retreat on research writing was because I realised some of the female academics were not aware of what was taking place within their working environment..... the problem with Universities is individuals working as a one man army.

The issue of being aware of strategies to be used was also buttressed by FGP2, representing University Y. They argued that the fact that there are female academics that have done so well in academia was proof that there were strategies they can use to climb the ladder within the universities. They reasoned that it was only a matter of identifying how these strategies could be blended with their already tight schedule. The FGP2 recounted their views as follows:

Yes, we are very much aware of the strategies otherwise some of our female academics will not have been able to accomplish as much as they have done. it is the lack of support in and out of academia that tends to slow us down. if you do not have a strong supportive system then everything comes secondary.

Thus, for these female academics being aware of the strategies to enhance their career development is not the major issue. The problem lies in the support system in and outside universities and how best one can use these strategies to deal with individual challenges. They commented:

The strategies that one can use are strongly dependant on an individual and the current situation they face.... Therefore, they can never be feasible because what works for me/us cannot necessarily work for everyone..... we now live in a dynamic world which needs individuals to come up with dynamic ideas and ideals if we are develop our careers or let alone find balance.

Interestingly, P10 from University Y, said although they were aware of the strategies, there was nothing to motivate them to use those strategies. Instead most of the academics had resorted to “moonlighting” as one survival strategy in their university since there was lack of funding. She clarified moonlighting as follows:

You know what being aware of the strategies is largely dependent on an individual, most of these female academics are aware of the strategies but they always ask themselves what for..... I will tell you one thing for nothing..... the remunerations at these government institutions are so little that if one has to use it as motivational strategy to develop your career then you are in for a disappointment..... so one strategy that the academics are mostly using is to moonlight (working for other institutions or NGO companies part-time), so you can raise funds to travel to conferences.

It can be argued that though the female academics are aware of the strategies they can use, the culture of helping each other is missing. Teamwork and sharing of knowledge needs to be promoted by the universities and amongst female academics. One can deduce that the message being communicated by FGP2 and other participants from both Universities is that strategies used to develop female academics' careers can never be adequate. Strategies adopted by the participants can be effective. However, universities also need to come in and render help to the academics.

4.9 Promoting career development of female academics through adequate organisational support.

The study also sought the views of participants on strategies which the University should employ to overcome barriers that hinder career development of female academics. The responses from participants in Universities X and Y indicate that universities need to come up with awareness programmes which specifically address their needs. They also highlighted that Universities need to provide attractive incentives to retain female academics and provide given equal opportunities.

P1 commented:

The University needs to come up with good peer mentoring system which should include developmental programmes that have attractive incentives and these should be implemented in a transparent manner.

P2 stated:

The University should give the female academics the voice and the platform to express their needs.

It is clear that the university needs to come up with different strategies that take into consideration the diversified needs and intellectual capacity of female academics. Some of the female academics particularly P3 from University X, felt that the only way that the university could overcome the barriers that hinder career development and under representation of female academics was through supporting change from grassroots levels by marketing attractive opportunities to female students so that by the time they get to university level they know what is expected of them:

P3 expressed her feelings as follows:

We have been here for some time and soon we will exit the academia the University has to realise that there are few female academics joining the University, that on its own should be wake up call, changes have to come from grassroots level, through career guidance in high schools so as to market opportunities for young women within the universities.

Interestingly, P4 from University X felt that offering advice to the University was a bit tricky because female academics themselves had a sense of lethargy and as such coming up with different strategies would not be an easy task. P4 articulated:

At times there is a sense of apathy coming from the female academics, the University does organise workshops and training session which are specifically meant for female academics only and we do not pitch up, despite that these are workshops that are meant to empower us and create some form of awareness, we are just not sincere..... at times we contribute indirectly to the problems we encounter because we fail to meet the university halfway.

It is apparent that University X does have programmes meant for female academics only. It may be concluded that these programmes need to be prepared and delivered in such a way that they reduce the rate of absconding by female academics. Moreover, they should be scheduled in such a manner that the female academics do not see them as activities that are just being imposed on them with no positive results.

4.9.1 Gender Mainstreaming and funding in Zimbabwean Universities

However, a glance at the senior female academics responses in University Y showed that they had different perspectives from those of their counterparts in University X and those of junior academics in both Universities. They said that the strategies that their University could use to overcome factors that hinder their career development as female academics was gender mainstreaming and enough funding. Their responses were as follows:

P6 :

The University needs to have its own comprehensive gender mainstreaming policy in place which must be active so as to balance issues..... A fair playing ground must be created for all academics.

P10:

The issue of funding has to be taken seriously, more money needs to be injected, donors need to be sought in and out of the country if we are to survive.

The above extracts indicate that efforts to promote equal representation of all academics can go a long way in making female academics realise that developing their careers in this male dominated and patriarchal profession is not after all a farfetched dream.

4.9.1.1 Creating and promoting flexible policy practices for career development of female academics

When the same question was posed to junior female academics from both Universities, the participants felt that for them to be ambitious, competitive and be able to develop their careers, the Universities had to come up with flexible promotion policy practices that would give everyone a chance to grow in their own area of speciality. As concluding remarks on the issue of strategies, t FGP1 and FGP2 from both Universities commented:

FGP1:

The University policy must look at the fact that most of the female academics are excellent teacher and they should at least look into promotion also based on teaching and research should treated as a separate promotion tool so that everyone can be accommodated.

FGP2:

The University needs to come up with workshops that are meant for female academics and they should invite speakers from different Universities and other strategy would be to inject more resources into our careers development endeavours because that is where the University is current lacking.

It may be concluded that some female academics are more comfortable when teaching than doing research and community engagement. Furthermore, universities have to come up with enough resources to help female academics. This will act as a motivation for them to develop their careers.

Lastly, in addition to the accounts of female academics from Universities X and Y on strategies that they use to develop their careers, the researcher saw it fit to use P6's response from University Y as it summed up beautifully the whole issue of the career trajectory of female academics and how they should strategize. She said:

Involve your family, have them to try and understand your type of work..... and as a woman you need to humble yourself all the times don't act too educated..... you can learn a lot from a cleaner who cleans your office, one who makes your tea, right to the students you teach in class how to strategize and manage your career.... Be ready to learn from all people at all times.....lest you are seen as educated but a foolish and a selfish person. She continued: Pray to have Solomon's wisdom, don't mistreat people because they are in a lower position than you are.... Even at home you can learn a lot strategies from the children we raise up and from our partners, you have to tell yourself that learning never comes to an end, you learn every day, anywhere and everywhere. Being an academic and developing your career in the process is not about having positive results overnight. This profession takes time and needs perseverance, just don't give up.

4.10 Summary

The commonalities and differences that emerged from the participants on the strategies that can be used at institutional, professional and personal level to help develop female academics' career in Universities are not exactly the same. The narratives also revealed that career development stories within academia and the strategies used to develop careers are closely linked to work and family environments and both are interrelated. The professional support that can be provided by both Universities will now be looked at in the last section of this chapter.

4.11 PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES FOR FEMALE ACADEMICS IN UNIVERSITIES

4.11.1 Knowledge creation, acquisition and advancement for female academics in Universities through PSDP

Professional staff development programmes are important in any workplace and should be tailored in such a way that they address the needs of academic staff and provide a support structure which the academics deem necessary to effectively and efficiently promote their career development. As part of research, the participants were asked to explain what Professional Staff Development Programmes(PSDPs) are. All the participants from both universities expressed that it was the training, workshops, professional services offered by the university in line with promoting their

careers not only for new academic staff but academics already in the system as well. The following responses, which were similar from all participants from Universities X and Y show how the participants expressed what PSDPs are:

P1 said:

It is about the steps and programmes that every University must have in action that must be reviewed every financial year..... the sole aim must be on how to develop academics in the institutions whether male or female and everyone should be given an equal opportunity to attend such staff development programmes.

P2: added:

It is the in-service training that the University offers its academics male or female to enhance teaching and research skills and community engagement.....it means people have to be trained on any issues that are of particular importance to them.

P3 also said:

It is those support structures that try to assist employees who want to further their profession in areas of their speciality.... It is about training of and enhancement through workshops that are relevant to career development of academics”.

P4 highlighted what PSDP and stated:

It is devising means for academics and giving them opportunities to grow within their careers taking into consideration their expertise.

In a similar vein P5 asserted:

It is the training of all staff within the University so that they can be better academics.

P6 said:

It is when the university has some programmes put in place that are specifically meant to help academics.

P7 commented:

It is the teaching, the learning and research training that academics are given in IHL.

In the same vein, yet expressed differently, P8 added:

Are the various programmes for all academics which are held regularly in and out of the institution as a way of putting the institution ranking on the map by enhancing academic growth of its academics.

Further to the above P9 said:

It's when a university derives ways of trying to help its academics to develop their careers.

P10 echoed:

It means upgrading the male and female academics in any learning institution.

The FGP1 from University X also added that Universities can churn out well rounded scholars when they graduate depending on the professional support system that the Universities offer to its academics. The participants stated that PSDP was the assistance which universities give to academics by paving a way for them to develop their career through formal training which should be in line with the different areas of expertise of academics. They elucidated as follows:

It is about the university professionally supporting its academics through formal training and developing them in their areas of expertise.....it is when the University makes it clear in black and white to say this is what and how we want our staff to develop so that they can be able to deliver quality education to the learners.

The researcher noted that FGP2 raised a different issue that was not referred to by FGP1 and by senior academics in Universities X and Y. They articulated that PSDP was when the university knows the needs of its academics so that they can be able to provide correct and adequate professional support. Below is their extract:

It is all the training, workshops, the support that is given to staff members by the University..... it is when the institution endeavours to identify the needs of its academics be it they are financial or professional needs with the sole aim of enhancing their careers and also helping them to overcome some of the difficulties they encounter within the academia”.

The descriptions made by the FGP1 and FGP2 indicate that every University must have laid down rules and regulations which will help academics to develop their careers. Furthermore, it may be inferred here that, it is the duty of the University to know the needs of the academics which must be provided in different forms, either financially, or through workshops and training sessions. Thus, as long as the university does not know the professional needs of its academics, it runs the risk of providing PSDPs that will not enhance the career development of its academics. The implication is that PSDP must cover the three pillars of the University such as research, teaching and community engagement. Moreover, the comments made by the senior female academics from both universities show that they used different and yet very common words to describe what is meant by PSDP in universities. These words add up to only one answer: it is the duty of the University to extend their academics intellectual knowledge and expertise on and off the job. This can act as an inherent stimulus to their career development.

4.11.1.1 Providing adequate and practical PSDP for academics in Universities

It was also of paramount importance to know how the participants perceived the professional support available at their institution. Unfortunately, most of the participants such as P1, P2, P3 and P5 from University X felt that the support was there theoretically but practically it was not enough as they felt the PSDP should not be only on the job but off the job as well with other Universities. The academics also added that the time allocated to the PSDPs was inadequate and did little to enhance their careers. The following extract is evidence to the participants comments:

P1 had this to say:

The support is there.... But you find that PSDP being done within the Universities tend to be too short yet what we are supposed to gain goes a long way in assisting us to be better academics, and they always run through teaching time which makes it hard to attend especially for us who have high

teaching loads". P1 added using colourful metaphors "but then again why does the University market their "potato and "tomato" in their own orchard? Why don't they take us somewhere different to train than the places that we are used to year in year out, we want to know what University Z is doing but we don't get the chance.

The following sentiment were representatives of P2 feelings:

Support is available but not enough, funds can be limited at times and you have to depend on those international conferences being sponsored by NGOs.... The university also needs to come up with programmes and new ideas because the ones they have are so repetitive".

Repeatedly, the participants highlighted that the PSDPs were there but they were viewed negatively and this is reflected in P3 statement:

The PSDPs are there but I have failed to attend a number of them because their time allocation is very short and the numbers that they usually train are very small yet we are a very large institution.

P5 echoed P3 and said:

Yes, it is there but it is not enough and these short courses of PSDPs that are done are very helpful but it would be ideal if they can increase the time on these courses.

P5 also added that though the support was there, some of the workshops and conferences tended to benefit academics that had already made a name for themselves in academics circles. She articulated:

For those like us in senior positions, the professional support is available because we can be funded from outside but for the junior academics it can be another story.

On the other hand, P6 and P10, from University Y brought in different perspectives on this issue and said:

With the years that I have in the academia, there is no university that does not support its members of staff. I think it depends on the leadership you have in

the faculty or department, I think support has to come from there, then it becomes easy for the University to step in..... everything at University level has stages that have to be followed if positive results are to be yielded.

P10 also commented on her perceptions of PSDP available. This is what she thought about the available support system:

You know you come in with so much zeal and excitement, then you realise you are being excited for nothing because there is really no-one to support you 100%, it is really discouraging, if only the resources could be made available because the University is not playing its part fully..... twice over I had to sit in workshops that were being conducted by under qualified personnel and I really wanted to walk out but was scared to send the wrong signals.... quality is being compromised. Most of the time it's like I am subsidising the University in a way because I fund most of the seminars that I go to..... Even when we have to contact the learners we use our own cell phones because the phones we have in our offices are for landlines only and you tell me, which students you are going to locate using a landline..... P 10 continuously posited, as for the library it is a museum because the books that are there are so out-dated, its really pathetic..... Fine we do have books on line, but the net is always offline most of the times and this has forced most of use to have internet put in our homes so that we can be able to research after hours and prepare for lecturers.

There are indications that though the participants seem to appreciate the efforts being made by their Universities on PSDPs, their comments reveal that both universities need to plan their PSDPs so that academics are able to attend. The researcher was also able to look through policies and it appeared that both universities have development policies that have been put in place for the career development of their academics. For instance, in University X, their development policy states that they are committed to the on-going structured and systematic training of their academics so that they can be able to perform their duties effectively and efficiently. Additionally this policy also states that all training programmes are recorded and the results reviewed so that training methods can be improved. However, the researcher opines that what is written on the policy is at variance with

what the participants alluded to as they bemoaned that most of the PSDPs being given are repetitive. Hence, their reservations lie in the fact that enough time and resources and planning is not allocated to these PSDPs.

By and large, the FGP1 and FGP2 from Universities X and Y had a different story to tell as compared to their senior academics with regard to the available professional support in their universities.

4.11.1.2 Creating tailor-made PSDPs in Universities

Each and every IHL has its own activities which entail their professional support for academics. This implies Universities must be in a position to cater for and satisfy the needs of academics in their area of speciality. When asked how they felt about the professional support available, FGP1 from University X felt the University needs to come up with new and exciting professional development courses for its staff members that are especially made to suit their needs and that of the students. They elaborated by saying:

Though the support is there, it is inadequate because it does not meet all our needs. The university needs to come up with tailor made professional staff development programmes for female academics only, they should not generalise the professional support given to its academics and think it's a one size fits all issue..... even if one is coming from another university there should be in a position to identify quickly what this university offers to academics in terms of PSDP and where they can fit in.

The PSDPs currently available do not cater for all the diverse and unique needs of academics. Nothing is specifically drawn for female academics on how they can develop their careers. The above comments may further be interpreted as meaning that the “one glove fits all” approach is being used in University X.

4.11.1.3 Tenured or not, does it really matter when providing PSDP for academics?

Meanwhile the responses from FGP2, in University Y, showed that lack of adequate funding influenced how they perceived professional support available in their university. They highlighted that they had to fund themselves most of the time and

that if one was not tenured the support given was very limited. In an attempt to emphasise their ordeal, FGP2 said:

Though the university does put forward some programmes for us to train and how we can develop, the problem always meltsdown to finance, without finance you can't do anything, the IHL in our country are financially strapped. We fund ourselves many times if you desire to attend a conference and the university has expressed that there is no money, if you are lucky you can get the money but it does not cover all the necessities and you end up using your own cash. What makes matters worse is that if you have not been tenured or served for a number of years you won't qualify for some of the professional staff development programmes".

PSDPs are valued if all the resources, monetary or otherwise are adequate. The issue of not supporting staff members that have not been tenured appeared to be segregatory because being tenured in academia entails a lot of issues. In such instances, it may take a long time before some female academics get the chance to attend or be even funded to attend professional development courses, seminars and workshops. The future of some of the junior female academics thus, seems bleak.

4.11.2 Promoting career development of female academics through gender policies

There are many gender policies that have been put in place to enhance the career development of females in the workplace. This prompted the researcher to seek the responses of the participants regarding their knowledge on the availability of policies that have been put in place by their institution to promote their career development. Their responses showed that the majority of the participants P2, P3 and P4 from University X showed ignorance and lacked information on the availability of any policies that had been put in place to enhance their career and they explained their positions as follows:

P2 said:

not that I know of that sorely represent this University.

Similarly P3 expressed:

Besides the AA policies that we find everywhere in and out of academia there are no specific polices that guide the career development of female academics only.....i think we have general policies for everyone.

Likewise P4 stated:

Well I am not sure about the issue of polices that have to do with career development of female academics only.

In other words, it may be assumed that there are no policies that are tailor made for the development of female academics careers' development in University X. Regardless of this, the researcher opines it is the duty of the university to sensitise female academics of the policies available that can guide them to develop their careers. Moreover, the female academics themselves should also show an interest towards polices that can enhance or better still, address the challenges they encounter in developing their careers within the academia.

The researcher took note that participants 3, 4, and 5 from university X stated that the polices that were available were not segregatory. The researcher probed if they thought they were a good foundation for the career development of female academics despite the fact that they are not specifically meant for females. They argued that the policies were good but there were still some grey areas that needed to be redressed so that they could meet the needs of all the academics. The following were some of their comments:

P3 comments as follows:

Its good the polices are there but a review needs to be done and to check if they meet the objectives of the academics within the institution.

P4 opined that:

The general polices are ok, it is the implementation that is a problem.... The polices lack a follow up on what the academics are doing, for instance, how can an academic go for a sabbatical leave and come back with nothing to

show, lack of obligation is missing from the University and the members of staff.

P5 articulated:

If we look at the AA it is a good policy and foundation for the career development of us female academics..... But it means from there we really have to work hard as female academics and prove to the society that we are equal partners with the male academics and we are capable of developing our careers with or without the gender specific policies.

Additionally P5 said

I think as female we are getting the wrong idea about these policies that address the past injustices and women rights, because really some women are now expecting to be given positions when they don't possess the qualifications or the experience.

Furthermore, FGP1 from University X articulated that they were not aware of any policy that was specifically meant for them. However, they did mention that the AA was a good foundation for their career development because it had given them the chance to voice their concerns and for some female academics to be in leadership roles and circles. FGP1 explained:

The AA covers almost all the spheres that have to do with women being recognised in the workplace and we must say this has shifted the goalpost just a bit because we now have female representation here and there..... because of such gender policies which align with the country constitution they have given us a chance to be seen and heard.

The above data reveals how female academics perceive the introduction of gender policies in the workplace. It may be assumed there are no policies specifically meant for female academics in University X. However, the AA policy that the FGP1 spoke about is undoubtedly a written down rule within University X policies as observed in the document analysis. It plainly states that the university is responsible for AA and other measures to overcome obstructions and ensure advancement of designated groups.

4.11.2.1 *Gender policies and career development of female academics in Universities*

The question on knowledge about the policies that have been put in place to promote career development of female academics revealed different answers from University Y as compared to University X. All the participants concisely reinforced that there was a gender policy meant for female academics only in their University, which tackled how female academics can be treated and are supported. The researcher also asked them if they felt such a policy was a good foundation for their career growth. The participants said the policy had created positive results for the girl child and professional women and it was crucial that they recognise its importance in putting them on the map:

P6 articulated:

They do play a good role and foundation and it is our duty to ensure that we do not abuse such policies but use them as a way of developing our careers.

P7 voiced:

We now have a number of female academics representing us in different forum because of these policies.

P8 pronounced that although the policies were a good foundation, what was lacking were builders to raise that foundation to reach roof level in their career:

The gender policy is a good foundation, especially the one we have here, but I think we need more mentors, role models for the junior academics staff members and female students so that they can scaffold them as they grow in our careers.

P9 verbalised:

This policy is a good foundation for career development yes there are still a lot of loop holes that need to be filled in if we are to develop but the fact that the University came up with such an idea to have a gender policy at our University shows that they have realised that we need help and their support.

P10 added:

Oh yes! They are making us to be recognised here and there (but not by all), a level playing ground is being created here though It will take some time because the barriers we have here are not going to vanish overnight.... But the male academics have questioned why this policy is for us only and they totally forget that we have been disadvantaged for a very long time and this is one way of redressing the past imbalances in IHL.

The FGP2, on the other hand, was also in support of what was elucidated by senior academics in both universities. They stated that besides the AA, there was a policy that was strictly meant for female academics and students in their institution. They expounded:

There is the AA which is a good stepping stone for women because it has helped to shape the career development of some of the professional women out there..... Here we do have a policy named Gender at Y University and it is for female academics and female students only and it specifically targets the issues that we encounter in this institution such as discrimination, it tries to shape our careers and that of female academics but hen funding always comes into play, without funding there is no progress that we can make.

From the foregoing sentiments, one may submit that in terms of the available policies, participants in University Y are very much aware of the policies that have been put down by their institution which have also invigorated their career. However, the issue of lack of funding is making their progress slow. The participants also augmented that female academics still have to prove that they can still progress with or without the policies. The following are FGP2 remarks relating to this issue of the policies:

Yes, they are a good foundation because in an attempt to eradicate the inequalities in the education system and the society especially at IHL, they have in the process opened numerous opportunities for the girl child.....but it is important that we continue to work hard can and show that we are capable to achieve and grow in our career with or without the gender policies.

It could be established from the information gathered here that participants in University Y as compared to University Y were well aware of some of the positive steps that their university has taken in an attempt to put them on the map through gender policies.

4.11.3 Faculty and departmental training courses for female academics - Serving Lunch before Breakfast?

Information on whether the department or faculty had any training courses meant for PSDPs female academics was also solicited from the participants. This was intended to see, partly, if the departmental heads, faculty deans and managers were also trying to come up with strategies that would boost the career development of female academics within their faculties. Participants P1, P3 and P5 in University X stated that they had to rely on the training workshops that were organised by the university only as their departments and faculties seemed to be silent in that area. Their sentiments were echoed by all the senior female academics in University Y who also argued that there was no training courses at departmental or faculty level. The participants from University X responded respectively:

P1 emphasised:

I will go back and say we are thrown to the deep end, no training or courses are offered at faculty or departmental level..... it is up to you as an individual to see how you can do it.... Training courses that are there are offered by the University to all members of staff.....it would be good to have our own training sessions because our needs and developmental goals and even the curricula is different from other faculties and even departments within our own faculty.

P3 repeated:

We do not have training at faculty or departmental level, if there is training that is done it would have been arranged by the university for all staff members... but anything specifically for the faculty or department there is nothing.

P5 was also in agreement and stated:

There is nothing of that sort, it's funny though because one would think as a department we are supposed to train each other on how to research, publish without having to wait for the workshops that the University offers to us because such course only cater for a certain number of academics and most of the times we are unable to attend.

All the senior female academics in University Y (P6, P7, P8, P9 and P10) said there were no training courses at departmental or faculty level

In University X and University Y, both junior female academics FGP1 and FGP2 also added that lack of training offered by their specific departments or faculties was causing problems because the University was not meeting all their needs as department and faculties differ. FGP1 stated:

There are no training courses offered by our faculty or department, the only workshops that we get to attend are organised by the university in and out t of the campus.

The FGP1 respondents colourfully stated the lack of co-ordination by the university from department to faculty to top managements and stated:

Though we have attended the courses offered by the University, the problem is that this University serves "lunch before breakfast", because they do not consider our unique differences or area of specialisation from our departments and faculties, we may be from the same faculty but have different specifications with regard to courses we teach, I would think our department heads and faculty deans are also failing us because the office in charge of training cannot guess what we need training on unless they have been told by our departments.

Participants in University Y stated that they did have departmental training but it had nothing to do with how they can be better academics, but the trainings were on how to capture end of semester marks for the students. Below is the extract from the FGP2:

It's a pity we do not have any departmental training that look at how we can be better academics we get training on how to capture end of year marks for the students and this is only if a new system has been introduced, we do have training workshop offered by the university but not always and training from NGO and these are not compulsory, it is usually an open invitation and they normally require a specific number.

The above responses raise questions as to whether the faculties and departments really know the needs of the academics. Generally, it can be said the participants seem to indicate their disappointment that the departments prefer to wait for the university to arrange everything that concerns their career enhancement through PSDPs. On the other hand, one of the participants stated that they had training sessions in the department and faculty:

P2 explained:

Oh we do have training courses here at departmental and faculty level.....mostly we send our request to the Teaching and Learning Centre (TLC) and we state what our requirements are and then we make arrangements when the staff members can attend in batches so that no-one misses out".

It is evident that there are some departments and faculties that do not rely solely on the PSDPs that are organised by the University, but they try to identify and put the needs of their academics into consideration. Faculties should make an effort to have their own training workshops that are specifically designed for the needs of their members of staff, lest they become unaware of the needs of their staff members. The researcher recognised that there is a huge gap between learning as a student and learning as an academic. Therefore, it is important that the PSDPs support offered to the academics also meet their needs and that of their clientele (students). Generally, it can be said that the participants were disappointed that departments preferred to wait for the university to arrange everything that concerned their career enhancement.

4.11.3.1 *Enhancing career development of female academics through PSDPs*

Most of the participants highlighted that there were departmental or faculty training workshops. Therefore, the researcher asked them if they had been able to attend those workshops. The researcher also asked how the workshops had helped them as female academics to develop their careers. The majority of the participants revealed that they had attended workshops. The following comments from P2, P3, P4 and P5 indicate how the academics were grateful they got a chance to attend but were not satisfied with the length of the workshops and knowledge retention after the workshop and time spent on the workshops:

P1 commented that limited time was spoiling the efforts being made by the University to develop their career:

Yes some I did manage to attend but the time was limited, time needs to be extended because the information that we gain from these workshops goes a long way in assisting us to work and be better academics, but I will come back to knowledge retention. if we share information we will be at par and there will be uniformity in what we do as a department.

P2 was of the opinion that:

I have attended the PSDPs here but there are so repetitive its boring otherwise most of the opportunities that I had of progressing through my career are those PSDPs organised by private companies.

P3 was in agreement with the issue of limited planning and time and said:

Yes over the years I have been able to attend some workshops on research writing and publication, these were meant for everyone in the university, but they really helped me as an individual..... there was also a course on supervising which I liked very much but it was only for 3 hours yet we supervise for over two years the same students..... time for these is very limited.

P4 also reiterated :

PSDPs yes I have attended, but there was one course that I wanted to do so badly, the assessor evaluation course but the time was so short and we did

not gain much, we did not even get the certificates because we were unable to create the required portfolio and most of us did not finish the course, it was a very good course but I feel it was a waste of money, time and effort.

P5 stated:

Though I must applaud the university for a workshop on plagiarism which we all know is making waves within academia, I must say I was disappointed that there is even a policy on plagiarism which as academics we did not know about, which shows that the University is not marketing their policies that are available for the academics, they are hidden, we are not informed about them.

In University Y, the participants also said that they had attended workshops as their colleagues in University X, but they added that there was need for specialised personnel to conduct such training workshops

P6 articulated:

Yes I have attended a lot of courses in and out of the university and they have made me realise the need for gender equity (that's when I thought of retreats for female only to try and boost our careers) because the female academics out there are just as clever.

P7 also expounded and said:

Yes I have had the chance to attend numerous workshops especially on teaching and learning and they were an eye opener because I did not have a good background on that.

P8 explained:

With the number of years I have spent in academia I have attended so many courses and each and every one of them helped in its own way and some were just refresher courses on teaching and learning and research, but the university needs to bring specialist from outside from time to time.

P10 noted that repetition of workshops must be avoided because staff were not gaining much from such practices:

Yes I have attended the workshops but as I stated earlier I really can't say some of the workshops are beneficial because they present things that we already know, we need new knowledge... the university must send qualified personnel to conduct the workshops.

It emerged that all the participants from the Universities X and Y had managed to attend the PSDPs given by their University to develop their careers over the years, however, their challenges and expectations from the University were varied. Besides that, most of the participants had proof, of the different professional courses that they had attended such as certificates of attendance, reading material and even forthcoming PSDPs organised by the university in their offices. Therefore, the perception that female academics feel they are not fully benefitting from PSDPs being offered in Universities may seem a bit absurd taking into consideration that the university policies also state PSDPs offered are totally dependent on affordability and financial sustainability of the institution.

4.11.4 Funding of Professional Staff Development Programmes

The study also sought the views of the female academics on funding of professional staff development programmes. The participants from University X articulated that there was too much red tape on issues of funding which at the end one was not guaranteed if they would even get the money for travelling. In University Y the participants emphasised that the lack of funding for PSDP was a serious challenge. The following extracts are from University X.

P1 opined:

Getting funding here is hectic, you have to make numerous follow-up and the forms that we have to fill in and do the calculations on our own are just too much

P2 also added:

The opportunities to travel to conferences and seminars are there, but you can apply and the application does not go through and there are just too many protocols to be followed when one needs money for research.

P3 echoed the above and said:

Applying to attend PSDP does not mean you will get the money because in the end you can be told you cannot go because of funding or the forms have been delayed in one office or another.

Lastly P5 asserted that:

A stable financial institution will definitely help its academics to grow without any sanctions, but here it is different, funding is not only inadequate but the whole process of requesting for funding is just too much.

FGP1, representing University X, noted that for the University to be able to give its academics excellent, efficient and effective PSDPs, adequate funding is a prerequisite. FGP1 felt that though there was funding it was not enough and they felt that at times there was a lack of transparency with regard to funding which made the whole process questionable. Moreover, one had to make numerous follow ups before anything could materialise. FGP1 posited:

Our funding is better than other institutions but the problem is that there is too much red tape and a narrow mind-set such that to go to a workshop you have to make countless follow up before you can make a break through and at times you end up being told to use your own money and claim upon return..... and if you don't have the money it means you can't go to the seminar or conference.

A key finding was that both universities appeared to have problem when it came to funding their academics. It may be inferred that the state of affairs in University X is much better as academics tend to be refunded their money. However, in University Y, the financial situation was in such a calamitous position that at times the academics were not refunded their money at all. In the end it tended to be an individual choice whether to attend or seminar or conference or not. FGP2 stated

Funding is very limited here we end up using our own monies which we are not refunded..... Funds need to be outsourced but then again it is not new that our country is financially strapped.

Career development of academics contributes immensely to their intellectual growth and that of the students they teach. Universities should strive to have adequate and readily available funding. As such, capacity building and promotion of an intellectual culture can be enhanced among academics through PSDPs. For instance, policies at University X state that one of its main principles is providing adequate resources, but, on condition of affordability and sustainability. However, in University Y the TTS alludes to the facts that it strives to provide sufficient degree of economic security to make the academic profession more attractive to men and women. It is clearly visible from the foregoing comments that the female academics view lack adequate funding as a stop sign to their career development. It may be concluded that the availability of funds and identification of needs will help in career development of these female academics.

4.11.5 Needs analysis for professional staff development programmes for female academics

Needs analysis and PSDPs need to be integrated if training programmes and workshops offered to the academics can be improved. Thus, the function of the needs analysis is to ensure that the proper initiatives with regard to PSDPs of the institution are set and positive decisions are made in line with the programmes that will be offered and the availability of adequate funds. Thus, the researcher sought answers on what advice the participants could give to the university in planning the PSDPs. The senior female academics from University X argued that the university must know its clientele well when they offer courses. Furthermore, they emphasised that they should collaborate with other leading universities to see where they can improve the PSDPs currently available. This is illustrated by P1 and P2 from University X who made the following comments in relation to this:

P1 opined:

The university must consult with us, they cannot just draw up on a programme or development and policies for its academics without knowing whom they are going to serve, they must use people centred techniques..... they know the Batho Pele principles of this country that you must first consult and say that this is how we want to do it?, what is your intake or view on this? Otherwise

they will always give us programmes that do not meet our needs fully..... A thorough consultation is needed.

P2 added and said that learning from other institutions was not a bad idea at all. These are her views:

Our University should look at the leading institutions on what they do, what are their best practices on PSDPs. There are role models Universities who excel in such things and they need to find out how they do it and learn from them.... The University has to realise that there are some areas that they need to mentored by other leading institutions if we are to grow as female academics and if the university is to grow as well..... If they do that, then maybe they will also realise the importance of role modelling, networking and mentorship of female academics within this university.

P8 from University Y echoed the same sentiments as P2 in University X:

It is important that the university goes out there and sees what other Universities are doing, such that when they plan PSDPs they strive to come up with programmes that will put us at same level with other academics from other Universities.

The implication here is that there is no University or academic that can survive without effective and efficient capacity building PSDPs and the support of each other. This is the reason why some universities have sister or brother universities that they share ideas with on how they can help their academics and even students perform better.

4.11.5.1 Creating capacity building programmes for female academics

The senior female academics in University Y were also asked to state what advice they would give to their University in planning professional staff development programmes for academics in Universities. The senior female academics mentioned that when planning the University should have academics in mind and of course the issue of funding was once again over-emphasised:

P6 opined:

Well I believe it is not the University's fault but more funds need to be sourced out so that more PSDPs can be offered, they also have to come up with programmes that meet the different levels of the academics experiences and expertise in academia.

P10 echoed the above participant and stated:

Resources need to be sought as this will attract the right people to give us professional courses because we cannot be teaching each other every time, we also need those programmes from outside that will develop us from where we are, that way we can know what is taking place”.

P9 reinforced and stated the following:

When we attend the PSDPs especially within the institution they should be able to develop us from one stage to another, we need capacity building programmes specifically meant for the different needs of academics.

P7 concluded for her colleagues and pronounced:

There should be a liaison between the department and the faculties, which I believe is currently missing, so that the workshop that are offered are not seen by academics as a waste of time when they attend. Therefore it is important that such programmes are tailored to the needs of the academics, what is good for education is not good for applied science..... That is why we often run into problems because the system that is in place where put up when the University was just starting with a few faculties, so the old system of running the University must go, the one size fits all program does not work at all now that the University has expanded.

The FGP1, from University X posited that the University should promote capacity building programmes which includes mentoring and coaching classes in black and white and these should be accompanied by a strong university support system:

The success of any PSDP requires intensive planning and this involves a lot of stakeholders, the planners and those that the programme is being planned

for..... there should be tailor made programmes for academics and mentoring and coaching classes on career development must be formalised..... we need the encouragement, while we do our part the University must also meet us halfway by providing an intact training development support system.

The responses from FGP2 were also informative because they also illuminated some issues which other junior and senior academics had not talked about. They commented that transparency was pivotal in PSDP and it was vital that the Universities use adequate communication channels to inform the academics of forthcoming PSDPs. The following citation emerged from the FGP2:

The training programmes being offered must be transparent and they should look into the matter of having mentors for us as junior female academics as this will help us to develop our careers..... they should use alternative communication channels because the internet is always down most of time and this makes us to get stale news at times.

Transparency and adequate communication systems should be used to inform academics of training courses that are available so that they can plan beforehand.

4.11.6 Advice to the future generation of female academics in Universities

The respondents of both Universities expressed through their various narratives the joys, the pains, challenges and the opportunities that they have encountered as senior and junior academics. Throughout the study there were similarities and differences as to how they wished to see the changes in academia for female academics being implemented. On a lighter note, and as a parting shot, the researcher asked the senior and the junior female academics from both Universities under study if they had any advice for those ladies who wished to be female academics in the future. Responses from both universities are presented verbatim below:

P1 commented:

They must do their research before they embark on this difficult journey.... Find out what is expected of you in the University and get advice on how to develop your career!.

P2 advised:

Be prepared to work hard and say goodbye to a social life and hello to a life of isolation.... It all boils down to being prepared all the times and knowing you can do it!.

P3 opined:

Don't think like a women telling yourself there are things for men and women, we are all the same, have your career goals set and go after them.

P4 articulated:

Walk with your eyes and ears open all the time, look for and hear about the opportunities to better your career, you have to make things happen, the sky is the limit!

P5 biblically said:

Tell yourself it's all about providence and you shall conquer.

P6 advised:

Don't come to the University because you think it pays well; come because you love what you do..... Don't come to sit from 8am to 4pm and walk away. Being a lecturer is a 24 hour job... it is not just about talking in class and going home at the end of the day..... You have to work triple hard.

P7also stated:

Perseverance and stamina is the key and one really needs lots of it!.

P8 said:

Work hard and be committed because the University is the place where you can influence your own career development.

P9 stated

You have to learn to motivate yourself, it has to come from you, and you have to think positively all the time.

P10 commented:

Tell yourself you are equally good as everyone, because it is only you who can liberate yourself and no-one else.... But be prepared to work hard, be committed and whatever stage you are it is just the beginning of your career growth.

FGP1 and FGP2 also added

FGP1 advised:

The academic world is not easy as one has to be prepared to go an extra mile every time so as to develop, it is the survival of the fittest and one has to be alert and assertive all the times, no matter how small the opportunities presented to you are, take time to use them wisely.

and FGP2 echoed

Make hay while the sun still shines, work hard, do everything and do it to finish..... it is not about being emotional but it's about us as female academics working together...take time to look at the pros and cons to avoid future frustration, set your goals and strive to achieve them by working an extra mile every day.

4.12 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The foregoing data presentation has unveiled and provided a insight on the career development of female academics in Universities X and Y. The biographical data presented here indicated that all the female academics were qualified to lecture in IHL although some had been with the same qualification for a long time, thus delaying their career development.

The participants from both Universities unanimously agreed that there was need to urgently address issues of male dominance, mentoring, networking and role modelling, adequate funding, teaching workloads, capacity building programmes, and female solidarity. They emphasised that all these factors were pivotal in helping them to realise their career mobility within the academia. The participants also revealed that receiving psychological support and sharing of family responsibilities at societal level from family and spouses was also vital.

The next chapter discusses the main findings.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The study set out to investigate female academics' perceptions of their career development in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. The data presentation, interpretation and analysis revealed that there are more challenges that hinder the career development of senior and junior female academics than positive opportunities for their career mobility. Although the research findings of this comparative study may appear to be similar with what has been alluded to by other scholars in literature regionally and internationally, this study illuminates specifically career trajectories of senior and junior female academics in selected universities.

In addition, the objective of previous chapter was to synthesize the findings on the career development of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. In order to accomplish this intention, four main research questions were formulated to guide the study. Chapter 5 provides a discussion of the findings as per the objectives stated earlier namely:

- to investigate the female academics perceptions and experiences regarding their career development in Universities of South Africa and Zimbabwe
- to find out factors that are perceived by female academics as barriers to their career development
- to identify the strategies that can be used by female academics to overcome barriers to their career development
- to reveal the professional support that female academics perceive as necessary for their career development

The above mentioned objectives guided the present discussion.

5.2 Experiences of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities

5.2.1 Career Choice in a University

The findings of the study illuminated that the career choice of senior and junior female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities was influenced by family background and the environment in which they grew up. It emerged that they chose to be academics because in the past the girl child was expected to be either a teacher, nurse or secretary. The findings of the present study are commensurate with those of Eagly, (2009) that socialisation allows for transmission of culture from generation to generation and children mirror themselves in the characteristics and roles that they see among people surrounding them. Tetty (2009) also says gender roles, cultural beliefs and norms influence women's advances in professional spheres as they are steered to certain professions that are deemed fit for their careers at an early age. Similarly, the findings of this study also buttresses the observations made in a recent study in Zimbabwe by Mandizvidza (2013) that family is the primary foundation where much of the social constructions of what is expected between a boy and a girl take place. Thus, it may be implied that parental beliefs are influential to the career path of girl children because they are modelled to take subservient roles within the community. Therefore, a societal attitude towards gender equality and the prevalence of gender stereotyping affects the career choice of the girl child

However, the theoretical framework used in this study is at variance with the foregoing views because it supports that humans are of equal status and should be treated equally and opportunities available (career choices) should be transparent to all irrespective of gender. Although Coleman (2003) argue that teaching has always been highly dominated by females, the researcher opines that it is important for female academics to be given the platform to choose their own careers so that the old values, norms and beliefs, as highlighted by Bronstein (2001) which lead to a vicious cycle of gender inequality can be broken.

5.2.2 Graduate employment in Universities

Issues of graduate unemployment and under-employment is a thorn in the flesh for many developing countries (Arinyermi, Ofen and IKuenomore, 2012). It was established in the findings of the study that junior academics in University X stated that the universities had taken it upon themselves to employ their own students soon after graduation as a way of curbing graduate unemployment and increasing the number of future academics. These research findings conform with observations made by Tetty (2009) that Universities are striving to make sure that female academics are well represented within the academia by employing and mentoring them to pursue academic careers.

It was also revealed by the participants that though academia was not their choice, graduate employment by their university came as a relief because of the full job market which saw a number of graduates roaming the streets in search of jobs. According to the City Press (June 2012) a degree or diploma in South Africa is no longer attractive as the youth of South Africa are struggling to find jobs. The Centre for Development and Enterprises (CDE) (2013) posits that though the number of degree holders in South Africa grew from 462 000 in 1995 to 1.1 million in 2011, few with University degrees are unemployed standing at just under 5% in 2011. This means that graduate employment is being taken seriously by South African Universities and is used as a strategy to curb unemployment. Thus, a degree is still considered as a significant factor when hiring future academics as Universities continue to search for skilled workers to enhance teaching and learning in Universities.

5.2.3 Intellectual growth and autonomy in Universities

The study also found out that the participants liked being in academia because of its flexibility and potential to promote intellectual growth and sharing of information. It also emerged that the participants felt that being in academia gave them a chance to enhance their creativity and innovativeness as female academics. In this sense, Ismail and Rasdi (2007) maintain that intellectual growth in academia is vital because it refers to the fact that academics know how to work smart to further their careers.

A closer look at the participant responses shows that sharing knowledge and intellectual growth in universities is a critical component of career and organisational growth. However, Mama (2003) and Mama and Barma (2007) explain that knowledge sharing and intellectual growth for female academics in Universities is negatively affected. They argue that African Universities (South Africa and Zimbabwean included) continue to be largely patriarchal such that intellectual growth and contributions made by the female academics continue to be demoted to the peripherals and ignored. Moreover, the results obtained in this study reveal similarities with a previous South African study done by Mabokela (2002) as discussed in Chapter 2.

Although the findings of the study also show that female academics value knowledge sharing for the enhancement of scholarly knowledge and information, Mama (2003) disputes these sentiments and concedes that most scholars in academia work in isolation with little chance to collaborate and think collectively. This scholar further posits that the global patterns negatively impact intellectual growth and knowledge sharing among academics. Therefore, it is vital for locally grounded efforts in South African and Zimbabwean Universities be made so as to sustain and strengthen liberatory scholarship. According to Harding (1998), individuals in organisations do not like to share their knowledge freely. It may be inferred that transparency among female academics in Universities is scarce due to the masculine forms and values that exist in academia (Ismail and Rasdi, 2007). Thus the theoretical framework used in this study challenges such masculine forms and values in a bid to promote the voice of the female academics within the education system and the society as a whole.

Regardless of the foregoing comments, Abdi (2006) in Mapolisa and Chirimuuta (2012) posit that individuals value intellectual growth in Universities because it contributes to social-cultural and community based advancement. Further to this argument, UNICEF (2000) states that intellectual growth and knowledge sharing among women (in and out of the academia) enhances their self-efficacy individually and collectively. This means that career development in academia can only be realised through intellectual growth and knowledge sharing because they are the key cornerstones in any IHL.

On the other hand, issues related to academic freedom and flexibility in academia are important (Sall, 2000). The study further disclosed that some of the senior and junior academics value academic freedom and flexibility in universities because they felt it gave them a fair playing ground to articulate their feelings and ideas. In addition, it gives them the chance to showcase their competences as they endeavour to develop their careers. Similarly, Ismail and Rasdi (2007) comments that flexible boundaries within the academia lend to academic and intellectual freedom. In the same wave length, the theoretical framework used in this study also supports academic autonomy and challenges the contemporary manifestations of historically rooted patterns of subordination and oppression that do not advocate for a boundary less environment for female academics to pursue information.

Nonetheless, Jones, Galvin and Woodhouse (2000) state that though there is so much flexibility and autonomy offered within Universities, literature is scant on the positive comments of female academics working in universities. In this sense, flexibility in academia tend to be overshadowed by the perceived excessive workloads, lack of permanent contracts and lots of time spent on administrative tasks. On the other hand,, Hakim (2006) in the literature review insists that academic life offers flexibility and freedom that is beyond most sectors wildest dreams. Ward and Wolf-Wendell (2004) also highlighted in the review of related literature that their participants' responses had commonalities with the participants in both Universities under study. They said that academic work was autonomous and flexible and allowed them to be their own bosses.

The Kampala Declaration of 1990 further enlarges our understanding of the research findings by stating that academic freedom and flexibility is the freedom of a member of the academic community individually or collectively. This is through pursuit, development and transmission of knowledge by research, discussion, study, documentation, production, and creation of knowledge through teaching and learning so that career development can be achieved. So, without freedom and flexibility in universities, intellectual growth, knowledge attainment and sharing and career development cannot be achieved by female academics. Therefore, for academic freedom to be enhanced in universities, academics should embrace the idea and accept the need to encourage openness and accountability to each other and the society in general.

5.2.4 Promoting female representation in Universities and mending the leaking pipeline

In the wide range of interviews with senior academics in both Universities under study, it was established that transformation in Universities could only be attained through adequate representation of female academics and professoriates and PhDs especially in the higher echelons of Universities. These outcomes resonate with Beoku-Betts (2005) who states that female academics do not perform well in universities as compared to male academics such that in most IHL worldwide they comprise less than 1/3 of University faculty and they are severely under-represented in the higher echelons of universities.

Sadly though, the results showed that the views of junior academics in University X on attaining a PhD or increasing their representation in academia was at variance with those of their seniors in Universities X and Y. They explained that their wish was to exit academia and pursue other careers since the university was failing to meet their needs which could help to develop their careers. These research findings adhere to a study done by Beoku-Betts (2005) which concluded that while women are being hired, they tend to drop out of the career pipe at a point when they should be experiencing career mobility. Regardless of research advocating that the lower representation of female academics is not a new phenomenon (Baker, 2008), the research findings revealed that junior academics in University X use the university as a stepping stone to exit academia for better opportunities.

Kufakunesu, Ganga and Chinyoka, (2012) support the above scholars and report that most female academics cherish the dream of using their higher education qualifications to seek employment in other organisations apart from the education fraternity. This means that the plight of female academics in academia requires numerous points of intervention. This also implies that a comfortable professional environment is needed if female academics profession are to be respected and appreciated. This can make a huge difference and thwart the leaking pipeline one of the Universities under study is experiencing.

Findings similar to the above are also cited by Chelser et al (2010) who found out that the un-conducive working climate at departmental, faculty and university level were the major reasons why female academics continued to be under-represented in

universities. The leaking pipeline is still a ubiquitous and omnipresent problem. On the same issue, it was also disclosed that the number of female professors in both Universities under study was very disappointing. Heilman (2009) state that the flimsy presence of female academics in universities especially at professoriate level is at variance with the liberal feminist theory which supports a vision of a feminised future in universities with a number of female academics being in leadership positions.

On the other hand, the findings of the study also showed that not all junior academics from University X wanted to exit academia prematurely. The participants revealed that career development was possible. One of the reasons for this was that they saw the career trajectory of their senior academics. Their wish was to be exemplary and show that career mobility in universities could be achieved by female academics. . The researcher opines that the findings of the study resonate with what was discovered by Harding (1998) that the presence of a significant number of female academics in universities increases the legitimacy and value of their work in the public perception. This is also similar to what was cited in a recent study by Bhana and Pillay (2012) that the number of female academics in any IHL has a direct impact on the success of their career development and influence on female students who may wish to be future academics.

In addition, female representation in Universities differs and cuts across disciplines and institutions (Deem and Brehony, 2005). The researcher found out that these scholars comments are in line with what was revealed by junior academics in University Y as compared to University X. They highlighted that what impeded their career mobility and under-representation was male dominance in their university. They added that the formation of their University was initially science oriented and hence became male dominated because there were a few female lecturers with a science background. This means that future female academics and those already in the system may find the environment and culture alienating and difficult to transverse and have to be prepared for hurdles they may encounter. But, at the same time, future female academics need to be supported by crestring equity of opportunities and outcomes if they are to remain for extended periods in universities (Chesler et al, 2010).

However, Ferraro (2004) contradicts the finding that female academics continue to be under represented. He posits that female representation is increasing in leaps and bounds because labour, low salaries and problems in tenure ship is now so casualized such that more male academics are exiting the academia. Thus, in the process they are creating more opportunities and opening new doors for female academics. This may mean that female academics in both universities under research also need to enhance their individual capabilities if they are to realise career growth. It may also depend on whether the female academics are also interested and willing to remain in the academia or not.

Furthermore, the study established that a lucid philosophy of increasing the number of female representation in the higher echelons of the university was attaining a PhD. Thus, the quality of any IHL system is determined not only by the teaching staff in it but also their qualifications. Female academics who exit the system during and after the attainment of their PhD represent a significant financial and intellectual loss to IHL and decrease the number of female academics in the universities. Though junior female academic in University X highlighted exiting the academia which will increase under representation of female academics and promote male domination, the findings of the study clearly show that it is the opposite with junior academics in University Y.

The outcomes of the study further show that a decree given to the Zimbabwean academics that they have to attain PhD can further increase the under-representation of female academics as some may exit academia after failing to meet the requirement. In her study Geber (2000) is in line with the above and articulates that few female academics are able to get their PhD at a stipulated time frame or they exit academia without finishing their PhD. Thus, in comparison with University X, the researcher noted that female academics in University Y are under pressure to meet the mandate because of the massive brain drain that the country experienced, leaving them with depleted numbers of PhD holders and professors. Moreover, many countries, regionally and internationally, are increasing the number of academics with PhDs as they are likely to be a potential pool of next generation academics. This means that the mounting pressure that academics in the Zimbabwean context are facing may be frustrating as they appear to be in a “catch 22” situation.

Moreover, lack of funding as indicated in the research findings hindered junior academics from progress to get their PhDs. Tetty's (2009) findings are in line with the findings of the current study that many IHL are incapable of training their staff members because of lack of funds, brain drain and political instability. Although a comparisons of both Universities show commonalities in the number of female academics with PhDs, each with 40%, in the background of the study it was highlighted that 1274 PhD graduates were from South Africa and the remaining 143 (0.6%) were from other developing countries (Zimbabwe included). Therefore, the government of Zimbabwe may be using these statistics to develop academics and improve teaching and learning in their Universities. Attaining a PhD is a mammoth task for female academics because of imbalances in workloads; lack of research expertise and work and family issues as highlighted in the reviewed literature. Coronel et al, (2010) posits that for female academics the doctoral pipeline is particularly important if their representation is to increase. It may be implied that this may be the opposite for female academics in Zimbabwe as they may find themselves exiting academia prematurely should they fail to produce the results in the next two years.

5.2.5 Formalising mentoring in the 21st century University

The study also sought to find out from the junior and senior female academics in both Universities under study if they had been mentored. Mentoring is powerful interpersonal exchange between an experienced senior associate and a less experienced junior associate whereby the senior guides, advises and supports and counsels the junior colleague on developing their career (Monseratt et al, 2009). Generally, academics in universities are assumed to acquire so much information when they are mentored. However, the findings of the research were that the majority of the female academics from both universities under study were not mentored. This was somewhat at variance with the documents that the researcher analysed in both universities which stated that every academic had the right to be mentored immediately they begin working in an institution.

According to Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005) career development in universities can be achieved through professional guidance in the form of mentoring. But the findings of the research show that participants were expected to assimilate the existing culture of their universities without being given any guidance by those

already in the system. These findings concur with what research has found that mentoring and role modelling should be used as a way of welcoming new academics into universities and also to acculturate them with the rules and regulations of the university (Mama and Barma, 2007).

It also emerged from the junior academics in University X that though they had senior female academics who could be mentors and role models, no help was rendered to them. These findings match Okanlawon, Powell cited by Stone and Coetzee (2005) that senior female academics who occupy key positions did not mentor their juniors. Thus, these differences diminish the chances of junior academics progressing in their career in academia. This implies that there is dearth of senior academics who are ready to formulate a relationship with junior academics as a way of developing their careers and carrying out the additional function of being change agents in IHL.

The above is contradictory to what Schulze (2009) concluded in a later study. She points out that lack of mentoring and role modelling of junior academics by their seniors can also be attributed to lack of sufficient and uninterrupted time between junior and senior female academics due to high work loads of teaching and administrative work in universities. This means that this comparative study reveals that the lack of mentoring is not a new phenomenon in Universities X and Y. Thus what juniors academics are experiencing is the same as what other academics in developed and developing countries are experiencing. The participants revealed that the issue of mentoring was pushed to the edge and yet they were expected to perform exceptionally well in teaching very large classes, research and community engagement.

The above findings demonstrate a link with an earlier study by Tetty (2009) which concluded that academics without mentors do not view career development as possible in a working environment where contentment is lacking. A clear role definition and understanding of the parties involved such as the university leadership, senior academics and junior academics is crucial for positive contribution in role modelling, mentoring and networking in universities. Thus, the participants' responses reveal that they view mentoring as a foundation for their career

development which unfortunately appears to be non-existent in both Universities X and Y.

While mentoring is meant to bring about positive changes in institutions of higher learning (Geber and Nyanjom, 2009), the junior participants in University Y context further attested that what was most irking to them was that what they read as theory in their university policies which did not resonate with what they were exposed to. These qualitative findings buttress the above scholars' views that universities must be fully aware of the disjuncture between policy and practice so that the problems faced by female academics do not continue.

On the other hand, according to the findings of the study, a minority of senior and junior academics in both Universities X and Y had been mentored. These participants had glowing remarks about how this had made them better academics because their mentors (both male and female) had exposed them to the academic world and showed them how to reach their fullest potential. These findings resonate with the liberal feminist theory discussed in the review of related literature that universities and academics must look beyond gender issues to ensure that both women and men get equal opportunities to develop their careers.

However, the idea that male academics can mentor females are not in line with findings by Coronel et al (2010). These scholars state that mentoring relationships between male and female academics are difficult to manage and the benefits for female academics tended to be very slim. Thus, the results from this study suggest that there is lack of solidarity between junior and senior female academics in both universities with regard to mentoring.

The fact that mentoring in universities under investigation is formalised on paper only and not acted upon aggravates the fear of junior academics to approach their seniors, whether male or female, for mentorship. Ideally, these findings indicate that addressing problems faced by female academics such as lack of mentorship, role modelling and networking maybe be difficult. Additionally, the university leaders of the institutions under study should take time to look at the grey areas around mentoring, role modelling and networking.

5.2.6 Teaching workloads in Universities

Undoubtedly, a key issue that was found among junior and senior female academics in both Universities was high teaching workload. The participants stated that this left them with no time to execute other responsibilities effectively and efficiently. Drawing from the above findings, Wilson (2005), also posits that the career development of female academics in universities is hindered by heavy teaching loads and large classes. Sall (2002) states that student explosion in universities has also increased workload for academics.

According to Tetty (2009), at a University in Ghana, some lecturers have up to 500 students in one session. These findings are in line with findings of the current study in which some junior and senior female academics in University X highlighted that they had between 250-600 students per session. From the findings, it is self-evident that lecturers in Universities in Africa have similar challenges of excessive workloads within the academia. This may mean that some female academics exit the academic pipeline because of too much work. Another issue that was revealed by the junior and the senior female academics in Universities X and Y was student enrolment explosion. They stated that these high numbers made it difficult for them to make any headway to develop their careers and to be fully prepared for lesson delivery because most of the time was spent on lesson preparation and marking of scripts.

These findings concur with what the research reveals that in most African Universities complaints about the workload seem to centre not on the number of modules that (female) academics are expected to teach, but on the large classes they have to contend with. Based on the above, it becomes evident that both universities under investigation have to come up with workload policies to help alleviate the burdens that are currently experienced by female. Thus, more active and open interaction between all stakeholders in the university is paramount.

Another issue revealed in the findings of the study was the changing of modules that were taught every semester. The junior female academics in University X commented that changing modules every semester was also increasing their work. Brooks (1997) states that courses that junior academics teach should not be varied in such a way that they have to continuously prepare for new courses and teaching

material as this can have a negative impact on their career development and their desire to remain in academia.

A study by Taylor (2013) showed that dissatisfaction among academics was increase of workload especially when different modules needed to be taught every semester. In this study, both the senior and the junior academics appeared to be overloaded with teaching and pastoral care. For instance, some participants in University X felt the that allocation of modules was not transparent as they believed male academics were not in the same predicament. However, Bronstein (2001)posit that the issue teaching loads between male and female academics are usually given as examples why female academics have failed to progress in their careers. It may be implied that lack of equal treatment in universities is also experienced even in allocation of workloads showing that workload allocation is gender centred and stereotypical.

However, a study done by Chipunza (2003) is at variance with the research findings and reveals that there is no difference between male and female academics work allocations. On the other hand, Subramanian (2003) showed that academics in the lower rungs of the university hierarchy tended to have more contact hours with the students as compared to their seniors. Unfortunately, existing research and this study show that the majority female academics are at lower rungs of the University hierarchy and this acts as a barrier to their career development as more workload appears to be imposed on them. The researcher refutes the above scholars' sentiments because the research findings of both universities under study shows that there is not much difference in workload allocation between senior and junior academics, as they all complained that high teaching workloads were hindering their progress in academia.

This means that since too much workload can hinder career development for both senior and junior academics in Universities X and Y, the University leadership should take notice of allocation of modules and use it as a strategic plan to get to the core of the workload problems. This implies that, they have to see how best they can reduce teaching workloads and create transparency on workload allocation. This can be used as a remedy to retain female academics because there seems to be a negative correlation between teaching, administrative loads and academic staff

retention. Authors such as Mabokela (2002) are of the opinion that workload allocation in universities is characterised by a great diversity of practice both within and between institutions. Therefore, it is imperative that formal and practical approaches have to be used to avoid discrimination in the going on undetected and unchallenged. Hence, for the purpose of this study, the researcher agrees with Bronstein (2001) that in the 21st century there should be workload models as these would promote allocation of workloads in Universities and act as career development enablers and not as career development barriers.

5.2.7 Impartiality on recruitment, promotion and appointment of female academics in Universities

Apparently, it emerged from the study that the senior academics in both Universities agreed that recruitment, promotion and appointment of female academics was even-handed. The assumption was that their Universities were transplant and were using set rules and regulations for hiring and promoting of female academics. This was also confirmed by FGP1 and FGP2 whose comments aligned with those of the senior academics. Moreover, the documents that the researcher analysed echoed non-marginalisation of female academics in the recruitment of academics.

Mugweni et al (2011), in the review of related literature, states that some IHL are promoting good practices and policies of promotion as a way of upgrading female academics in universities. The liberal feminist theory in this study also supports impartial treatment of female academics. It advocates positive recognition of their career and promotion into meaningful and equitable positions in academia through merit (Kenway and Modra, 1992). Thus, the case in point is that promotion of female academics may also largely depend on the leadership of IHLs who should give academics the same rules of the game and the same playing ground. As one of the senior participants articulated in the previous chapter “the best player wins”.

It was also revealed in the findings that despite having the qualifications, most female academics tend to be scared to apply for promotion. These findings are supported by an earlier study done by Bronstein (2001) at the University of Kenya that female academics were scared to apply for promotion because of the practices and the culture that discouraged female academics from getting into senior positions in academia. This is also similar to what Barrett and Barrett (2013) found in a recent

study that female academics are less likely to apply for positions in universities than male academics, but those who do are just as likely to succeed.

However, the above is contrary to the findings of two scholars from Zimbabwe, Chabaya et al (2009) and Makura (2012) who argue that promotion comes with many roles and responsibilities such that some of the female academics do not bother to apply for promotion fearing further alienation from their families and lack of productivity in their career development. This means that lack of confidence and self-efficacy continues to emerge as factors that hinders the career development of female academics. Nevertheless, it appears that changes in promotion, recruitment and selection criteria in some IHL in developing countries have been helpful in reducing bias towards female academics in universities. The issue of female academics being given fair and equitable chances in academia appears to be in line with the trends of globalisation and the liberalisation of policies in the education sector that have made their rights to be upheld and enshrined within the employment policy plans in universities (Aiston, 2011)

However, the findings of the study paint a picture of positive changes within academia. Interestingly, scholars still insist through extant literature that promotion of female academics is not a walk in the park. They argue that there is still impartiality on opportunities given to female academics to develop their careers through selection and recruitment in academia. For instance, Airini et al (2011) posits that discrimination against women in selection and promotion still exists in academia and continues to grow. A review of the related literature also illuminated few opportunities for the selection and promotion of female academics (Mabokela, 2002).

Interestingly, the findings from FGP1 and FGP2 disclosed that male domination and under representation of female academics in Universities made them “doubting Thomases” because most of the promotion, selection and recruitment in Universities fell in the hands of men. The researcher opines that the findings of this study lend support to Bhana and Pillay (2012) and Makombe and Geroy (2009), who purported that recruitment, selection and promotion in academia acts as a career trap which requires female academics to continuously assimilate to the new rules and regulations in the so called men’s club. This appears to be to a credible fact because in the researcher’s view, it appears most of the female academics are in the

playing ground but do not know the rules of the game when it comes to policies and promotion criteria in universities. Even if some do, they seem to lack confidence and self-assertiveness to prove the male network wrong as has been highlighted in the preceding chapters.

Regardless of the existence of policies and the fact that universities follow set rules on appointment and recruitment of female academics, a closer look at findings from University X participants shows that fair and equitable chances for promotion and career development of female academics is just window dressing and lip service. It was established from the participants' comments that academia was still fraught with politicking and this affected career development of other academics who were caught within the web as it took a long time for them to be promoted. These findings are in line with Mabokela (2002) who summed up in her study that a variety of "promotion" criteria exist among different IHL, among different departments within the same University for different individuals within the same department.

Similar to the preceding comments by the participant in University X, Stout et al (2007) observed that female academics highlighted that the process of promotion and impartiality in university can be degrading and humiliating. This means that most female academics felt short-changed, stressed and burned out because of the promotion processes. Hence, it can be deduced that there is continued marginalisation of female academics in Universities.

5.3 BARRIERS TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE ACADEMICS IN UNIVERSITIES

5.3.1 Challenging patriarchal control in Universities

It was also established in the study that one of the commonalities among the female academics' responses from the study in both Universities was the continuation of male domination . Similarly, Bhana and Pillay (2012) argued that universities are gendered institutions which entrench a gendered division of labour, gendered culture and gendered hierarchies of power. An earlier study done by Chipunza (2003), in Zimbabwe resonates with the above and posits that female (academics) in Zimbabwe are pushed into the traditional structures that preserve patriarchy and disparity in IHL.

Thus, some senior female academics in Universities X and Y stated that open discrimination and total marginalisation were the reasons male supremacy continued to go unchallenged in universities. Bhana and Pillay (2012), lend support to the findings of the current study and posited that elimination of occupational segregation by challenging male patriarchy is important if female academics are to realise career mobility. In the review of the related literature, De la Rey (1999) highlighted that patriarchal boundaries within universities need to be tested and destroyed because the academia has comfortably reproduced itself for several centuries such that a male dominated patriarchal culture has been in existence for a long time. De la Rey's sentiments are in line with one of the senior female participants in University Y who stated *"funny enough you will find that even the most basic things like official forms that have to be filled in still have 'chairman' printed on them, this is despite that female academics have been heads of departments for some time now..... Such documents should have been changed a long time ago"*.

Hence, one of the findings from Universities X and Y was that because of the unchanged status quo in Universities, female academics were not being considered for leadership positions and crucial information was being reserved by the male academics as a way of maintaining the boys network club. This may denote that male ego and lack of respect for women in Universities paves for the marginalisation of female academics. These findings are parallel with Brooks (1997) who pronounced that universities will remain an intimidating environment for female academics.

It was further disclosed by junior female academics in University X that addressing male domination in Universities was an uphill task because lack of acceptance by some male students and staff members was making it hard for them to fit into the system. In this sense (CHE, 2009), posits that understanding the gendered effect in the lives of women is fundamental if higher education is serious about addressing, monitoring and promoting equal participation of women in universities. But an earlier study done by Gephart, (1999) makes it even more transparent that fighting male dominance and female subordination in universities cannot be easily addressed. A closer look at the participants in this study show that the fighting spirit among female academics is not there. On the contrary, Brooks (1997) argues that it's not that the female academics lack the fighting spirit but the attitudes and values that are

entrenched in higher education are actually anti-female despite appearing to be gender neutral at face value. Thus, the efforts that the female academics put across to develop their careers and be recognised in academia may appear to be a drop in the ocean if the university leadership does not offer its help considering Universities have been male dominated since time immemorial.

The study also noted from the two universities being investigated that the female academics felt that despite the transformations and the gender policies in place, changes in addressing male domination in universities were not evident. However, Bhana and Pillay (2012) in South Africa refute the above findings and state that male patriarchy seems to have been addressed through gender equality and employment equity policies that have given rise to the female representation in academia. Interestingly, Chinyani (2010) also disreputes Bhansa and Pillay and states that in Zimbabwe gender equality in IHL is still a 'new baby', therefore concrete transformations are yet to be realised. Thus, it makes sense for some female academics in University Y to contend that change is just not there in their University. Therefore, it can be said that female academics have to play along the male academics tune just to survive in the university environment.

Furthermore, the results of this study show that junior female academics in University Y had the notion that challenging patriarchal control in university was a problem because of the generation gap especially between female and male academics. They argued that this made it hard for them to change some of the decisions made by very senior male academics as they expected them to respect them as their 'fathers' or elders. According to Tetty (2009), one of the gaps that African Universities need to close if African countries are to utilise their human potential is the gender gap. The above scholar concedes with the finding of the current study that such a problem has affected female academics' personal and professional relations as they fail to be on the same wave length with the senior academics. This means that without active intervention by the state and to fill in the gaps male domination will continue to propagate (HESA, 2011 and Tetty, 2009). The fact that the biographical data of University Y shows that 20% of the participants are past retirement age and 40% are nearing retirement amplifies the extent of the problem. Therefore, it may be implied that University Y needs to hire more female

academics not only in the lower positions but also in the middle and senior posts so that the generation fissure can be closed.

5.3.2 Research and Publication efforts of female academics in Universities

In this study the participants were asked which barriers had affected their publication efforts. The study revealed that there was lack of scientific training and workshops. Moreover, though the participants appeared to be keen about research too much teaching workload and administration seemed to be a barricade to their efforts. Lack of adequate training and scientific writing skills is in line Taylor (2013), who maintains that heavy emphasis on teaching and a lack of strong research background and training in an institution are the major problems that can hinder research publications. Dominico & Jones (2006) further suggests that the paucity of research inclined academics, coupled with heavy teaching loads keeps the lecturers busy such that research ends up taking last preference. These arguments are also supported in Chapter 2 - the review of related literature by Barrett and Barrett (2013) and Armenti (2004).

The participants in University X, as compared to their counterparts in University Y, further disclosed that their research and publication efforts were also derailed by the fact that their institution did not promote co-authorship between academics regardless of gender. However, most academics do not value co-authorship because it is ranked very low by some institutions with regard to promotion of academics. Interestingly, an earlier study by Baker (2008) alluded that lack of co-authorship in developing countries promoted lack of collaboration and facilitation of better quality work through exchange of ideas by academics. Therefore, it can be observed that universities under study appear to undermine the issue of knowledge sharing and creation especially among female and male academics.

It was also disclosed by the junior female academics in University X that research depended largely on the field in which an academic belonged. They added that some fields were flooded and making a breakthrough was not easy as one needed to be exceptionally outstanding not to be rejected. This means that for female academics not to be treated unfairly, their competence in research needs to be extraordinarily high especially in some disciplines that are already devalued.

Some of the senior female academics pointed commitment and passion for research was missing among female academics. In the review of related literature, it was disclosed that female academics appear not to get the chance to communicate with other academics who may be researching in the same study as theirs, as most work in isolation. Cobb-Roberts (2011), refutes the above views and states that it is not about the lack of commitment or sincerity but at times the topics that are often valued by senior academics usually do not mirror the interests of the junior academics. Hence, most of them tend to give up before they have even made an effort because their research efforts tend to be marginalised. Chitando and Mateveke (2012) opine that research in Africa can only flourish if there are sufficient researchers, both senior and junior. Unfortunately, according to SARUA (2010), one of the Zimbabwean Universities had a vacancy rate of 45% senior academics. This means that promoting research especially among junior academics in this country is difficult as there are appears to be virtually no seniors to act as role models and mentors.

Steps need to be taken by African countries and universities to create a dynamic environment which will promote assertiveness, build confidence and attract bright young academics to take up research and develop their careers so as to become the next cohort of researchers. It was further revealed from the study that the female academics were not taking advantage of the training that the universities offered because some females viewed teaching as a calling and enjoyed it more than research. These finding are in line with Hassan (2011) who disclosed that female academics are viewed as being less concerned with or as underutilizing institutional resources. However, Schwartz, (1994) is at variance with the above and states that female academics tend to be much more involved in teaching. Hence, they have less time, energy and commitment to invest in their professional development and this can lead them to be less scientifically productive as compared to male academics.

It can be noted that despite the efforts that both universities have put into training, female academics continue to lag behind in research and publication efforts because some trainings remain limited and poor. As a result, many female academics lack the basic skills of research and publishing of papers. Information from the study reveals that the answer lies within the female academic themselves to embrace research if

they are to develop regardless of lack of adequate training because it is a critical component of career mobility in universities .

On the other hand, in the current study other senior and junior participants in University Y, as compared to those from University X, felt that despite the efforts that their University was making in promoting research and publication, their efforts were hindered by severe lack of funding. The participants stated that they had to use their own resources to collect data for research papers and this had incited lack of interest among other academics. Taylor's (2013) states that central to the success of research and publication in a university, it is crucial that there is adequate and stable funding. These findings are also in line with Nieuwoudt & Wilcocks (2005) in the reviewed literature who also confirmed that lack of research outputs from female academics is due to lack of organisational and financial support.

Interestingly, Mosha (1997) argues that the problem with developing countries is not lack of funding for research but misdirection and misuse of research funds to government departments and parastatals research units. Additionally, lack of funding as cited by the participants makes it a mammoth task for female academics in the University Y context to realise career mobility. This means that, as compared to their University X counterparts, Universities Y lacks the resources to support their academic staff.

This further, implies that both government intervention and University leadership is important if academics' are to take research seriously (Kotecha, 2011) because in the hierarchy of academics values, the research and publications foci remains at the apex (Altbach, 2011). Therefore, the government of Zimbabwe needs to give research its proper place by providing adequate funding because most of the academics in the study argue that career development is through research and publications in any IHL.

5.3.3 Negotiating a balance between work, family and progressing as a female academic in the 21st century

It was found in the study that family issues affect female academics negatively in their career development. The participants revealed that cultural and societal beliefs made it hard for them to balance work and family. These findings are parallel to Bhana and Pillay (2012) who pointed out that children, husbands and gender

beliefs by society made it hard for them to progress because their lives revolved around these external factors. It was further publicized by the participants that in the decisions that the female academics made, family issues took primacy and thus many of them had lost good career opportunities because of gender insubordination especially in family and home life.

Junior academics from both Universities agreed that family issues impeded with their career development, as there were a lot of expectations especially from the parents, siblings and the extended family. Nguyen (2012) and Gaidzanwa (2005) in the review of related literature also stated that it is always the females that have to interrupt their careers by taking time off, working fewer hours or part-time and this makes them less mobile physically and socially. This implies that the female academics tend to accept the gendered beliefs as they are despite that they affect their career development for the “sake of peace” within the family .

However, one of the participants in South Africa noted that balancing work and family and career development was possible in academia as it was up to an individual to make the arrangement that best suits their individual needs. Bhana and Pillay's (2012) findings in the South African context are also commensurate with the above. They argue that some of their participants pointed out that family, motherhood, work and career development could all be managed such that one was able to experience career mobility.

Moreover, in the literature review, Monroe (2008) also concluded that some female academics did not judge balancing work and child care as relevant to career development in Universities. However, Mertens (2005), views are at variance with the above. They opine that female academics are most likely not to get married or have children because these factors interrupt their career development. In the same line of thought, Harris (2007) also revealed that some female academics in her study viewed having children in academia as an act of “academic suicide”.

Therefore, the common thread in these findings is that because of the strong societal expectations in South African and Zimbabwean contexts, female academics place their careers development as secondary and family issues take precedence. This means that for one to achieve career development, it is vital for the situation at home to be stable because the universities give an impression that they are not set up

to deal with family issues. Additionally, April et al (2007) points out that those female academics that have been able to develop their careers do so through strong family support, both domestic and extended. In this sense, Thanacoody et al (2006), also retains that employing domestic help was very helpful in balancing work and family roles.

However, responses that emanated from junior academics in University Y are inconsistent with the foregoing authors' views. As compared to junior academics in University X, their responses showed that most of them were not in favour of help from the extended family or through domestic workers due to bad experiences. Thus, despite the problems that the female academics elucidated, developing ones' career in academia is not possible with lack of adequate support especially from the home front.

On the other hand, all the senior participants in both universities under study were also in agreement that the socio- cultural expectations for female academics were hindering their career development such that at some point in their careers they had put their careers on hold because of lack of family, spousal and organisational support. It also emerged that lack of universities' day care centres made it hard for female academics to juggle between off campus day care centres and reporting for work. In this regard, De la Rey (1999), report that child care facilities for academics are in dearth. This may mean that more day care centres should be provided by Universities as they act as motivational factors and proof that universities do have the female academics concerns at heart.

Consequently, this means that the clash between the career expectations and children end up forcing some female academics to exit the academy. Though this may be a good idea, the researcher believes that for universities to provide day care centres is an uphill task as most universities already have financial problems as elucidated earlier.

On the other hand, Tamale (2004) observed that patriarchy defines women in such a manner that their full and wholesome existence is largely dependent on getting married, providing children and caring for the children. This was supported by one of the senior female academics from University X who reported that she negotiated her career development by putting the needs of her in-laws first right

from the time she got married. Similarly, another female academic from University Y stated she had nothing to show for the 22 years of being in the academia because of prioritising the family needs and putting her career on hold. Therefore, the results of this study may mean that it is the gendered philosophies that continue to locate female academics in difficult positions.

Baker (2006), refutes the above and states that the fault lies with female academics as they do not take time to be well versed with the work and policies that are available in their institution. However, during data collection and document analysis, the researcher did not come across such policies as they appeared not to be in existence in these two universities under study. This may imply that the only possible remedy for female academics in academia is to contest the communally fashioned notions and beliefs that mothers are the only ones who have to step in and take care of the family whilst their careers are relegated. The theoretical framework of this study also highlights that though female academics may have problems in trying to balance work and family and developing their careers because of male dominance, they are not spineless or inferior. Thus, they should be in a position to exercise control over their career mobility and intentions in and out of academia.

In addition, it has been established in the findings that most of the senior academics in both Universities under study and part of the junior academics from both Universities X and Y that are married lamented that being in academia had also robbed them of time with their families and children. The commonalities in the female academics' answers show how they are either forced to work extra hours or during weekends to try and strike a balance. Some disclosed that they were forced to knock off early to go and do household chores despite being in the same field with their partners. According to April et al (2007), for female academics to realise career growth and find a balance between family time and work, a lot of sacrifices have to be made. As such, Beaufort (2000) in Baker (2008) comments that educated women have lower marriage and fertility rates and higher divorce rates and report more problems with work and life balance. Bhalalusesa (2010) confirms in her study that that family and children place female academics in a situation where they end up being single, divorced or single parents. These findings clearly demonstrate that a choice has to be made by female academics. Either one forgoes the marriage institution and concentrates on their career growth or family comes first to avoid

children growing up in an environment where they lack affection, emotional and parental love. It appears that children and family are the principal factors that hinder career development of female academics. These results showed that failure to find time for career development is emerging as an emotional issue to these academics because they are individual who have families in name only without being fully participative mothers and wives.

However, it can be noted from the findings that some of the senior female academics had made a choice to do more on the work and focus less on the family. It was discovered that though they had a sense of guilt in neglecting their families they were too committed to their work and would not negotiate their jobs with other external responsibilities. These findings are supported by London (1983) in Nazemi et al (2012) who say that individuals with high career and professional commitment place more value, time, concentration on career satisfaction as compared to home.

As a result, information from the study reveals that it is not all female academics who will embrace the societal beliefs that women are meant to nurture their children and forego their career development in the process. This implies that some of the female academics present themselves as mothers by name only while they concentrate more on their careers. Hence, being an academic and a wife seem to be in conflict as an individual may be caught in between and fail to give adequate attention to all areas.

5.3.4 The importance of Family and Spousal Support for female academics working in Universities

The participants in the study stated that family and spousal support was crucial especially in terms of emotional support. A comparison with junior academics also indicates that they reiterated that family support from partners, parents and siblings was vital. These outcomes confirm the findings from previous research by Nguyen (2012). The junior academics in University X added that it was important to “involve them (family), let them know what you are dealing with at work”. These findings are similar to results reported by (Bhalalusesa, 2010, Gaidzanwa, 2005, Mabokela, 2002) that family variables such as moral support, work balance and parental support were associated with academic career advancement. This also buttresses Miler, Campbell and Morrison, (2002) who say that family and spousal support are

needed for the achievement of role related expectations that can be shared between individuals in work and family spheres.

The study also found out from one of the senior participants in University Y that without family and spousal support which she had from her husband during her PHD studies abroad, her career advancement would have been futile. Hassan (2011) argues that spousal support is needed for the career development of female academics because the spouse is depicted as inspiring and encouraging the female academic to new achievements and professional development. Similarly, studies by Gordon and Whelan-Berry (2004) also revealed that spouses provide support by being the sounding board of the wife's ideas and providing a calming effect in times of stress.

The researcher assumes that female academics that have experienced career mobility, are in management positions, or have come up with brilliant ideas that were borne out of the brainstorming done exclusively with the support of their spouses and families at home. However, the findings in the study showed that female academics in University X felt getting support from spouses was hard, especially for those who worked in the same field as their husbands. For instance, one junior academic disclosed that she had to do all the chores while her partner remained researching at campus. She stated *"I break early every day and leave him, only for him to call me to come back and collect him late at night to come home because we have one car"*.

Such findings are parallel with Gughlanga et al (2012) comparative study in the review of related literature that show that female academics continue to encounter hurdles in developing their careers because of lack of external support. These finding again support the assertions put across by Heikkinen et al (2013) that some of the participants in their study argued that lack of family and spousal support was still common, thus, instead of their aspirations and achievement being supported by their spouses, they were instead belittled. As a result, the researcher suggests that if spousal and family support is to be effective, it is important that the female academics in both universities under study learn to navigate their partner support (Ezzedeen and Ritchey, 2009).

The above assertion and the findings of this study extend to previous studies done by Makombe and Geroy (2009). They highlighted in their study how most female

professionals in Zimbabwe had adopted humbleness and continued execution of domestic duties as a way of gaining support and being given the “green light” to do their studies and pursue career mobility. Therefore, it may be inferred that these findings bring to the surface that professional females must take utmost care and consideration when choosing partners and their line of careers.

5.4 STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE ACADEMICS IN UNIVERSITIES

5.4.1 Commitment and Self- efficacy among female academics in Universities

A prevailing variable which was revealed throughout the findings of the study from both Universities was that female academics lack self-esteem, confidence and commitment to their work. As a result, they tend to retain a great deal of information to themselves and do not ask what to do with it. The researcher observed that the findings of the study lend support to a study done by Doherty and Manfredi in Nguyen,(2012) which states that female academics tend to adhere to societal norms and values and this affects their level of confidence. They end up being reluctant to come forward and parade their achievements. Bezuidenhout & Cilliers (2010) writing from a regional perspective are also consistent with the findings of the study. They state that there is low self confidence among women, particularly in the academic setting. This has caused most female academics to be pessimistic about their job performances and career mobility. This may imply that female academics, both senior and junior, under-estimate their capabilities in and out of academic circles because of their gender.

In addition, the findings of the study also revealed that lack of confidence and commitment was the reason why the majority of the female academics (senior and junior) had problems with research and publication. By and large, Leedy and Ormonds', (2005) view that non committed workers may see the academia in a negative sense and this may affect how they involve themselves in developing their career is true. Most of the junior academics in University X viewed academia in a negative light and alluded their wishes of exiting because of lack of progress instead of identifying strategies that they can use to develop their careers.

The participants also said that being confident and committed when working within the university was crucial and this is a strategy that female academics have to try

and adopt if they are to realise career mobility in a male dominated environment. Thus, it has to start with them believing that they are worthy to make a difference in academia. A recent study by Mudhovozi et al (2013) support the findings of the study and posit that lack of confidence, self-doubt and fear of failure in highly patriarchal environments affect career development of female academics. Similarly, Barrett and Barrett (2013) also support these findings and say, female academics still find it hard to be committed, assertive and confident. Therefore male academics tend to be more proactive and confident and they use this to their advantage to develop their careers and maintain the status quo in universities.

Tsoka and Mathipa (2001); Gaidzanwa (2007), Chigutai and Zafar (2006), cement the findings of this comparative study by arguing that Universities need to create a working environment that will promote and foster confidence and commitment among female academics so that they can also reach the higher echelons of the University. On the other hand, Aiston (2011) argue that female academics are confident and assertive; however they seem scared to show these attributes because they may be viewed as unruly because of displaying what society would see as masculine behaviour. This means that those female academics who try and exhibit their creativeness and innovativeness within the academia to enhance their careers are viewed as unfeminine and not subservient to the status quo. Nevertheless, the theoretical framework of the study is a point of departure because it promotes equality between males and females.

5.4.2 Female solidarity as a strategy for career development of female academics in Universities

Another important finding which emerged on the strategies that the female academics can use to develop their careers in Universities was female solidarity. However, this strategy was conspicuously missing among female academics in both Universities under study. The findings of Hakim (2004) reveal that it is not the imbalances of the past that have kept female academics in the peripheral or held them back from developing their careers, but their attitude. The participants further revealed that female academics were their own enemies, instead of promoting a collective investment on how to develop their careers; they lack that one voice to address the problems that have hindered their recognition in academic circles for a long time. For instance, an earlier study by Du ploy (2001), confirms that female

solidarity can overcome male supremacy in universities and discourage female academics from working in isolation.

Furthermore, the researcher established that collaborative-ness and collegiality among junior and the senior female academics was missing as they tended to work individually and in seclusion. Their responses showed that they were secretive about their achievements or problems and some of the female academics preferred to watch the academic life of their institution from the “terraces”. . These findings are confirmed by Derks et al (2011) who posits that the main problem with female academics is that they tend to “hide in their cocoons” or struggle frequently among themselves.

As a result, instead of strategizing through team work and creating a positive awareness among each other, they tend not to have the same visions, values and norms on how they can promote their own career development. As one participant in University X alluded “the problem is us female academics working individually, as a one man army in universities”. This clearly shows that lack of solidity does hinder career development for female academics in both universities under study. However, a perplexing observation made by the researcher is that some of the female academics, both senior and junior, appeared to be content with the existing situation such that instead of preaching oneness among themselves, they continued to tread carefully on the uneven ground in a bid not to upset the engrained and enshrined rules and regulations of the boys network club.

The study also found that lack of concerted efforts and passive participation by female academics in the universities aggravated the problems they continued to encounter. Gosling (2009) postulates that the complex contours of female relationships tend to be tense and promote unnecessary display of hostility and suspicion among them. This many mean that for the career development of female academics to take place, the university leadership has to try and intervene. Recognition must be made of the stories of female academics working in Universities. From the researcher’s point of view, this will give the university leadership, and other academics, a clear picture of the problems facing female academics.

During the data collection phase, the researcher picked one very recurring commonality among the senior and junior female academics in Universities X and Y. There was so much focus on how male domination had robbed them of their rights in universities that their own lack of solidarity did not receive adequate attention. This further implies that the pervasive belief among female academics that sharing information or workings as a team is like shooting oneself in the foot is likely to continue. This notion has to be addressed so as to promote solidarity among female academics in both universities.

The issue of lack of solidarity was also expounded on in the review of the related literature. Some scholars have argued that female academics are guilty of damaging and deregulating their own career advancement in universities. These findings may explain why some female academics have failed to make positive inroads and realise their career mobility after so many years of working in the university system. The strategy of female solidarity is missing because female academics have, to a certain extent, failed to ensure that female solidarity is deeply engrained and entrenched in the university system. Further to the preceding views, it should be highlighted that the findings of this study are at variance with the theoretical framework which says that the voice of the female academics should be a uniting force if they are to dismantle the institutional structures that have ostracised and hindered them from developing their careers.

5.4.3 Hard work and sacrifice as a principal instrument for career development of female academics with key positions in Universities

This study also sought to find out the strategies which female academics with key positions were using to continue developing their careers. It was established from the senior and junior academics in both universities that hard work and sacrifice were vital to reach the higher echelons of the university. Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004), shared the same views that key positions in universities come with a lot of responsibilities, and working hard for extra-long hours was the only remedy to survive. This means sacrificing some personal and professional issues.

Simon (1981) also in Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) also argues that through hard work comes also the art of sacrificing which should be used as a strategy in universities. This may imply that for female academics to be in key positions they

should have made decisions that were good enough for that moment but not necessarily optimal with the sole aim of developing their careers. The senior and junior academics in Universities X and Y realise that there are situations which are beyond one's control, which demand sacrifice.

However, Mabokela (2002), to a certain extent appears to question the findings of the study. She argues that although the female academics may work hard and sacrifice social lives for career development, there still lies a serious problem which needs to be addressed. She contends that female academics do not have confidence in each other such that when they are in key positions, instead of helping other female academics, they start emulating male academics. Moreover, the female academics in key positions are "forced" to work hard because they are in constant scrutiny as they have to continuously validate their abilities. .

Thus, the strategy of working hard and making sacrifices to be in a key position paints a picture that having a high powered professional life is in fact incompatible and one has to pick one over the other (Aiston, 2011). In addition, Hakim (2004) also posits, on a positive note that anyone who is talented enough and works hard will be successful regardless of the extant literature that shows that the career development of female academics is shrouded with difficulties..

On the other hand, though disappointing, an important implication which the researcher noticed was that there was no mention of mentoring as a strategy that could be used for key positions in universities. A plausible explanation for this unfortunate situation is lack of solidarity among senior and junior academics which has already been tackled in the foregoing paragraph. These findings, the researcher believes, explain why male academics refuse or are not keen to mentor female academics. This is because even with key positions at hand, female academics seem to fail to exhibit solidarity among themselves as a strategy for their career development.

5.5 PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES FOR FEMALE ACADEMICS IN UNIVERSITIES

5.5.1 Providing adequate and tailor made PSDP in South African and Zimbabwean Universities

The importance of Professional Staff Development Programmes (PSDPs) has never been greater than it is today. PSDPs ensure that the quality of teaching and learning in universities is efficient and effective (Dominico & Jones (2006). This study found that both on the job and off the job professional staff development programmes were available in both universities under study. However, in terms of the adequacy of the professional support, the participants highlighted that their Universities could still do more to ensure that their professional needs were continuously met so that they could be able to theoretically, practically, informally and formally develop their careers. These findings are in line with Stefani (2003) who posits that staff development is an on-going process which focuses on improving the capabilities and practices of academics' needs through formal and informal training. These sentiments are also supported in the review of related literature by Koen (2003) who says that professional support offered to academics must be sustained, on-going and participant driven.

Trigwell (2003), argues that for adequate professional training to be provided by universities, it is important that adequate awareness is created right from the onset of the staff development programmes, including the approaches that are going to be used and the space for learning the programmes. This means that any PSDP being offered by both universities under study has the obligation to provide both theory and practice. Thus it is the duty of the universities under study to ensure that their academics (female) are constantly cognitively active through tailor made PSDPs so that they are at least at par with the changes and transformations that the universities have experienced over the last years.

On the other hand, the senior female academics in Zimbabwean Universities added that when planning PSDPs, the university should come up with capacity building programmes that will help female academics to develop their careers. These findings are in line with a South African study done by Frantz (2012) which states that capacity building in PSDPs has been identified as important for enhancing the quality

of professional education. This implies that effective and efficient leadership, coupled with commitment and collegiality among stakeholders must be promoted at all times so that adequate PSDPs can be provided to (female) academics.

It was further established from the study that having adequate PSDPs was largely dependent on the leadership within the institution. Some of the senior participants in University Y stated that all Universities had in one way or another support mechanisms and PSDPs for its academics. Therefore, they articulated that it was important for their universities to follow proper channels and ensure transparency so that PSDPs could yield positive results. Symth (2006), states that beliefs which remain undervalued and tacit do assist to destabilise transformation in practice.

For instance, failure by female academics to articulate their needs clearly resulted in most of the junior and senior female academics in University X highlighting that the University was serving them *"lunch before breakfast"* because their departments were not providing them with any PSDP at all. They believed it was the onus of their departments and the faculties to know their needs before they could be communicated to the University personnel in charge of PSDPs. Frantz (2012) also emphasises the need for the involvement of departments in PSDPs, Frantz (2012), further posits that to stabilize transformation through PSDPs, it is vital that the needs analysis of the academics must be done first at department level which can then cascade to the faculty development workshops.

This means that when such steps are taken it becomes very easy for the senior female academics to be roped in to help mentor their juniors in the department. Such collegiality, within the department, and the faculty will help to illuminate the importance of PSDPs and enhance career development of academics instead of waiting for the University to offer training and workshops on a 'silver platter' all the times. Thus, Ndebele et al (2013) sums it all up and says, the future and sufficiency of PSDPs in Universities lies in the hands of faculties and not the universities' centralised units. The implication of these findings is that providing adequate PSDPs contribute to collegiality, collaboration and a shared vision among academics, HODs, Deans, Faculty Managers and the university leadership. Moreover, in the review of the related literature Fullan (1990) also stress the importance of a common purpose

which must be the key driver for career development of female academics in the educational sector..

Furthermore, a glance at the findings show that junior female academics in University X as compared to their counterparts in University Y felt that PSDPs were not only supposed to be adequate but also relevant to their needs and areas of expertise. They added that needs analysis was vital as it would ensure that decisions made by the management are in line with the programmes being offered by the university. According to Altschuld and Witkin (2000), needs analysis is an on-going process that is embarked on for the sole purpose of ascertaining, setting priorities and making decisions about PSDPs, identifying the resources in place with the sole aim of not only identifying but also meeting the needs of institutions, groups and individuals.

Holton's (1996), findings are commensurate with the current findings. He says that the degree of employee involvement with regard to the needs assessment or planning of PSDPs is important as it is a positive influence on motivating academics. However, Boyer (1990) argues that it has become more complex and a nuanced exercise to provide adequate PSDPs and meeting the need for (junior) academics to become well rounded scholars. Thus, the level of learning and everyday knowledge of academics when they come into academia appear not to be taken into consideration by staff developers such that the pace of training and time allocated to the PSDPs does not balance with the individual needs (Smith, 2003).

In this regard, Blaikie (2006) postulates that it is a travesty for IHL not to have needs analysis for their academics because not only are they a necessity but also the needs analysis help to pinpoint to the institution how, what, when, where adequate and tailor made PSDPs can be planned and delivered in a manner that best suits and serves their clientele (female academics). The researcher also envisages that failure to involve the academics is the reason why most of the participants in both universities under study stated that the PSDPs offered on the job were repetitive, too short and done by under qualified personnel. This resulted in most academics not bothering to attend as they felt they were not gaining much from the PSDPs.

According to Trigwell (2003), IHL are at fault due to failure to create awareness, and good communicating skills and channels that thoroughly inform the academics of

PSDPs available in their institutions and what they entail. However, the Institute of Chartered Account Australia (2005), takes a divergent view and states that awareness for efficient and effective PSDPs should also be initiated by the academics themselves. It is their duty to identify, develop and promote their own knowledge and skills. The ICAA (2005) adamantly adds that PSDPs should not come from academics reacting (mostly negatively) to what is being offered by the university but also what they feel will meet their needs. As Wilson (2005) stated, it is a very a foolish legal professional who does not understand the need to be relentlessly aware of the changes taking place around them and the need to have a systematic program of updating their own knowledge and skills. Although he is referring to the legal profession, he is very certain that his sentiments are also in line with other professions (academia included). This means that for adequate and tailor made PSDPs to be provided, both junior and senior female academics in both Universities under study must be explicit in their expectations so that the personnel that is in charge of developing PSDPs can be in a position to meet their unique needs.

5.5.2 Adequate funding for PSDPs in Universities

Central to the success of a University is adequate and stable funding (Altbach, 2011). From the findings of the study in both Universities it was noted that both junior and senior academics felt that funding of PSDPs was not only inadequate but was also full of flaws and this militated against the PSDPs being offered in both universities. The senior academics in University X stated that there were too many protocols and red tape that needed to be followed for one to get funding, which in some cases resulted in a person failing to attend external PSDPs at the last minute. The findings of this study are in line with Wangenge and Ouma (2008 : 409) in Odhiambo (2011) who state that funding in developing countries is inadequate and unreliable.

Additionally, a South African study by Gosling (2009) highlighted that shortage of funding in universities to promote career development of (female) academics was a recurring theme in their study. The above findings are in line with the current findings where both FGP1 and FGP2 representing the junior female academics of Universities X and Y respectively buttressed the importance of funding of PSDPs in and outside their universities. They stated that adequate funding was a pre-requisite

if female academics were to get effective and capacity building PSDPs. Moreover, the junior academics comments in the study are in line with HESA (2011) that even though Universities are complex institutions, their importance lies in being able to provide adequate financial support especially to the future, new and current academics within the university system.

Though the participants from both Universities have the same commonalities on lack of funding for PSDPs, the situation in University Y appeared to be more pronounced as compared to University X. In South Africa in 2008, HESA revealed that funding in Universities had increased over the years and universities had received funds to help run their institutions and develop the careers of their academics. Therefore, the researcher opines that failure to fund academics or release funds in time to attend conferences or seminars may be blamed on poor leadership, organisational and management skills in an organisation. However, in the words of Gosling (2009), the funding of academics in universities is there, but because of the ever increasing demands economically and the student number explosions, the resources available tend to be swallowed by other unforeseen institutional needs which result in the Universities at times failing to meet the needs and demands of its academics.

It was further revealed by University Y participants that their situation was dire because attending conferences and seminars was purely an individual choice because their institution was financially strapped. According to Gutek (2007) as cited by Eze (2012), workshops, seminars, conferences are meetings that are specially held to discuss by academics topics relevant to the interest of the organisation and society on specialised subject areas and these often last between one or two days. Altbach (2011) emphasises that universities have multi-faceted academic and societal roles because they are the central institutions of the global knowledge. University Y's failure to sponsor workshops may suggest that it does not find workshops as relevant to academics. It may be further assumed that those responsible for the planning and implementation of PSDPs in University Y are not willing to commit time and resources or make efforts to source funds so that their academics can develop their careers through PSDPs in and out of their University.

At the time of the study, the participants in University Y appeared not be impressed with the lack of adequate funding in their institution which they viewed as a stop sign

to their career development. However, lack of funding for PSDPs in universities is not only experienced in developing countries alone. A study done by Altbach (2011) indicates that Universities in United States of America are also in the same predicament of failing to fund their academics. This shows that academic participation in any PSDPs in universities is largely dependent on the availability of funds (Ndebele et al, 2013). In the same line of thought, Odhiambo (2011) adds that providing adequate funding for career development of (female) academics in universities through PSDPs is currently an uphill task for IHL in Africa. Thus, there is a strong belief that any funding or donor investments should be directed to primary and secondary education. So, it has to be realised that PSDPs are the most visible and obvious methods that any IHL can show that it has its academics at heart. However, instead of being increased, funding has been declining over the years in most developing countries (Wangenge-Ouma, 2008 in Odhiambo, 2011).

This implies that for funding to improve, especially in Zimbabwe, there is need of a holistic approach to PSDPs. Moreover, Kotecha and Perold (2010) in SARUAs' leadership dialogue which focused on rebuilding higher education in Zimbabwe stressed that Universities in Zimbabwe might need to merge their resources in order to re-claim the original intention of high-quality education in which the country was once well known, highly respected and acknowledged for. This means that such a move would help their academics to experience academic growth and be competitive with other academics and institutions regionally and internationally.

5.5.3 Gender Policies and Career development of female academics in Universities

The study also sought to find out if there are any specific gender policies that have been put in place by both Universities to enhance the career development of female academics. It was established from the findings that most of the senior female academics in University X were in total darkness about the gender policies in place at their institution. These findings illuminate what Murniati (2012) found out in her study that gender equity and equality policies do exist but are not well planned, initiated and implemented such that female academics become so ignorant and relaxed about the policies in place at their institution.

Paradoxically, the ignorance of female academics about available policies for career development does not only hinder their career development. It also shows that the female academics in this institution do not collaborate and see how policies in their university can be implemented. Thus, according to the researcher, it is a travesty to realise that the senior female academics in this institution lack knowledge of the policies that have tremendously helped to ameliorate their position within the IHL in which they have been marginalised for a long time. However, in the review of related literature it was highlighted that gender policies in place have had limited impact on the career development of female academics which might be the reason why female academics appear to turn a 'blind eye' on the policies. This implies that University X is failing to sensitize its female academics on any policies that are tailor made to help guide them in their career development. Moreover, Mabokela & Mawila (2004), in their South African study on the Impact of Race, Gender and Culture in South African Higher Education (SAHE) argue that gender policies can be feeble unless they are enforced and adequate awareness is promoted. Therefore, sensitisation on gender policies is important if one is to realise career growth and survival in the academia.

It was further established that those few senior female academics who knew about the gender policies in place at University X posited that they were a good foundation for their career development. The junior academics were also in agreement with their seniors and articulated that the policies such as AA had helped to illuminate their existence and capabilities as female academics in universities. According to Odejide et al (2006), gender policies such as AA which was also adopted by University Y to redress gender equity and equality act as catalysts for the recognition of female academics in IHL. Ostensibly, Shackleton (2006) commented that though AA may conceal all the disadvantaged groups and act as foundation to the career development of females, she believes AA has not worked in South Africa because in IHL there is always a reason why someone is better than you. In the same vein, Adejide et al (2006) also adds that AA is mostly viewed negatively by some females and not promoted among them for fear of stigmatisation and criticism in universities. This is also in line with FGP2 responses from University Y where they emphasised that female academics must not be solely dependant on AA but must show that they are capable of developing their careers with or without the gender policies.

On the other hand, the findings from the study showed that both junior and senior female academics in University Y were knowledgeable about the policies in place, including one policy that had been specifically formed for female students and staff. The FGP2 also accentuated that the policies in place have to put the girl child on the map. These findings are in line with Mabokela and Mawila (2004) that policies such as the AA, equal opportunities employment and employment equity (which the researcher analysed through document analysis in both universities under study) have created a discursive space and a practical means for Universities to inject and support career development of female academics. Furthermore, Mugweni et al (2011), in the review of the related literature acknowledges that positive changes in Zimbabwean IHL were being realised because quite a number of female academics had powerful positions in academia. This means that the gender policies in universities have managed to dent male dominance and concentration in universities (Murniati, 2012). Thus it may be assumed that the policies in place have helped to create awareness of the challenges that female academics encounter in academia.

Moreover, these policies have to a certain extent increased the number of female representation in universities. Thus, the findings are in line with Beoku-Betts (2005) who says that some universities in developing countries are so deeply involved with gender mainstreaming in their institutions that they strive to maintain as much as possible good and strong relations with the women movements in their institutions. The antidote is for the Universities to create, and promote opportunities which are in conjunction with implementing and facilitating a conducive working environment which allows all academics, male or female, to develop their careers.

5.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The central task of this chapter was to discuss the findings of the study female academics' perceptions of career development in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. The study confirms that the career development of female academics in both universities under study is still fraught with many challenges which range from inadequate professional staff development programs, lack of adequate funding and lack of mentoring and role models and other support mechanisms from the university leadership. This chapter also tackled how best the challenges raised by the participants could be remedied. The next chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 6

6.1 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter provides the summary of the study which is organised around how the research questions were answered and what has been revealed about the career trajectory of female academics in Zimbabwean and South African Universities. These are then followed by major conclusions derived from the findings. Recommendations also form part of this chapter, which ends with suggestions for future research.

6.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This section provides a summary of findings in relation to objectives of the study. The career development of female academics in universities has been researched on internationally and regionally. Moreover, universities have experienced a lot of transformation during the past decades to promote the growth of academics; yet, their career development continues to be fraught with challenges which do not seem to be receding. The stories of junior and senior female academics in both universities revealed that external and internal factors continue to affect their career development. This is made transparent throughout the study as there are indeed more commonalities than the variations between answers that emerged from both universities. Therefore, the factors that affect the career development of female academics in Universities X and Y are summarised hereunder

6.2.1 Career choice through family and environmental influences

Although the career choices of senior academics in both universities and those of junior academic in University Y were moulded by parental, environmental and gender specific influences, most of the participants highlighted that they had learnt to appreciate their profession and the opportunities that had been exposed to them.

6.2.2 Job creation through graduate employment

The data revealed that being in academia for junior female academics in University X was not their career choice. The majority of them went into academia as graduate trainees soon after completing their studies. They felt this caused lack of acceptance by students, and colleagues as did not have teaching experiences.

6.2.3 Lack of mentoring and role models

It was established from the study that female academics in both Universities X and Y faced lack of mentoring, and shortage of female role models which promoted fragmentation, isolation and individualism within both universities under study.

6.2.4 Lack of female solidarity

Lack of female solidarity and individualism could be ascribed to the continued underrepresentation of female academics in the top echelons of management in both Universities as highlighted in Chapter 1 and Chapter 2.

6.2.5 Retaining female academics within the academic pipeline

The study also found out that there was a need for University X to retain their junior female academics within the academics pipeline. Most of the junior academics showed lack of commitment and enthusiasm to remain within the system as compared to their seniors and their counterparts in University Y.

6.2.6 Teaching Loads and high teacher – learner ratios in Universities

It also emerged that high teaching loads and high teacher learner ratio was prevalent in both universities. The participants noted that such a problem could lead to Universities producing half-baked graduates. The above mentioned challenges were also buttressed by previous research and extant literature which highlighted how female academics continue to encounter challenges related to workload allocations in universities. Thus, the same can also be said about the results of the current study that show that the persistence of high teaching work load for female academics and lack of transparency in course allocations has to an extent affected their career mobility.

6.2.7 Research publications versus teaching and career mobility of female academics

The findings from the study indicated that the majority of junior and senior academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities did little research and publication due to lack of confidence, ignorance and lack of collaboration among academics. As a result, research and publication was viewed negatively as most of the participants felt that male academics were in better position to research and publish.

6.2.8 Using Teaching as a promotional tool in academia

Despite these challenges, some the participants said that of the three pillars of the University namely, teaching, research and community engagement, teaching students was a source of joy and inner fulfilment especially for junior academics in University Y, and for senior academics from both Universities, however, the same did not apply to junior academics in University X. They argued that universities should consider evaluating the performance and promotion of its academics based on teaching only as not all academics had the knack for research and publications.

6.2.9 Balancing work and family as a female academic

The results of the study also revealed that there were commonalities and variations among female academics in both Universities under investigation. For instance, the on the issue of balance between work and family, participants in University Y felt their problems were a bit over board because of the strong cultural and patriarchal background that was still in existence in their country such that child care and family issues were mostly their responsibilities. Moreover, the collected data shows that there is a variation with regards to the percentage of married academics between both Universities. University X had less senior academics who were married, and the participants stated they had double responsibilities as single parents; hence striking a balance was hard.

6.2.10 Continuance of male domination in Universities

In terms of the prolongation of male dominance in Universities there were also varied responses. University Y participants' felt patriarchy in their institution was more distinct because the university was initially science oriented and this had attracted more male than females employees as compared to University X. Furthermore, the passive participation by some senior female academics that were expected to act as role models fuelled the whole situation.

6.2.11 Multi-tasking as a strategy for career development

Throughout their narratives both junior and senior female academics in Universities X and Y pointed out that being in the academia continued to be more and more demanding. The participants were of the opinion that this called for extensive multi-tasking, personally and professionally, if they were to realise career development. Hence, the success or failure of female academics was dependent on these factors.

6.2.12 Negotiating between career and family

Some of the senior academics in Universities X and Y admitted to a sense of guilt and , selfishness because they were absentee mothers and wives and had lost out on their children milestones. However, they applauded themselves for not compromising their careers.

6.2.13 Family and spousal support as a catalyst for career development of female academics

There was also uniformity among the participants on the importance of family and spousal support. This also emerged as one of the dominant strategies that senior and junior female academics in Universities X and Y felt was a vital ingredient for their career development at professional and personal level.

6.2.14 Hard work, sacrifice, and assertiveness as the key to leadership positions in Universities

The findings of the study also indicated that Universities X and Y participants' comments were commensurate with each other on the importance of hard work, sacrifice, and self-confidence among female academics with or without key positions in universities. The participants articulated that the thoroughness and intricate paths to the top position meant one had to use these strategies. However, a rather disappointing factor was lack of acknowledgement by all the academics in both universities that the female academics in key positions might have benefited from mentoring. This was after it was revealed by the participants that only a small percentage of them had been mentored. Thus, to attain career development in Universities, and to move up the academic stratum, requires hard work. Both the junior and senior female academics saw it as a battlefield where only the fit survive.

Moreover, from the data collected it could be deduced that the successes of female academics within the academia was viewed as attainable only if one had resilience, or “ a thick skin” and was prepared to forge ahead regardless of lack of support and sabotage which was rife among academics.

6.2.15 Professional staff development programmes

In terms of professional staff development programmes (PSDPs) all the participants spoke with one voice and expressed understanding of what the PSDPs should entail.

6.2.16 Lack of funding for PSDP

Inadequacy of funding of PSDPs, on and off the job, was also cited as a hindrance to the career development of female academics in Universities X and Y. However, lack of funding and training appeared to be more transparent in University Y as compared to University X due to the economic meltdown that the country had experienced over the years.

6.2.17 Limited time frame and inadequately trained personnel for deliverance of PSDP

It was also established that PSDPs availed to academics were not only repetitive but also insufficient. Internal workshops and training sessions were either too short or presented by under qualified personnel such that the participants ended up absconding as they did not see any relevance to attend. Thus, the junior and the senior academics in both universities advocated adequate funding, needs analysis and capacity building programmes that were efficient and effective.

6.2.18 Gender policies and career development of female academics

Lastly, some of the participants were in agreement that although change was slow, female academics were beginning to gain an equal footing with men in academia. The catalysts for these changes were the gender policies that had been put in place by both countries. Further to this, the Universities X and Y had their own specific policies (these were analysed during data collection) which supported equity and equality in the workplace regardless of gender. However, some of the participants felt that while the policies were opening the once closed door for females academics, it was important that they (female academics) continued to work hard and not depend on the policies for promotion or career development lest the male academics see them as amnesty casualties.

6.3 IMPLICATION FOR THEORY

The participants of the study were female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. The focus was on how they perceived their career development in Universities. A study of women experiences can only be justified by using a feminist theory. Therefore, a liberal feminist theory was used in this study to identify and put an emphasises on redressing the unjust and discriminatory practices that females continue to experience at societal and educational level. Thus, the

theoretical framework advocated a level playing ground for everyone without discrimination on the basis of gender. As articulated by Senge (1990) individuals have a right and must be allowed to exercise their independence and fulfil their needs in the best way they deem necessary. Thus, the researcher used this as a basis to argue that both junior and senior female academics had a right to be given the same opportunities for career development as their male counterparts in both Universities under study. This theory was ideal as it challenged the status quo that has been disadvantageous to women for a long time.

6.4 JUSTIFICATION OF THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a qualitative approach because the main objective of the study was to tap into the voices of junior and senior female academics in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. Therefore, it was paramount that the research methodology used would guide the researcher to collect rich, in-depth and descriptive data of the everyday experiences and perceptions of the participants in and outside academia and determine what deterred them from realising career mobility. The research methodology used also created opportunities to identify the commonalities and variances among the responses given by the participants. Moreover, the methodological approach used in this study was aligned to background of the study which focused on the career paths of female academics in universities. This allowed the researcher to use different data collection instruments which revealed the lived experiences of female academics and enabled the researcher to gain insight into the lives of female academics by capturing their perceptions verbatim.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The junior and senior female academics who participated in this study took the researcher on a journey that revealed their perceptions and experiences with regards to prospects for career development in South African and Zimbabwean Universities. The findings of this comparative study have undoubtedly and to some extent reinforced what the extant literature for developed and developing countries says about the pains, challenges, complexities, opportunities and the joys that female academics continue to experience in universities. Thus the study has attempted to demonstrate why, after so many years of transformation and talk about

equity and equality in universities, female academics still struggle to realise career mobility.

The findings of the study indicate that there are more challenges than opportunities for female academics in both universities under study. The findings further reveal that career development of female academics in both Universities can be attained through a conducive organisational culture and support, adequate funding, mentoring and networking, PSDPs, gender equity and equality, as well as enhancing research among female academics, collegiality and collaboration. Thus, the study may conclude that both universities' long term plans should focus on the growth and provision of resources which would enhance career development of female academics.

The most interesting finding is that the majority of participants in Universities X and Y valued the autonomy, flexibility and academic freedom that is attached with being an academic. However, it was established that knowledge sharing among academics in both Universities was scanty. In fact, it emerged as a concept and practice that was generally "unknown" to most of the participants. Thus, the universities appeared not to have instilled a culture of knowledge sharing among academics, hence, the perpetuation of isolation, fragmentation and individualism among academics. Findings also point to the fact that what is missing is proper dissemination of information to enhance collaboration and collegiality among academics. Moreover, if both Universities X and Y could embrace knowledge sharing, and improve dissemination of tacit and explicit information, academics will develop their careers and become well rounded scholars.

In addition, lack of staff members responsible for mentoring junior academics also hindered the career development of junior and senior female academics. It is critical that the University leadership in both institutions realise that every theoretical aspect (especially on University policies) should be partnered with efficient and effective practical aspect. Findings reveal that female academics in these Universities, especially the junior academics, need to be nurtured, supported and cared for if they are to realise career mobility. Senior academics in both Universities need to be taught the importance of mentoring their juniors. This is because, to a greater extent, the participants throughout the study felt that mentoring and networking were a

catalyst to knowledge creation which would lead to career development in their Universities.

On the other hand, it was transparent that the strategies that were adopted by both senior and junior academics to cope with the demands of academia and career development were common in both Universities. Female academics in both Universities seem to have identified ways to regain some sense of direction, survival and belonging in the academia.

In addition, , the theoretical framework adopted for this study was uniquely suitable as its main emphasis was the equal treatment of academics regardless of gender. It may be concluded that this study revealed that though inroads have been made in IHL, subtle gender inequality in both universities is still in existence and this affects the career development of the participants. Even at societal level, the strategies that the academics use as indicated in the data collection phase indicated the existence of male dominance and patriarchal control. This continues to push the female academics to the periphery while males continue to be better positioned in and outside academia.

Furthermore, most of the advice offered by the female academics in both universities centred on the need to have capacity building programmes which would address the needs of academics to avoid reverting to old habits of fragmentation and individualism as this was negatively affecting their career development. There is a need to have a holistic approach from departmental to faculty level because the increased demands being experienced by the academics and the support they were receiving from the university leadership were not at par. As a result, both these institutions were likely to end up losing their academics through the leaking pipeline.

Lastly, it may be concluded that the ignorance exhibited by the participants, especially from the University X context, on the existence of gender policies, was disappointing. Such ignorance should actually give the leadership and management of the University X thoughts on how they can sensitise their academics about the gender policies in place, what they entail and how they contribute to the career development of female academics.

6.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and the conclusions, the researcher makes the following recommendations:-

- Female academics should be assisted, guided, and appreciated so that they can be more assertive and progress in their careers. Social support is vital in both Universities under study.
- Time and money should be invested in the career development of female academics, thus a positive culture should be cultivated in both universities and the leadership should show they value the needs of academics. Positive organisational culture is significant in imparting self-belief among female academics so that they can aspire reach the top echelons of University leadership, it should be cultivated..
- There is need to ensure a successful retention initiative especially University X because the majority of the junior female academics highlighted exiting the academia.
- Mentoring of female academics should be formalised and on-going. This will help junior academics to have more meaningful experiences and develop their careers under the tutelage of experienced academics and avoid scanty use of their talent. .
- University leadership, deans and faculty managers should take time to investigate the transparency of module allocations within departments to avoid other academics being overburdened with teaching loads. This will help the academics (female) to realise career mobility within the universities.
- Female academics should also make an effort to be fully involved in what transpires within their universities as this will promote female solidarity and collegiality.
- Female academics should also strive to attain PhDs as this will increase their chances of being promoted
- Female academics should have a positive approach towards research and publication to ensure that they are adequately exposed to academic writing which would help in their career development and increase their chances of getting promoted to leadership positions.

- Adequate funding should be provided for PSDPs offered in Universities to enhance career development of female academics. Moreover, a needs assessment and identification of capacity building needs should be conducted so that training provided is able to meet the needs of academics.
- There is a need for both universities to have gender sensitive leadership so that the voice of the female academics can be heard. Universities under study come up with institutional policies that respond to the needs of female academics with children as this will reduce the percentage of female academics exiting the academia.
- There is need to create awareness of university policies among academics through training sessions or PSDPs. These training sessions should target thoroughly explaining what universities policies in both universities entail and how they can enhance career advancement for female academics.
- Specialised and qualified personnel should be used by both universities in expediting PSDPs.

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From Registrar F. Mhlanga Dip Edu, BEd, MSc(UZ); MBA (NUST)

FM/sb

Mrs Bellita Banda Chitsamatanga

University of Fort Hare

Alice Campus

Faculty of Education

P. Bag X 1314

ALICE

SOUTH AFRICA

5700

Dear Mrs Chitsamatanga

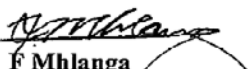
PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

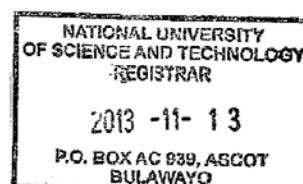
We would like to inform you that we have granted you the permission to conduct your research study entitled **"THE PERCEPTIONS OF FEMALE ACADEMICS ON THEIR CAREER DEVELOPMENT : A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SOUTH AFRICAN AND ZIMBABWEAN UNIVERSITIES"**.

We note that you will be collecting data and would like to emphasize that all the information gathered should solely be for research purposes only and that confidentiality will be exercised.

The university wished you the best in your studies

Yours Sincerely


F Mhlanga
Registrar



Appendix 2



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

28 October 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

FACULTIES OF:

EDUCATION

MANAGEMENT NAD COMMERCE

APPLIED SCIENCES

Dear Sirs,

Re: Permission to Collect Data – Mrs Bellita B. Chitsamatanga (Student Number 201104691)

This is to confirm that Mrs. B B. Chitsamatanga is pursuing Master of Education degree at the University of Fort Hare. Her research title is **“Perception of Female Academics on their career development : A comparative Study of South African and Zimbabwean Universities”** She is supposed to collect data during the month November 2013. Her study has been cleared by Research Ethics Committee. Kindly grant her permission.

I would like to assure you that any information that will be collected will remain confidential and no name or person will be disclosed. The student will ensure that she does not disrupt ongoing activities during the period she will be collecting data.

Sincerely

Med and PhD Coordinator, Faculty of Education : Department of Further and Continuing Education, Alice Campus, University of Fort Hare

Appendix 3



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Interview Guide for Female Academics in Universities

Dear Participant,

My name is **Bellita Banda Chitsamatanga**, a Masters student at the University of Fort Hare, Faculty of Education. As a requirement of the programme I am currently collecting information and your institution has been included in the study. My research topic is on **"Perceptions of Female Academics on their Career Development : A comparative study of South African and Zimbabwean Universities"**. I am hereby seeking your consent to participate in my research study. I would really appreciate if you would share your thoughts with me by answering the questions below as honestly as possible as your responses will assist in providing information on the perceptions of female academics on their career development in universities.

Participation is voluntary and you are assured that the information being solicited from you is purely for academic purposes, will be treated confidentially and not revealed to anyone other than myself. I will not be recording your name anywhere on the interview schedule and no-one will be able to link you to the answers you give.

Sincerely

Bellita Banda-Chitsamatanga



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

Section A: Background information

This section of the INTERVIEW GUIDE refers to background or biographical information. Although I am aware of the sensitivity of the questions in this section, the information will allow me to compare groups of respondents. Once again, I assure you that your responses will remain anonymous. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Please tick where appropriate

1. Please indicate your age

20 – 30 years	
30 – 40 years	
40 – 50 years	
50 – 60 years	
Over 60 years	

1. Please indicate your marital status

Married	
Single	

2. Do you have children

Yes	
No	

--	--

3. Please indicate name of faculty to which you belong

Education	
Social Sciences	
Management and Commerce	
Communication and Information	
Applied sciences	
Science and Agriculture	

4. Please indicate your occupation or position in this faculty

Professor	
Senior lecturer	
Lecturer	

5 (b) Please state the year when you were appointed to the current position

--

5. Please indicate your highest qualification

PhD	
Master's Degree	
Bachelor's Degree	
Post – Matric Diploma or Certificate	
Any other, specify:.....	

5 (b) Please indicate when you attained this qualification

--

--

6. How many years of work experience do you have in this university?

2 years to 5 years	
5 years to 10 years	
More than 10 years	

SECTION B

PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES OF FEMALE ACADEMICS

Can you please tell me about yourself briefly – the environment you grew up in?

What factors led to your career choice

What do you like most about being in academia? Please elaborate

What has been your experience like in the academia as a female academic?

Do you have career goals? If so, please explain to me how achieving your career goals might contribute to your career development as a female academic

What do you consider to be the major constraints faced by female academics in progressing in your institution?

Could you tell me about the obstacles and the opportunities that you have encountered in your career development?

What has been the biggest challenge in your career as female academic?

Would you say female academics are given fair and equitable chances to compete and develop their careers within the academia?

What are your other responsibilities in your current position? Do you have any other assigned responsibilities excluding teaching and research?

Focusing on your experiences and career progression as an academic, have you been exposed to mentoring, networking and role modelling in your institution? Please elaborate

What do you think needs to be done to improve the career progression of female academics by universities?

Which factors do you think influence the recruitment, promotion and appointment of female academics in your university?

Given the opportunity, are there any changes that you could propose to the university with regard to career progression of female academics or universities as a whole?

BARRIERS TO CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE ACADEMICS

What would you say are the impediments to career development of female academics in universities? Could you please elaborate by giving me examples?

In your opinion, do you think these barriers continue to persist or they are receding?

Which barriers or enablers do you think have affected research and publications efforts among female academics? Would you comment on this?

Which external factors would you say have affected female academics negatively in their career development? Tell more about them.

Do you feel you have had to negotiate your career development because of other responsibilities? Could you please tell me more in this regard?

Personally and professionally what would you sight as your short comings with regard to balancing work and family and trying to advance your career?

Do you view universities as male biased, male dominated and patriarchal? Please explain.

STRATEGIES FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE ACADEMICS

Which strategies do you think are mostly used by female academics at institutional and societal level to help develop their careers?

What do you think are the strategies that have been used by those female academics who are in key management positions within the universities

Please explain whether you feel most female academics are aware of strategies that they can adopt to enhance their career development?

Would you say these strategies are tolerable or feasible?

Which strategies do you feel universities should employ to overcome factors that hinder career development of female academics

What strategies have you used personally and professionally to develop your career in the academia?

Which challenges would you say female academics have encountered in adopting strategies for their career development?

PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF FEMALE ACADEMICS

Please explain what you understand by professional staff development support?

How do you perceive the professional support available at your institution? Please elaborate.

Please explain whether your university has any professional development programmes in place?

Are there any specific policies that have been put in place by your institution to promote the career development of female academics? Please give examples.

Do you feel the policies in place are a good foundation for professional support and career development of female academics? PROBE, could you explain further

Are there any training courses that are offered by your faculty or department? Can you please give examples?

Have you had the opportunity to attend any professional staff development programmes? How did they help you as an individual to change your career as an academic?

How do you view the funding of these professional development programmes by the university to enhance the career of academics?

What advice would you give to the university with regard to planning of professional staff development programmes for (female) academics in universities?

Lastly, what advice would you give to future female academics?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 4



University of Fort Hare
Together in Excellence

CONSENT FORM

I hereby agree to participate in research regarding the **Perception of female academics on their career development in Universities. A comparative study of South African and Zimbabwean Universities**” I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop this participation at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally.

I have received the telephone number of a person to contact should I need to speak about any issues which may arise in this study.

I understand that this consent form will not be linked to the interview schedule, and that my answers will remain confidential.

I understand that if at all possible, feedback will be given to my community on the results of the completed research.

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....

I hereby agree to the tape recording of my participation in the study

.....

Signature of participant

Date:.....