

**EXPERIENCES OF ACADEMIC EMPLOYEES IN RELATION TO GENDER  
EQUALITY IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS: A CASE STUDY OF A SEMI-URBAN  
UNIVERSITY IN LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA.**

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## Declaration

I, Munyai Ndivhuwo, student number: 11624172 declare that this dissertation for Master's Degree in Gender Studies entitled, *'Experiences of Academic Employees In Relation To Gender Equality In Leadership Position: A Case Study of A Semi-Urban University In Limpopo Province'* Written and submitted by me to the University of Venda in fulfillment of the Master's Degree in Gender Studies is my original work. No part of this research has been submitted for any degree at this or any other institution and all the references contained therein have been acknowledged.

Student's signature.....

Date.....

**Munyai Ndivhuwo**

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## **Dedication**

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## Abstract

Institutions of higher learning continue to reflect gender biases in their endeavor to create an egalitarian atmosphere in their learning environments. These institutions serve to equip people with the intellectual capacities needed to pursue national and regional development advancements. However, gender inequality persists within them. Women continue to be underrepresented at all levels. Women have proven to be productive, more committed, more focused, more competent in executing whatever roles they are given. This study focused on the experiences of academic employees' in relation to gender equality in leadership positions at a semi-urban University in Limpopo province. The main aim of the study was to probe the experiences of academic employees' in relation to gender equality in leadership positions at this university. The research design was qualitative in approach. This study was conducted at the University of Venda which is situated in Thohoyandou in the Thulamela Local Municipality under the Vhembe District in the Limpopo province, South Africa. The study used purposive sampling to collect data from the participants. Academic employees were the interviewees. The findings of the study are as follows: Institution should encourage the formation of academic and leadership support networks for women; Deans of faculties should support women who aspire to move up the academic ladder instead of frustrating them; Institutions should formulate policies geared at fast-tracking women with leadership potential; Employment equity policies should be fairly implemented so as not to advantage one ethnic or racial group over another, a larger scale study is needed that will cover a considerable number of institutions to gain deeper insight into the problem.

Key Words: **Gender equality, gender disparity, leadership positions, and gender roles.**

## List of Acronyms

HEIs:	Higher Education Institutions
UNIVEN:	University of Venda
SARUA:	Southern African Regional Universities Association
SADC:	Southern African Development Community

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## **Chapter 1: General orientation to the study.**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The under-representation of women in senior management positions in institutions of higher learning and indeed other spheres is problematic and has become a major issue of debate in higher education circles (Mathevula, 2014). This study focuses on the experiences of academic employees in relation to gender equality in leadership positions at the University of Venda. Institutions of higher learning serve to equip people with the intellectual capacities needed to pursue national and regional development advancements. However, gender inequality persists. Firstly, institutions of learning are still plagued by gender disparities. Women continue to be under-represented at all levels. Women have proven to be productive, more committed, more focused, more competent in executing whatever roles they are given (Mathevula, 2014). In South Africa, before the 1994 democratic the elections, women were regarded as second-class citizens and would not be considered for any managerial or leadership positions. After 1994, a new Constitution Act 108 (1996) was promulgated to ensure equality for all individuals. As a result, policies were revised and amended to ensure compliance with the constitution. In the Institutions of higher learning, most women are employed in junior positions where they are unable to form networks in their academic discipline and research work or community of practice. This puts women at a disadvantage with regards to publications.

In this chapter, I will begin by discussing the historical background of the study, the statement of the problem, aim and objectives, the significance for the study, major research questions, and the definition of concepts.

#### **1.1.1 Background to the Study**

This section gives a background review of women representation in senior management levels at international, regional (Sub-Saharan) and national level. The literature demonstrates that despite global, regional and national efforts to combat gender inequality throughout the world, women will continue to be under-represented in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Guramatunhu (2010) demonstrates that women have historically been viewed as second-class citizens in all spheres of life throughout the

world. Moreover, women's inferiority to men is mainly justified by their emotional and physiological weaknesses. In addition, Wood (2013) states that most aspects that have led women to be inferior to men were assigned by tradition and the patriarchal system, wherein different gender roles were expected to be carried out by women and men. Due to gender expectations and/or roles, women never enjoyed equality in the production, reproduction, and community work (Wood, 2013; Lewaks, 2015), 'gender expectations' has permeated all spheres of life, including HEIs. Literature shows that Institutions of higher learning, which are expected to be in the forefront of societal transformation, are plagued by gender inequalities and disparities. Ramaite (2013) highlights that Institutions of higher learning are still largely male-dominated, especially in executive, senior and middle management and academic positions (senior lecturer and lecturer positions).

Literature illustrates that developed countries, like all other countries around the world, continue to be plagued by gender inequalities (Australian government & Department of Education and Training, 2015). The Australian government and Department of Education and Training manual (2015) note that women were under-represented, wherein women hold fewer senior faculty positions than men and they also hold fewer lecturer positions than men at the senior level and above. Moreover, Australian government statistics on gender disparities in the Institutions of higher learning show that in 2014, Australian women held 43.6% of senior lecturer faculty positions and just 29.9% of above senior lecturer faculty positions. On the other hand, Australian men held 56.4% of senior lecturer faculty positions and 70.1% of above senior lecturer faculty positions. However, the findings of the Australian government and Department of Education and Training (2015) that continues to show gender disparities in the Institutions of higher learning highlights that women hold more than half of the entire lecturer and below lecturer positions. For instance, Australian women held 52.5% of lecturer faculty positions and 53.1% below lecturer faculty positions. Moreover, Australian men held 47.5% of Lecturer faculty positions and 46.9% of below lecturer faculty positions (Australian Government & Department of Education and Training, 2015).

Higher Education Institutions in African countries experience gender inequalities in various dimensions. Literature shows a huge gender gap in all areas of higher education. At the regional level, in 2007, the Southern African Regional Universities Association (SARUA) consisted of 40 members of which only 2 (5%) were female (SARUA, 2007). To address such imbalances SADC created a special unit targeting gender issues, the SADC Gender Unit. The unit was established in 1996. This unit plays a primarily advisory role to the SADC Secretariat on issues of gender mainstreaming and empowerment (Mathevula, 2014)

Research indicates that this has to do with the unequal division of labour within the household or families. For instance, Cain (2015) highlights that traditional gender role promotes inequality between women and men and this permeates to the workplace including Institutions of higher learning. For instance, Cain (2015) asserts that universities in Ghana have articulated a sexual division of labor where men hold the majority of senior and high positions. This study also highlights that women are mostly occupying lower-paid, insecure jobs. The study showed that there was only one woman who held an administrative position, as registrar in the history of Nkwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. There was never a time where women held the position of Vice-Chancellor. Mgcotyelwa (2013) & Cain (2015) highlight that although there are few women who are senior lecturers and deans of academic colleges; very little information is available about the experiences of these women at universities in Ghana.

Zimbabwe, like Ghana, is traditionally a patriarchal society. Women have always been marginalized in terms of leadership and management opportunities, especially in universities. Zimbabwe continues to experience under-representation of women in the educational sector. Coleman notes that in most universities, women do a lot of teaching while men manage despite a multitude of strategies to rectify the gender imbalance in educational management (Guramatunhu, 2010). Sahadi (2016) further demonstrates that the University of Zimbabwe provided an atmosphere and opportunities for female academics with little experience to join in administration, but the higher levels of university administration remained male-dominated. Sahadi (2016) also emphasizes that only 12.0% of senior public positions were held by women in Zimbabwe.

Kenya also shows a similar trend of women under-representation. Women in Kenyan HEIs are generally concentrated at lower level decision-making positions. However, there are a few exceptions, where the first female Vice-Chancellor was appointed to lead Kenyatta University. Notwithstanding, women remain in lower positions where they are unable to influence decisions.

This limits their ability to contribute to the gender transformation of universities. Studies by Kamau (2010) and Scott (2011) show that despite having a female Vice-Chancellor, the Kenyatta University's management was dominated by men (11 men and 2 women). This study also reiterates the fact that gender roles have entrenched underrepresentation of women in higher positions in the Institutions of higher learning, just like in other areas of work in general.

As already mentioned, gender inequality permeates all areas of work within universities. A study conducted in Uganda found that there is gender inequality in the admissions committee as well as Academic Affairs committee at Buistema University. The study showed gender disparities in the Admissions Committee, with 1 female and 7 male and is chaired by a male, while the Academic Affairs Committee has only 1 female and 6 male and is also chaired by a male. The University Senate has 5 females and 18 males which mean that only 22% of the decision-making body is female (Dakar, Senegal. 2015).

Ancient systems of management under which men were assigned a monopoly of access to higher managerial positions of authority and power in organizations and the public sphere, with women restricted to the home, have come under attack in both developed and most developing countries. Under-representation of women in top educational management and leadership positions has led to negative implications on government policies and general education curriculum which has lacked gender mainstreaming. The girl child has also lagged behind in education due to lack of positive female role models (Morley, 2014).

Background studies in South Africa show similar trends as in the above-mentioned countries. Despite progressive policies introduced by the democratic government after 1994, women are still under-represented in higher education institutions. Moodie (2010),

notes that only 24% of professors and associate professors in South Africa were women. In 2009, South Africa had only 3 females out of 23 Vice-Chancellors throughout the country and occupied only 5 of the 23 registrar positions in all universities in the country (Council on Higher Education Statics, 2009). Studies show a slight increase of women representation in senior levels. However, placing women in senior positions and middle management positions in the Institutions of higher learning does not automatically imply that women are no longer undermined (Mupambirei, 2013).

As already mentioned above, the traditional place of a woman in higher education is teaching or a secretarial position. Moodie (2010) highlights that with greater access to higher education over the past few decades; there has been an increase in women in senior positions. However, the rise has not brought enough impact as there still remains a significant and visible gender inequality gap in higher education institutions. This is largely because of a continuation of traditional norms, such as the conviction that management must be male-dominated. Moodie (2010) notes that 3 of the 23 vice-chancellors (13%) and 5 of the 23 registrars (21%) in South Africa were women. Women also comprised 21% of the deputy vice-chancellors, while 21% were executive directors. Although women constitute over 50% of the higher education workforce in South Africa, there is still a glaring under-representation of women in senior positions (HERS-SA, 2007 in Kayi, 2013: 2). In addition, Survey data, as reported by Bruckmüller and Branscombe (2010), showed that in 2003, nine years after South Africa achieved democracy; the average percentage of women in senior management positions was only 24% across all the Institutions of higher learning in the country. This shows that we still have a long way to go in terms of gender equality in South African institutions of higher learning. Women are experiencing glass ceiling challenge in higher education.

Morley (2014) asserts that globally, and in South Africa, gender equity in higher education is still a major challenge that warrants attention as women are not equal to their male counterparts. Morley also noted that a number of researchers have reviewed the number of women in vice-chancellor positions, and the findings reflect that globally men are still dominating these positions. In addition, Morley (2013) notes that women are under-represented globally in the executive level of higher education management, this has negative implications in terms of decision-making, and the under-utilization of

skills and expertise of a large and significant part of the Institutions of higher learning workforce.

In South Africa, social inequalities are embedded and reflected in all spheres of social life. Moodie (2010) demonstrates that social inequalities are a product of the systemic exclusion of blacks and women under colonialism and apartheid. The higher education system was no exception. Social, political and economic discrimination and inequalities of a class, race, gender, institutional and spatial nature profoundly shaped, and continue to shape South African higher education. Given this, South Africa's new democratic government committed itself in 1994 to transforming higher education as well as the inherited apartheid social and economic structure and institutionalizing a new social order. Moodie pointed out that although strides have been made, women academics are still losing out to male colleagues at South African universities, especially at the senior level. Pervasive patriarchal attitudes, the lingering effects of apartheid and woman's childbearing responsibilities are the major challenges faced by female educators as they climb the career ladder, and statistics show their situation hasn't improved much this past decade (Moodie, 2010: 63). In South Africa, a lot still needs to be accomplished to improve the quality of education and address the issues of gender. This next section discusses the statement of the problem, aim and objectives, the significance of the study, major research questions, and the definition of concepts.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Research in various institutions of learning has shown that there is a glaring disparity when it comes to the awarding of senior jobs especially between men and women. Studies have shown that for every ten men who are selected into management positions, there is only one woman on the selection list. Also, their multiple roles as providers and mothers at home hinder them from being looked at favorably by their male counterparts. The Labour Relations Act, though progressive in many respects, is still silent on mainstreaming gender, especially in institutions of higher learning. At the University of Venda, where this study is being conducted, female professionals and labourers also seem to be suffering from the same gender disparities when it comes to promotions. Women are still under-represented in leadership positions. For instance, the Vice-Chancellor position is held by a man. So is the registrar. Most of the heads of

department are men. This institution still has a backlog in terms of mainstreaming gender to an acceptable level. This study seeks to determine as to what holds women from ascending the employment ladder to higher positions in the academic profession.

### **1.3 Aim and objectives of the study**

Aim refers to the purpose and anticipated outcome that is intended or that guides the researcher's planned action (Jamshed, 2016). The main aim of this study is to probe the experiences of academic employees in relation to gender equality in the leadership positions at the University of Venda.

### **1.4 Objectives**

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To explore experiences of academic employee's members towards gender equality;
- To determine how gender representation at UNIVEN is practiced;
- To identify challenges faced by female academic employees in their career advancement at this university;
- To determine how women can best enter and succeed at leadership at the University of Venda.

### **1.5 Major research questions**

The study will employ the following research questions:

- What are the experiences of academic staff members towards gender equality in the Institutions of higher learning?
- How is gender representation practiced at the UNIVEN?
- What are the challenges faced by female academic employees in academic careers in the Institutions of higher learning?
- How can women best enter and succeed at leadership/management levels at the University of Venda?

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

Probing the experiences of female academic employees provides an important framework for understanding the ongoing gender imbalances in the higher education sector. This study will contribute to the current discussions about women in the higher education sector and institutions of higher learning in South Africa. The findings and recommendations may be used by the university to develop and implement policies and programs that promote gender equality at the university. Finally, this study will add to the body of knowledge on under-representation of women and as justification for advocating gender equity principles in the university management.

## **1.7 Definition of concepts**

### **1.7.1 Perception**

Perception refers to an attitude, understanding or result, based on what is thought, observed or acquired about a minority member and/or the surrounding environment or situation a minority is in (Kajawo, 2012). In this study, perception means the ability to understand and interpret gender parity in leadership positions.

### **1.7.2 Gender**

Gender refers to the different roles, rights, and responsibilities of men and women and the relations between them. Gender does not simply refer to women or men, but to the way their qualities, behaviors, and identities are determined through the process of socialization (Berg, 2006). Daddow (2013) explains that gender is the meaning given to the concept male and female and the supposed characteristics that flow from them in terms of those that are held to be masculine and those to we associate with femininity. In this study, gender means a set of socially constructed characteristics describing what men and woman ought to be.

### **1.7.3 Gender inequality**

Gender inequality refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals based on their gender (Berg, 2006). Kajawo (2012) defines gender inequality as a disparity between individuals due to gender. In this study, gender inequality defined as unfair

treatment of individuals, unfair access to opportunities and unfair constraints based on their gender.

#### **1.7.4 Gender equality**

Gender equality refers to when women having the same opportunities in life as men, including the ability to participate in the public sphere (Phala, 2011). Phala (2011) defines gender equality as men and women enjoying the same opportunities, rights, and obligations in all spheres of life. In this study, gender equality defined as an equal sharing in the distribution of power, resources, and opportunity.

#### **1.7.5 Gender roles**

Gender roles refer to expectations regarding the proper behavior attitudes and activities of males and females (David, 2014). For example, toughness is thought of as masculine while tenderness as feminine. In this study, gender roles mean the constellation of rules and identities that prescribe and proscribe behavior for persons, in their social roles as men and women.

### **1.8 Conclusion**

This chapter affirmed that gender disparities exist in each society. However, the problem is common in Africa due to a patriarchal tradition which has critical outcomes in higher institutions of learning. In most institutions of higher learning, men have long dominated the top echelons of power while women remained marginalized. The chapter presented general orientation of the study, aspect covered include; background of the study, Statement of the problem, Aim and objectives, the significance of the study, Definition of concepts. The next chapter will present literature review.

## **Chapter 2: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to review the existing literature of other authors around the world regarding gender inequality in institutions of higher learning. This chapter is comprised of Challenges experienced by women in institutions of higher learning. It also probes gendered Leadership styles, Gender Stereotypes, the Glass ceiling in the Institution of Higher learning and the theoretical framework. It also highlights knowledge gaps that existing research has left unresolved. The identification of such gaps will assist in situating the study in the existing body of knowledge in the field of gender mainstreaming.

Literature is probed under the following sub-headings derived from the study objectives: Factors influencing gender inequality, gender representation and equity in the workplace. Challenges faced by women in the leadership positions.

### **2.2 Challenges experienced by women in higher education institutions**

Considerable research demonstrates that women in Institutions of higher learning are lagging behind men because of barriers that hinder their progression to senior management positions. This section reviews the literature on the experiences and challenges faced by women in Institutions of higher learning. Moodie (2010) notes that gender equality in higher education needed more focus and attention. Moodie highlighted that focus on gender equality in higher institutions of learning reflects growing concerns that women in higher education are not getting equal treatment as their male counterparts. In the higher education sector, there is less visibility of women in leadership positions, especially in key leadership positions like university vice-chancellor and registrar (Moodie, 2010).

On the other hand, Naicker (2013:2) postulates that white male privilege was held up by an invisible hand of support, prestige, and advocacy which gave male academics access to valuable information and opportunities, thus ensuring their success. Naicker also indicates that women academics who managed to obtain positions in the academy were without this invisible hand of support, which meant that these women simply did

not have access to the resources they needed. Moreover, in such a context, the white male privilege was the lens through which the experiences of women were re-interpreted and dismissed. In addition to the above, Naicker further contends that black women, being at the bottom of the rung in the racial/gender hierarchy of apartheid were not only subjected to race, class and gender discrimination, but also experienced discrimination from within the ranks of women themselves, women who served to re-enforce paternalism and the marginalized position of black women (Naicker, 2013: 2).

The major problem is that the workplace in general, including Institutions of higher learning, is highly masculine oriented (Maqubela, 2013). Butler (2004) illustrates that staff members and students in HEIs' are being exposed to working environments dominated by masculine values and power. To this effect, in most HEIs globally, women remain underrepresented. In relation to the above, Hutcheson, et al (2011) asserts that the institutions of higher education were primarily established by men, who tend to have processes and structures in place that reflect male values and lifestyles.

The absence of women in decision-making positions stems from a variety of influencing factors. It is important to note that women have historically faced multi-faceted barriers and challenges in higher education, particularly in areas of equality of opportunity. Such barriers can be categorized into barriers stemming from cultural factors among others socialization and stereotype; individual and organizational barriers.

### **2.2.1 Patriarchy**

Mngxitama (2010) argues that patriarchy is part of sexism because it puts the interests of men before those of women and uses culture, religion, tradition and even love to justify the enslavement of women. It reduces women from being the property of men. In addition, Mngxitama notes that patriarchy is an ideological construct of a system encompassing ideologies, beliefs, values, and practices underpinning the organization and structure of society which result in unequal power relations between women and men. According to Miriam (2015), men are a prized commodity, yet there appears to be no clear consensus on the type of skills and qualities they exhibit beside being physically different from women. On the other hand, Jones asserts that the subjugation and subordination of women in all spheres of life beginning with the family are impacted

upon by patriarchal attitudes (Miriam, 2015). Jones also emphasizes that it is a historical and widespread phenomenon, continuously reinforced by social practices and institutions, including education, work, religion, culture, the arts and the media and has come to be a natural, God-given or part of the tradition and culture.

Kiruriti (2015) notes that the situation of women compared to men, in universities in Africa is inseparable from women's position in society at large. Kiruriti (2015) demonstrates that women's role and progress in the university can only be understood through an analysis of the sociology that situates the university in the society that also defines its existence, goals, and values (Kiruriti, 2015). Furthermore, Kiruriti (2015) therefore see a great need to examine the systems, structures, norms, and values of a society that govern and define the universities and their ways of operation, which are significantly patriarchal.

Cook and Glass (2014) demonstrates that due to traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes barriers to women obtaining leadership positions are still prevalent in the African context and that these act as deterrents to the promotion of females. At face value, men in institutions of higher learning tend to mask patriarchy and pretend to treat women as equals (Kiruriti (2015). Cook and Glass (2014) also emphasize that female students and women employed in tertiary education need female role models in terms of professors and administrators in senior management.

Miriam (2015) notes that the South African Constitution considers, equality of men and women as a fundamental part of its human rights and should be observed in all sectors of the country, including Higher Education institutions. However, Wood (2013) demonstrates that despite the enormous positive changes in South Africa after 1994, the country is still characterized by great inequalities, since patriarchy is still pervasive. She asserts that disparities due to pervasive patriarchal attitudes are a major barrier to women academics. These manifest in various forms, such as blocking women from climbing the academic ladder, exclusion from research supervision, and production of knowledge, among others.

### **2.2.2 Masculine Work-culture**

Cook and Glass (2014) demonstrate that traditionally, leadership has been associated with masculinity and the belief that men make better leaders than women. Cook and Glass (2014) state that with management being masculine oriented, women feel the demand to prove their authoritative power to fit into a role that society typically ascribes to men. Wood (2009) emphasizes that even after long battles against gender oppression, where women finally obtained the right to be educated through government acts, the opening of facilities willing to educate them, and the opportunity to continue into higher education. Although women have shown themselves to be capable educational leaders, they tend to be discouraged by the masculine work culture and their male counterparts.

Schwanke (2013) demonstrates that most leadership positions are described using argentic terms, so men are deemed more appropriate for those roles, whether the position is in a field that is seen as traditionally male- or female-oriented. Schwanke further argues that men will, therefore, accelerate their climb up the corporate ladder, leaving women to slowly ride the glass escalator and to work through external perceptions. Although women are generally perceived to have made great strides towards equality in achieving senior positions, the fact remains that women still do not share equal representation in these roles (Schwanke, 2013).

### **2.2.3 Gender and racial stereotypes Leadership**

Gender and racial stereotypes can be identified yet another barrier in South Africa; perceptions on leadership capability are also marked by race. As Casad and Bryant (2016) states that black and colored women face stereotypes that are rooted in their historical employment as maids in the homes of white employers. Davis and Maldonado (2015) demonstrates that stereotypical assumptions about the gender differences between men and women make conditions difficult for women to obtain the opportunity to be placed in senior leadership positions. Davis and Maldonado (2015) further note that the traditionally defined model of leadership assumes that good leadership is essentially masculine. Such masculine characteristics as being a good decision-maker, organized, assertive and strategic, have been and continue to be associated with good

leadership. On the other hand, women leaders have been described as sensitive, caring, compassionate, responsive, democratic, participative and nurturing (Davis & Maldonado, 2015).

#### **2.2.4 Underrepresentation of women in the HEIs leadership.**

Bahieh, Mohani, and Farhad (2015) argue that universally, education is accepted as the foundation for achieving the goal of social justice. In addition, Bahieh, Mohani, and Farhad (2015) also indicated that supports and justifies for developing women's participation in the top senior position of higher education based on the quality, equity, and development. It acknowledges the global progress made over the decades, in improving the status of women in higher education (World Bank, 2005 & Calvo, 2015). However, although women in Higher Education have received special treatment by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, gender disparities and gaps still exist, especially in top decision-making positions. Underrepresentation of women in positions of senior management within educational institutions continues to be a matter of concern, particularly as the teaching force is largely dominated, by women (Yousaf, R & Schmiede, 2017). Avgeri (2015) demonstrates that despite variations in the pattern of representation of women in positions of educational leadership what is common is that educational leaders are predominantly male, and women seem to be under-represented at managerial levels in virtually all countries.

Furthermore, Yousaf and Schmiede (2017) observes that women's low level of active participation and their underrepresentation in decision-making and leadership positions, especially in HEIs continues to be a problem. According to Yousaf and Schmiede (2017), for any workplace to function as democratic, women must have equal access to decision-making processes. Marina (2015) also highlights that if women continue to be under-represented when decisions are being taken, it means their needs and interests are not be adequately addressed, nor can they be expected to accept the legitimacy of the decisions taken on their behalf. Taylor & White (2014) argues that women are seen as outsiders in academia. They are disadvantaged by a system which differentiates values and interests are seen to be little or of no importance. Taylor and White (2014) highlights that legislative policies have helped women in higher education, but despite these initiatives women in higher education still experience large disparities in salary,

promotion, and prestige. Taylor & White (2014) also points out that often subtle discrimination is rooted in gender stereotypes, especially when it comes to leadership. However, Mason states that female candidates are purportedly passed up for promotions based on a conscious or unconscious belief that women do not have what it takes to lead men (Taylor & White, 2014).

### **2.2.5 Lack of mentorship**

In a general sense, the literature on mentoring is consensual in the view that mentoring is the chief means by which female academics can be prepared to advance their careers in academia, while noting that they are likely to benefit from psychosocial mentoring (Marina, 2015). Moreover, marina notes that given the fact that female academics are also faced with balancing academic and domestic life in ways which are dissimilar to their male counterparts given their caregiver roles in the home. However, Marina (2015) also demonstrates that in many cases, males are the chief beneficiaries of mentoring since higher education has always been regarded as male-dominated and are more easily mentored by male mentors. Marina (2015) indicates that traditionally, women were comparatively fewer in academia and so younger female academics are often not mentored by more experienced females. Marina (2015) further indicates that even though more females have entered academia and continue to do so at a steady rate, they are nevertheless regarded as an under-represented and minority group in leadership positions within academia. The lack of senior women both at the full professor and administrative levels, according to Marina (2015) meant that women experienced time restrictions which prevented them from providing adequate mentor support.

### **2.2.6 Lack of research and publishing networks**

Mooney (2012) asserts that traditionally, men have had more access to research, and publishing networks, a domestic support to facilitate research and better promotional prospects. To this effect, Mooney also demonstrate that women have been directed into caring, helping pastoral roles within the university which provide little time or opportunity for self-advancement. Statistical evidence shows that women have an unequal chance when attempting to enter the academic profession, and when they arrive they are

promoted more slowly than men and more likely to leave (Mooney, 2012). On the other hand, Cummins (2012) postulates that women academics must learn to ask for help. In addition, Cummins indicates that women need to surround themselves with people who understand the work process that they engage in. Furthermore, Cummins argues that women academics need to use mentors and networks to access and empower themselves in the process. On occasion, such assistance can be denied from other women (Cummins, 2012: 84).

### **2.2.7 Lower classification for women**

Morley (2012) indicates that the initial appointment of women to lower classification levels puts them at a structural disadvantage by increasing the time needed to ascend academic ladders and by reducing their access to influential committees, to senior researchers with whom they might network and collaborate, and to other women who could serve as role models or support and mentor them. Moreover, Merchant (2012: 15) demonstrates that barriers that make up the glass ceiling hindering women from advancing in their careers include lack of mentors and role models for women leaders, exclusion from informal networks of communication, stereotyping and preconceptions of roles and abilities, lack of significant experience, and commitment to family responsibilities. In addition, Merchant notes that though companies are slowly beginning to see a greater representation of women in management positions, the presence of females in management positions is disproportionate to the representation of males in leadership positions (Merchant, 2012: 15).

### **2.2.8 Gender stereotypes**

Another important barrier that is shown in the literature is referred to as are gender stereotypes. A study by Mohabir (2012: 22) highlights the fact that "men tend to perceive women who succeed in managerial positions as being less physically attractive. This is due to the stereotypical assumption that women are less competent than men are, to handle managerial positions. In another related study, it was also found that men still have less positive attitudes about female managers than women do in the workplace. Mohabir further indicates that men are sexist because they believe that males have always been better leaders than women whom they consider being

emotional, insecure, irrational, and focused on family rather than work (Mohabir, 2012: 22).

Merchant (2012: 16) demonstrates that men and women differ psychologically in the way they act, from the style in which they communicate to the way in which they attempt to influence others'. Merchant further asserts that gender differences in communication and influence tactics also have implications for gender differences in the leadership styles of men and women. Merchant (2012) highlights that men and women also differ in the way in which they influence other individuals. Though the influence tactics used by male and female managers or leaders vary depending on the gender of the targeted person that they are trying to influence, much research proves gender differences across influence tactics (Merchant, 2012: 16). According to Merchant (2012), gender differences in communication styles and influence tactics have created stereotypical gender roles that have affected the behaviors of both men and women in the workplace. (Merchant, 2012: 16) notes that some of these stereotypes have even had negative effects on women's behaviors and perceptions of females as employees, managers, and leaders in the workplace (Merchant, 2012: 16).

### **2.3 Gendered leadership styles**

Literature shows that institutions and organizations may benefit by having both men and women in strategic positions (Maqubela, 2013) since men and women attributes and qualities complement each other. Literature highlights gendered styles in leadership. Maseko (2013) notes that leadership styles are marked by gender differences. For example, male South Africa managers, like in other parts of the world, focus on performance, competition and winning, power, control and directive leadership. Furthermore, Maseko (2013) highlight that South African woman managers' leadership style is characterized by cooperation, empowerment, involvement, intuition, and empathy. Maseko characterized the style of women in her sample of 216 retail managers as transformational and interactive. This seems to be the strength on the part of women. Maseko also included racial differences in the behavior of the managers in her sample. Maseko also highlights that the organizational culture of white managers differed greatly from that of blacks. The black managers in her sample were more Afro-centric in their approach to leadership (Maseko, 2013).

Rhode (2016) notes that there is a mismatch between the qualities traditionally associated both with women and with leadership. Rhode also contends that most characteristics associated with leaders are masculine, dominance, authority, assertiveness and so forth. In addition, Rhode (2016) demonstrate that women are becoming more like men in their career aspirations and achievements and are more willing to see themselves as having qualities associated with authority. Rhode (2016) indicates that more women now occupy highly visible leadership roles, and recent theories of leadership have stressed the importance of interpersonal qualities commonly attributed to women, such as cooperation and collaboration. Yet despite these trends, Rhode (2016) argued that traditional gender stereotypes still leave women with a double standard and a double bind. Men continue to be rated higher than women on most of the qualities associated with leadership.

## **2.4 Gender stereotypes and the glass ceiling in the HEIs**

Morley (2013) argues that although many women are educated they need disposition and experiences to be successful and effective in academic executive and managerial roles. Moreover, women often find that others challenge their authority and question their intelligence (Morley, 2013). Women are experiencing a glass ceiling challenges in higher education such as societal and institutional beliefs that women cannot lead; that women have to focus on family responsibilities and obligations. Breaks are taken for child-raising that coincide with crucial career development periods and having less freedom to travel than men. Women fail to be promoted to senior positions due to perception they are suited to compassionate roles than decision-making roles (Casad & Bryant, 2016)

Johnson and Thomas (2012) in Naicker (2013) demonstrate that transforming higher education and the inherited apartheid social and economic structure was high on the agenda of the new democratic government of South Africa. Although a number of interventions were introduced to bring about the advancement of women, and to increase the number of women in Institutions of higher learning. The study of Naicker articulates that there are numerous challenges experienced in taking up research grants which have been made available. Furthermore, Johnson and Thomas (2012) alluded that more positions for women academics opened up, mentoring projects were

established and a host of other interventions were initiated. On the other hand, women still find it difficult to opportunities climb the corporate ladder in institution of higher learning (Naicker, 2013).

## **2.5 Theoretical framework**

### **2.5.1 Standpoint Theory**

The mentioned theories (Liberal, Socialist, Radical and Third World feminism are positive in analyzing the binaries inherent in gender and class positions of women. However, a more relevant theory that suits this study is the Standpoint theory.

Standpoint theory basically seeks to challenge the initial production of knowledge which was written from a male perspective and thus omitted women interests and experiences. To this effect, it demonstrates the importance of presenting the perspective of women and other subjugated groups in knowledge production. Davis (2013) indicates that the feminist standpoint epistemology requires researchers to place women at the center of the research process, wherein women's concrete experiences provide the starting point from which to build knowledge (Davis, 2013).

In addition, Cochrane (2013) added that feminist standpoint theory attempts to elaborate a feminist epistemology, or theory of knowledge, which is an important epistemological tool for constructing effective knowledge from the insights of women`s experience (Cochrane, 2013). As (Cochrane (2013) states, standpoint theory demonstrates that women possess a different type of knowledge since their lives and roles in almost all societies are significantly different from those of men. In addition, their position as a subordinated group enables women to see and understand the world in special and challenging ways to the existing male-biased conventional wisdom. The feminist theory uses the conflict approach to examine the reinforcement of gender roles, and inequalities, highlighting the role of patriarchy in maintaining the oppression of women. Jackson (2014) demonstrates that women`s view of the world is more reliable and less distorted than what the ruling class possesses, because of women unique social position.

As already mentioned above, the researcher will standpoint theory as it also focuses on the theory of patriarchy as a system of power that organizes society into the complex of

relationships based on the assertion of male supremacy. Moreover, standpoint theory was used in this study because it aims to understand the nature of gender inequality, and also examines women`s social roles, experiences, and interests. Standpoint theory helped this study as it provides a critique of social relations and focuses on analyzing gender inequality and the promotion women`s interests. Standpoint theory was the most appropriate for this study as it is more comprehensive in addressing the root causes gender inequalities. Moreover, this theory also assisted the researcher in the section of methodology to recognize Positionality in the study.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

This chapter captured the reviewed literature on challenges experienced by women in leadership positions in the Institutions of higher learning. It focused on gender issues and some characteristics that hinder women to advance to the upper ladder and finally streamlined to focus the study in University of Vanda Thohoyandou, South Africa. The theoretical framework which applied in the study is feminist standpoint thoughts. Feminist standpoint challenges issues of gender inequality in institutions of higher learning in relation to gender mainstreaming. The concept of gender and gender equality were addressed. Under-representation of women, lack of mentorship, research, publications, and glass ceilings in the higher education institutions were also discussed. The next chapter discusses the research methodology used in the study.

## **Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the research methodology that was used in conducting the study. Research methodology refers to the methods, techniques and procedures that are applied in the process of implementing the research design (Silverman, 2013). In this chapter, the following aspects are discussed: qualitative approach, research design, and description of the study, population of the study, sampling procedure, data collection, research instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations

### **3.2 Research design**

To achieve the purpose of the study the qualitative approach was employed. Jamshed (2016) explains that qualitative research can be employed while one is exploring new methods of looking at a greater familiar topic as feminist proponent recommend. Therefore, the qualitative approach permits the researcher to produce data that is holistic, contextual and descriptive in detail.

The qualitative method is the most appropriate research design for this study because it allows for the exploration of the subjective experiences of academic employees` on gender equality in the leadership positions at the University of Venda. The researcher chose qualitative approach because he wants to get first-hand information directly from the respondents. The qualitative approach looked into the social experience through the use of structured questionnaires. The respondents were UNIVEN employees` academics (women and men) who answered by choosing a predetermined set of scaled responses and supporting their answers at the University of Venda, Thohoyandou in Limpopo Province, South Africa (Henning et al., 2004). The study additionally analysed participants` own beliefs and attitude, which are shaped by the same social relations being researched. In this procedure, the researcher removed himself from the research context to obtain an essential distance from which they could interrogate their own standpoint.

### **3.2.1. Description of the study area**

This study was carried out at the University of Venda which is located in Thohoyandou in the Thulamela Local Municipality beneath the Vhembe District inside the Limpopo province, South Africa. Limpopo Province is divided into five districts, specifically Mopani, Vhembe, Capricorn, Waterberg, and Sekhukhune. Vhembe is located on the far north side of South Africa, bordered by Zimbabwe and Mozambique. South Africa has twenty-three (23) Universities, and the University of Venda is situated in Vhembe district. The University of Venda is constituted of eight faculties with an estimation population rate of 15 532 students. The UNIVEN community is constituted of numerous international groups including males and females from different parts of Africa.

### **3.2.2. The study population**

Consistent with De Vos, Strydom, Fouché, and Delport (2011), population refers to a set of subjects, events, objects or individuals having some common characteristics that the researcher is interested in studying. The population of the study consists of University academic employees. The researcher seeks to find out what hinders women from progressing to leadership positions in the higher education institution.

### **3.5. Sampling procedure**

Babbie and Mouton (2012) notes that non-probability sampling refers to the type of sampling that is utilized in qualitative research, in which there is no generalization of information because it specializes in getting intensive information. The study blended purposive and convenient sampling, that are kinds of non-probability sampling, to choose the representative sample of the academic employees' participants group. Purposive sampling is based totally on the decision of the researcher. Wherein, convenience sampling enables the researcher to sample participants of the target population that meet sure realistic standards, together with smooth accessibility, geographical proximity, availability at a given time, or the willingness to participate for the motive of the study (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). However, the sampling was determined by the will to participate and availability of participants. Other sampled participants pulled out of the study, which resulted in the researcher having to look for other participants of which in turn delayed and reduced the number of participant in the

study. However, at the end, the researcher managed to collect data from seven (7) female and five (6) males academic staff members ( $n=13$ ).

### **3.6. Data collection**

Data collection method is the technique of collecting information in the course of the research project (Austin & Sutton: 2014). In this study, open-ended questions became applied in the collection of data which is more empirical in nature. Data were accumulated from academic employee members in the University of Venda through questionnaires. The questionnaire consisted of a combination of open and close ended questions in which respondents stuffed and handed over to the researcher. The questionnaire pertains to demographic information of the respondents, their critiques about gender inequality, career advancement opportunities, gender representation, demanding situations of women in academic careers, entrance, and fulfillment of women in leadership positions at the University of Venda. Those questionnaires helped the researcher to generate important information using the qualitative method. Open-ended questionnaires are more elaborate in responses which are limitless in some cases.

#### **3.6.1. Completion of questionnaires**

Questionnaires were distributed to respondents for them to complete on their own, but the researcher was also available in case problems are experienced. The researcher limits his own contribution to the completion of the questionnaire (De Vos, et al: 2011). Similarly, the researcher was available for clarification and respondents received encouragement from the researcher to fill the questionnaires.

The quantitative aspect of the study was divided into four sections of the questionnaire namely: Section A: demographic data of academic employees' participants (women and men) at University of Venda; Section B: Career advancement opportunities, Section C: Gender representation at the university of Venda; Section D: Challenges of women in academic careers and Section E: Entrance of women in leadership positions (see Appendix). The data concerning the purpose of the study was clearly stated in the informed consent form (see Appendix). The respondent completed the consent papers, despite the fact that few did not complete it due to the fact that they were afraid to

disclose their identity no matter my effort in assuring them that their identity will not be disclosed.

### **3.7. Data analysis method**

In line with Bojie (2010), data analysis is a method of systematically looking and arranging the interview transcripts and field notes that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and permit you to present what you have discovered to others. Data accumulated through questionnaire were interpreted, grouped according to themes through a process of data coding. Data coding refers to a systematic way in which extensive data is condensed into smaller sets analyzable units through the creation of categories and concepts derived from the data Bojie (2010). Thematic analysis is essential on this research as it identifies recurring styles, similarities, and differences and it additionally identifies new themes which could emerge from the gathered data. Thematic type of data analysis methods will be used for this study.

### **3.8. Ethical consideration**

Consistency with Babbie and Mouton (2012), ethics are set of moral principles that are extensively accepted and which give policies and behavioral expectations about a accurate conduct in the direction of research. In this study, the researcher became in the long run responsible for the integrity of the research procedure and the dignity and well-being of the research subjects. As such, the researcher acknowledged the need to balance subjectivities, provided accurate research accounts and act in the law so one can broaden the required understanding. This was accomplished by:

#### **3.8.1. Permission to conduct research**

The proposal was presented to the School of Human and Social Sciences' Higher Degrees Committee prior to the execution of the research project and was approved or authorized before it was dispatched to the University Higher Degrees Committee and then to the University Research Office for ethical clearance. An approval letter and ethical clearance letter were issued. Copies of these documents are part of the appendix.

### **3.8.2. Informed consent**

Ethics of research include voluntary participation which means that participants are not to be forced to participate (Babbie & Mouton, 2012). To this effect, the researcher seeks consent from the participants to participate in the study. Acquiring informed consent implies that all possible or adequate information on the goal of the investigation; the expected duration of the participant's involvement; the procedures which will be followed during the investigation and the possible advantages. At some point of a research, participants have the right to understand what the research is all about, how it will affect them, the danger and benefits of participation and the fact that participants have a right to participate if they choose to do so (Neuman, 2011). The participant was informed about the nature of the study, what is anticipated from them and the way results might be used. Informed consent implied the following:

- Participants had the intellectual potential and mental maturity necessary to understand their involvement in the study.
- Participants have been making a self-reliant choice to participate in the study.
- Involvement in the study is certainly voluntary.
- Participants were aware of the nature and details of the research being conducted.
- Participants were aware of their right to discontinue the research study.

Participants were in no way coerced into collaborating within the study (Neuman, 2011). This letter of consent serves as a written agreement containing information concerning the aims of the research, use of the research, as well as the role of the participant in the research. Participants were knowledgeable that participation would be voluntary, and they can withdraw from participating at any time as and when they feel like. To this end, an informed consent letter was prepared and distributed to each participant of the study. An Informed Consent letter for this study is attached as a part of the appendix.

### **3.8.3. Confidentiality**

Confidentiality means handling of data in a confidential manner. The information provided by participants was covered and no information concerning any participant

was known to the public or any other unauthorized employees. Protection of confidentiality involved restricting access to raw data, storing all information securely, reporting findings in a manner that does not permit for equipped identification of participants and obtaining permission for next use of information. The data participants provide is confidential or personal and their names are not revealed in the analysis and interpretation of the data.

#### **3.8.4. Anonymity**

In line with Neuman (2011) anonymity refers to the ethical protection that participants remain nameless, their identities are protected from disclosure and remain unknown. The researcher will use anonymity to shield the information or names or any other identification of the respondent to keep away from being looking awful. Not revealing or publicizing the respondents' personal details helped the respondents to be comfortable. In this study, the researcher utilised pseudonyms or false names to ensure the anonymity of the participants

#### **3.8.5 Securing appointment to complete questionnaire**

An appointment to distribute the questionnaire for data collection was arranged with the participants. The appointment was made at the convenience of the participants because of the nature of their responsibilities. The questionnaires took less than 25 minutes to be completed.

#### **3.9. Study limitations**

Limitations are potential weaknesses in the study and are out of the researchers' control (Creswell, 2013). Limitations of this study were influenced by three factors which are the availability of participants, the timing of the study, and the delay of funding. The researcher encountered challenges during data collection from the targeted study participants. Some of the participants were unable to form part of the study due to their workload. Some academic personnel do not comprehend the idea of gender mainstreaming within the University of Venda and some were not inclined to participate. These challenges hindered the researcher from getting back completed 20 questionnaires which were distributed, however, the researcher managed to get back thirteen (13) stuffed questionnaires.

### **3.10 Conclusion**

The chapter described the qualitative approach adopted for this study. It also presented the research approach, design, instrumentation, sampling, ethical considerations of the study and the demography. A qualitative approach was purposefully selected to have in-depth information and the proof grounded in the University of Venda, Thohoyandou, in Limpopo Province South Africa. The next chapter discusses the research presentation, findings, and information interpretations.

## **CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND ANALYSIS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This section presents the interpretation, analysis and discussion of the data. The data were presented and analyzed systematically using the thematic system of the data analysis. In this respect, the data is presented in the form of major themes that emerged from the interviews. It starts by presenting the participant's demographical data. This is followed by the presentation and discussion of research findings. The presentation of data is guided by the following research objectives: to explore experiences of academic employees towards gender equality; to analyze how gender representation at UNIVEN is practiced; to examine challenges of female academic employees in their career advancement at this university; to determine how women can best enter and succeed at leadership positions at the University of Venda as described in chapter 3 where the data was organized categorically.

### **4.2. Research Findings Analysis and Discussion**

Findings are divided into three sections, Demographical data, Career advancement opportunities, and gender representation, Challenges of women in academic careers and Entrance of women in leadership positions.

#### **4.2.1 Demographical data**

The research consists of a sample of the total of seven females and six male academics ( $n=13$ ) from University of Venda. Their ages range between 25 and 65, as can be seen in the table below. Table 1 also shows that participants' employment levels are between junior lecturers to Director. The majority of participants', as can be seen in the table below are married, followed by participants who are single and lastly, two participants who are widowed.

**Table 1: Demographical information**

	<b>Pseudonyms</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Marital status</b>	<b>Level of Employment</b>
1	Acts	Female	53	<i>Single</i>	Senior Lecturer
2	Bachelor	Female	52	<i>Widowed</i>	Lecturer
3	Vision	male	45	<i>Married</i>	Lecturer
4	Mission	Female	56	<i>Married</i>	Lecturer
5	Roots	Female	38	<i>Single</i>	Junior Lecturer
6	Gino	male	43	<i>married</i>	Junior Lecturer
7	terminal	Male	54	<i>married</i>	Senior Lecturer
8	Confidence	female	61	<i>Married</i>	HOD
9	Shamah	female	64	<i>Widowed</i>	Chief Administrator
10	Mishah	male	57	<i>Married</i>	Administrator
11	Rozy	male	50	<i>Single</i>	Senior Lecturer
12	Grazy	male	63	<i>Married</i>	Senior Lecturer
13	Lolly	female	48	<i>single</i>	Director

The table above indicate that 53, 8% were females and the other 46, 2% were males. In University of Venda both men and women who were sampled were able to share their views and experiences about gender equality in the leadership positions and what they perceive as the challenges hindering women to ascend to the upper ladder and advancing their career. In addition, Majority 38, 5% of the respondents where people

between the age of 51-60 years, and 30, 8% from the age 41-50 whereas 23% were people from the age of 61-70 and 7,7% were people from the age of 30-40. Importantly, table 1 also indicates level of employment for the academic employees. The majority (30, 8%) of respondents were senior lecturers, and 23% of respondents were lecturer, 15.4% were junior lecturer and whereas 7, 7% were HoD, Chief Administrator, Administrator and Director each.

#### **4.3 Career advancement opportunities**

A generally held assumption is that women (specifically married) regularly placed their careers on the preserve to permit their partners to increase theirs. The woman plays a supportive role, regularly subordinating her personal career to that of her partner or occasionally even sacrificing it for the sake of her husband. However, the experiences shared by means of the women in the present study do not list 'prioritising the husband's career as an impediment'. As a substitute, it is the dual role of profession and circle of relatives (with few putting family first) which constitutes an obstacle to professional development.

The participants were asked if they had any plans to improve or advance further and where they would like their careers to be in the next 5 years. Three categories of comments were distinguished. Majority of comments were positive regarding the desire to move up the academic ladder or move into a senior management position. In this regard, some respondents said the following:

*"I would really like to improve from the position of head of department to that of the Dean"* (Acts, 53, Senior Lecturer)

*"I am seeking out ways of competing for a vice-chancellor" position* (terminal, 54, Senior Lecturer)

*"I would love to register for a doctoral degree"* (Vision, 45, Lecturer)

Nearly all the participants were negative or unsure regarding them joining the management field. They said the following:

*"I have no aspiration to enter into management- I would really like to make a difference in other fields apart from management"* (Bachelor, 52, Lecturer)

*“I do not have ambitions of moving up – would love to work with students. That’s pleasing”* (Mission, 56, Lecturer)

*“Not certain, presently just comparing positions”* (Rozy, 50, Senior Lecturer)

The remaining group of commentators included the ‘age clock’ (ageing) as an impediment. Those who responded to the theme of ageing said they could not strengthen themselves even if they wanted to, because they are nearing retirement. Their responses are as follows:

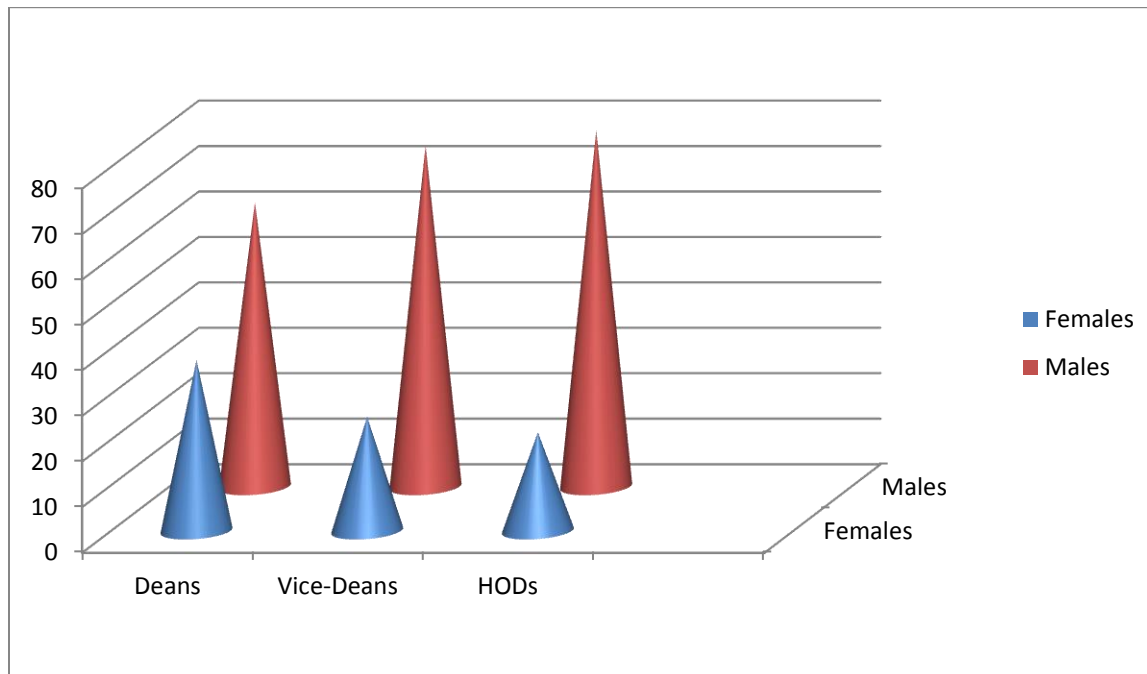
“Well, I think since you know how old I am, all I can say is there’s not much time to further my career, I’m tired” (Confidence, 61, HOD)

"Retiring at end of the year 2018" (Grazy, 63, Senior Lecturer)

"That’s a problem for me because I'm quite old now, I'm nearing the end of my career and although I would like advancement it’s very unlikely that a job will come up in time for me to apply”. (Shamah, 64, Chief Administrator)

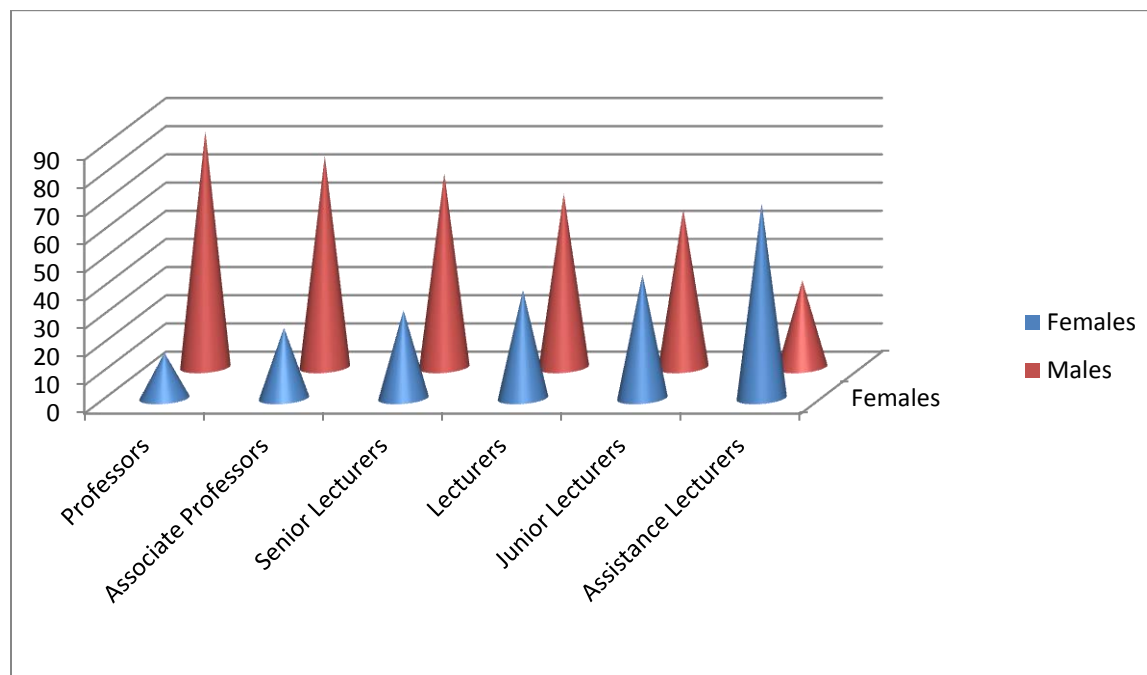
What were interesting about these comments were the reasons given. Whereas the women who aspired to a higher academic rank or a senior management position expressed a desire to be more involved in research, publishing and supervision of postgraduate students, and in ‘making a difference at the whole organisational level’, the women who were not interested in moving up felt that being ‘too management-oriented’ would hamper their enjoyment of working with students. It appears, therefore, that while on the one hand, more involvement in management is perceived by some as an opportunity to improve their research careers, on the other hand, it is perceived by others as a barrier to teaching and making a difference at that level.

**Figure 1: Middle Management**



**Figure 1** shows gender representation in the middle management; the findings show that 62.5% of deans are men and 37.5% are women. The table also shows that 75% of the Vice-Deans are the males and 25% are the females. In addition, the findings also show the disproportionate gender representation in HOD positions where women are under-represented in this position, 21.6% are women and 78.4% are men. Importantly, As Deutsch (2007) indicated, the most important gender issue worldwide is women’s low level of active participation and their under-representation in decision-making and leadership positions.

**Figure 2: Academic Level**



Importantly, the researcher sought to investigate the gender representation at various levels of academia. The figure above demonstrates that women are under-represented in especially the highest academic positions. As can be seen in the figure above the greatest gender disparity is at the level of the professoriate, where 83.9% represent men whilst 16.1% is women. Similarly, male associate professors represent 75% while women only represent 25%. The findings on the senior lecturers show that 68.8% are men and 31.2% were women. The gap narrows down at the lecturers' level where there's almost 40% representation of women. The figure shows that women are concentrated at junior levels of academia. Junior lecturers consist of 56.1% men and 43.9% women. Surprisingly, men dominate the assistant lectureship, as can be seen in the figure above. Last but not least part-time lecturers consist of 59.6% of men and 40.4% women. The above findings clearly demonstrate that the university has a long way to go in the realization of the transformational goal especially with regards to gender representation.

In addition to the audit, the researcher sought to find out from the participants whether 'men and women are equally represented at the workplace'. Participants were asked

the following question Do you think women are adequately represented in the following employment levels?

- Executive management,
- Middle management,
- Academic management
- And junior management

The researcher also wanted to determine participants' opinion from the above-mentioned question as to *'why do they think this is the case?'* In their responses, many of the participants emphasized that women are not well represented in most of the higher positions in academia, as well as top and middle management of the university. They attributed this to the patriarchal workplace-oriented culture. These participants indicated that women are only concentrated in lower positions at the University of Venda. The following are participant's responses:

*"Women are not adequately represented in Top and Middle management because men believe that women are so emotional and cannot manage the stress that comes with management. Anyway, they are well represented in the Academic management at Lecturer, junior lecturer and senior levels"* (Roots, 38; Junior Lecturer)

*"Women are not represented in the Executive and Middle management because these domains are for men. But in the Academic management women are adequately represented because these levels are accessible to females"* (Lolly, 48; Director)

In addition to the above question, the researcher also sought to determine participants' perceptions of 50/50 gender representation at all employment levels. The majority of participants demonstrated that indeed there should be 50/50 in all spheres of employment in the academia or anywhere at the workplace. According to the majority of participants men and women should be given equal opportunity to be part of leadership at the workplace as gender parity is necessary in all employment levels, as can be seen in the responses below;

*“There should be 50/50 at all the employment levels. Of course, suitable candidates should be targeted for promotion and human rights at workplace should be followed”* (Lolly, 48; Director)

*“Women should be represented as Head of Departments and 50/50 parity on work and placements should be observed.”* (Acts, 53; Senior Lecturer)

To sum up, data have demonstrated that gender equality still has a long way to be achieved more especially in the institutions of higher education. The University of Venda is still to a large extent masculine oriented.

#### **4.4 Challenges of women in academic careers**

Challenges are encountered in any employment situation. The position of Head of Department is no exception. Consequently, the participants were asked to share those aspects of their job as Head of Department, which they found most challenging. One of the most frequently mentioned challenges by participants was “dealing with merger problems.” However, UNIVEN participants found “restructuring and transformation of universities and of departments and programmes” a trial. Some of the consequent problems of merging, according to participants, include:

*“Having to deal with staff who are resentful over shrinking departmental budgets”*  
(Confidence, 61; HOD)

*“Those who won’t let go of dying programmes”.* (Mishah, 57; Administrator)

In addition, according to a South African participant, merger and incorporation presents challenges of "dealing with different cultures", and said one UNIVEN participant:

*“Being integrated into the university’s ethos and culture where many of the staff are from a college which has been incorporated into the university”* (Gino, 43; Junior Lecture)

The budget is a continuous challenge. Head of Department must operate with shrinking budgets and resources and are expected to ‘do more with less’. This also results in feelings of resentment among staff forced to share scant resources. It leads to frustration and aggression as well as confrontation and resistance all of which is a test

for the Head of Department. 'Maintaining research outputs' was identified as another challenge for the Head of Department. As can be seen in responses below;

*"Not only does the Head of Department have to ensure that staff engages in teaching, but she has to encourage them to engage in top-level research as well to meet the demands for education and research assessment". (Confidence, 61; HOD)*

Participants further shared their opinions that the Head of Department has to balance many demands including work, family, university and programme requirements. These are participants' responses below:

*"Heads of department are also tasked with identifying and developing talented staff; designing and developing postgraduate programmes; and turning an emerging programme around. In addition to all these tasks, the Head of Department is a full-time academic/professor"* (Lolly, 48; Director)

The researcher also wanted to know whether the participants would apply senior or top management positions, such as the 'Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and registrar' at the University of Venda. The majority of the participants responded positively to this question, as can be seen by the quotes below:

*"If I manage to accumulate the required qualifications for this position 'I won't think twice' because I know I'm capable and I would apply for Vice-Chancellor position with the necessary qualities and qualification. Nothing will ever limit me, including my gender"* (Gino, 43; Junior Lecturer)

*"Yes indeed, I would. So that my principles may be seen as valid and I would do that in order to put gender programs in practice."* (Bachelor, 52; Lecturer)

*"I would apply for a senior management position at UNIVEN because I believe that 'I stand a chance' if I had the necessary qualifications. I would apply for registrar position because I do have the skills needed"* (Vision, 45, Lecturer).

This is an indication that although women want to apply for top positions in academia, they are confronted with barriers to such positions. However, one participant differed

with the others on the above question and said that it depends on one's qualifications and hard work. She said the following:

*"I wouldn't apply for a senior management position because I feel; I have already missed the boat"* (Mission, 56; Lecturer).

In addition, the researcher sought to determine whether participants have any challenges with regard to publication. Participants were asked if they *have any challenges with regards to publications.*" Data also reveals that most of the participants are facing some challenges in terms of publishing. Karikari (2008) indicates that publications of articles are one of the major challenges that hold women back in their academic progression. Most participants indicated that the workload is one of the major problems that prevent female academics from publishing articles. The respondents said the following in this regard:

*"The workload is preventing me from publishing"* (Vision, 45; Lecturer)

In addition to the above, the researcher sought to investigate if the respondents have attended any article publication workshops. Similarly, the researcher also wanted to determine whether workshops have played a vital role to help the respondents. The researcher sought to determine whether participants are presently having articles in journals. At the Institution of Higher Education, 'publication of articles' seems to be extremely important for the university staff member to move or upgrade from one level to another (Morley, 2013; Marina, 2015). According to Marina & Morley, this is the most important process for all academics who work and study very hard worldwide. The minority of participants have at least managed to publish their articles. However, the majority of participants have not yet published any articles, but they have attended workshops which specifically based on articles publication. And it is quite interesting because most of the participants seem to have gained a lot and benefit from the workshops. See the responses with regards to question as to *'how they have helped you'* below;

*"I attended publication workshops and they helped me to have the insight into how articles are evaluated"* (Acts, 53; Senior Lecturer)

*“I attended and I am busy writing one. The presentations had been done on article writing and I performed some tasks to help myself and also I have been referred to senior people to assist me” (Rozy, 50; Senior Lecturer)*

*“It is not long that I have joined the University, so I am still working on my article writing skills” (Gino, 48; Junior Lecturer)*

Importantly, one participant asserts that household responsibilities are also part of the challenges that hold women back. Women are not free to participate fully in the academia because their daily routine makes them have workload and this is one of the reasons why women do not publish that much (Karikari, 2008).

*As a mother and wife and an academic, I always juggled with many responsibilities. I have to go fetch children from school, attend to sick children, including their father. And this takes a lot of my time. The teaching overload is too much. Although I want to do research, it is very challenging. We also have no one to mentor us with regard to research and publication (Mission, 56; Lecturer).*

*“We have other responsibilities outside work, at home, at church. There is just too much to juggle. However, I do try and do research whenever time permits” (Shamah, 64; Chief Administrator)*

In conclusion, this sub-section shows that although women are gradually advancing in their careers they are still facing multiple challenges in their line of work such as teaching and research supervision overloads that are preventing them from publishing. More so, women are also hindered by the family responsibilities to advance in their academic careers.

#### **4.5 The success of women at leadership/management levels**

This section determines how women can best enter and succeed in leadership/management positions in institutions of higher learning (IHL). When research participants were asked to explain how women can best enter and succeed in leadership/management positions in institutions of higher learning, many respondents argued that their entrance depends on their individual knowledge, skills, and experiences. Apart from both academic qualification and work experiences, participants suggested *“engendered policies, Training workshops, and women empowerment*

*strategies through mentorship programmes*” as strategies to increase their success in leadership positions/ senior management level at the University.

In addition to the above statement, the findings of this study revealed that there were more males in leadership positions especially in the Middle Management at UNIVEN. Majority of participants indicated that academic women should be sent for training in their various areas of employment specialization and leadership positions, as supported by the responses below:

*“Women must be empowered through training and development. Bursary and leave allowances should be provided during such training as it will broaden their areas of skills and knowledge and give them time to master their area of the profession to become future leaders of the Institution”. (Mishah, 57; Administration)*

Cullen & Luna, 1993, Hagevik (1998), Whitaker & Lane (1990) supports the statement above by saying that although there are challenges and obstacles faced by women leaders, there must be a desire from the part of many institutions to set up goals and strategies which will help in the upward mobility of females in any institution of higher learning or the private sector. Some participants also articulated the importance of mentorship in leadership management; as indicated by the respondent below:

*“The mentoring experience would help women to develop self-esteem, aggressive leadership personalities and self -assertion” (Lolly, 48; Director)*

*“The nurturing of attitudes of self-worth will also allow for accomplishment in job performance” (Terminal, 54; Senior Lecturer)*

In this study, the researcher found that the use of mentors would help to present future leaders with the powerful tool that may be used to bring about effective labour practices. For women to thrive in obtaining leadership positions in a workplace, mentoring must be observed. The mentoring experience should be incorporated into the University policy to make it a normal operation in the institutional job performance. This will ensure that they develop in their respective areas of specialization.

There is no doubt that when employees are trained and mentored there would be self-esteem and confidence in executing their job expectations. Eagly *et al.*, (2003) argue

that government departments have prepared extraordinary plans for working towards gender equality by putting programmes in place to advance the position of women. It is therefore contingent upon female academics to access these opportunities.

The researcher sought to find out useful strategies in addressing the employment challenges especially in leadership position. In this regard, the majority of participants indicated the appropriate strategies of ‘staff retention and nurturing’ as well as ‘transparency and fairness’ should be essential. An overwhelming majority of participants ‘strongly agree’ on the above-mentioned strategies. Moreover, the majority of participants also ‘strongly agree’ that middle management positions challenges could be addressed by ‘establishing support networks’, ‘balancing personal or professional activities’ and ‘deliberately seeking out members of other gender groupings for development and promotion.

Importantly, the researcher also sought to determine from participants whether they think gender should be mainstreamed at UNIVEN. Participants shared their thoughts in different perspectives as quoted below. What came out from the data is that most participants do seem to share the idea that there is a necessity for intervention, through gender mainstreaming in order to promote gender equality at UNIVEN.

Firstly, one participant suggested the proper implementation of equality policies in order to promote gender equality.

*“The implementation of equality policies and regulations are most important to promote gender equality at the University of Venda”* (Rozy, 50; Senior Lecturer)

Secondly, another participant suggested the usage of equality approach, as a way to mainstream gender at the workplace. However, as Maqubela (2013) suggests, this approach does not make a significant difference in terms of changing gender relations. But this may only make a difference in addressing only women representation.

*“Women should be given an equal opportunity to compete with others for leadership positions”* (Mission, 56, Lecturer).

Thirdly, a minority of participants indicate that gender should be mainstreamed at all levels of employment. They further indicate that students should be taught about gender

equality. More so, one of the participants indicated that gender should be mainstreamed to elevate the status of women at the University of Venda.

*"Gender should be mainstreamed in schools at the University of Venda Every staff member should be taught about gender equality and there should be gender lessons in all departments so that there would be gender transformation"* (Acts, 53; Senior Lecturer)

*"Gender should be mainstreamed to elevate the status of women at UNIVEN"* (Bachelor, 52; Lecturer)

In summing up, the data has shown that most participants are agreeable to have women in leadership positions at the workplace. More so, most of the women are willing to occupy or support other women in leadership positions such as Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and *Registrar* as well as Dean and HOD positions. However, the perceptions are that women have to be strong, believe in themselves and have the capacity to perform and to be competent.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

### **5.1. Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on the presentation, analysis, and discussion of data. In this chapter, the focus is on how the findings have answered the research objectives. This will be followed by conclusion and recommendations and future research. The study recommendations are based on the findings presented in chapter four of this study and the conclusions to be drawn in this chapter are an overall recap of the whole study.

### **5.2. Overview of the Study**

This study had adopted a feminist standpoint theory to probe the experiences of academic employees in relation to gender equality in the leadership positions at the University of Venda. Participants were drawn from female and male academics between the ages of 30-65.

### **5.3 Summary of Research Findings**

This section seeks to discuss how the findings answered the research questions. The study sought to answer the following research questions:

- What are the experiences of academic employees towards gender equality in Institutions of higher learning?
- How is gender representation at the UNIVEN practiced?
- What are the challenges faced by females in academic careers in the Institutions of higher learning?
- How can women best enter and succeed at leadership/management levels at the University of Venda?

Below I outline the research questions and discuss how they have been answered by this study.

### **5.3.1. Experiences of academic employees towards gender equality in HEIs**

The researcher sought to investigate the experience of academic employees in their career advancement. The findings articulate that lack of mentorship and lack of formal preparation in the form of professional development programs; appear to have been the major constraints for the women. In addition to the above, the findings also show that very few of these women were mentored or participated in training programs designed to develop management and leadership skills. Furthermore, the findings, as well as literature, demonstrates that although the women had some experience of training in the form of workshops and courses on management and leadership, none of them had any formal preparation for the job.

The findings demonstrate that women frequently want to move into senior management positions. However, the results have shown that minority of participants were either uncertain or clearly unwilling to trade their family responsibilities and love for teaching for a life of administration and management. The findings have shown that one of the main obstacles to advancement seems to be the dual role of career and family. In addition to the above, the findings indicate that starting an academic career late in life is as much an impediment to career advancement as lack of experience or lack of a good research profile. The literature used in this study demonstrates that institutional advertising policies, which make it difficult for women to compete fairly, can also be as much of a hindrance as lack of support from the dean of a faculty.

The findings have shown various strategies for overcoming obstacles to career advancement. The main strategies suggested by the participants in this study are determination and perseverance. This is confirmed in Devillard, et al (2013). Importantly, results have shown suggestions that women are tenacious and have the capacity to continue with a given course of action until it is completed. Similarly, in the academia, the findings reveal that positive attribute, particularly for someone in a position of authority, implies that positive leadership and management action undertaken will not be abandoned until results have been achieved.

### **5.3.2. How is gender representation practiced at UNIVEN?**

This question sought to investigate gender representation in all levels of management and academia at UNIVEN. Findings have shown that women are under-represented in almost all management and academic levels. Glaring gender disparities were revealed especially as ranks ascend. This is demonstrated in chapter 4. The data and statistics show that women are not represented at all at the executive management. We begin to see slight women representation in middle management. More women are represented in junior management. Similarly, in academia, the findings show glaring disparities at the professoriate level, and slight representation at senior lecturer level. Data shows that women are concentrated at lower levels such as '*Lecturer, Junior Lecturer, Assistance and part-time Lecturer*'.

To this effect, as the literature suggests; much still needs to be done to close the gender gaps in higher education institutions in South Africa (Marina, 2015 & Morley, 2013). The findings demonstrate that gender equality in almost all institutions remains elusive and difficult to achieve. Literature has demonstrated that there are no appropriate structures and strategies in place to holistically address the issue of gender equity. The findings provide interesting accounts in this regard. For instance, it is perceived that female academics 'themselves' should begin to undergo the transformation of their mindset, by getting rid of the negative stereotypes and preconceived notions that society has about their ability to lead.

### **5.3.3. What are the challenges faced by women in academic careers at the University of Venda?**

The above objective sought to investigate challenges of women in academic careers and leadership position at the University of Venda. The findings have shown that women in the academia and the middle management face multi-faceted challenges. A combination of the findings from the questionnaires revealed four major challenges encountered by women as Head of Department in their job. In support of the above, the findings reveal restructuring and transformation, the budget, research and time management as related issues. More so, the findings on 'time management' have shown that women in this study seem to imply that Head of Department may have

difficulty fitting in the numerous responsibilities and tasks they have within the available time. It is most probably not an indication of any inefficiency on their part.

To this effect, the findings have shown that heads of the department are expected to promote and encourage excellence in teaching and research as well as provide long-term direction and vision for the department while performing the maintenance functions of preparing budgets and handling finances. The results further indicate that employees who are in the leadership position also have conflicting demands and expectations, not the least of which is providing an enabling environment for both individual employees and the entire group to succeed. In other words, she must ensure that individual, as well as teamwork, are encouraged.

The findings demonstrate that the middle management must provide intellectual leadership in the restructuring of the curriculum and in designing new programmes. Moreover, the study findings also articulate that it is inevitable that women would need strong support networks and strategies to overcome the challenges. Contrary to common practice in universities, the findings have shown that using consultants to address challenges is not an appropriate strategy. Therefore, the results have also shown the recommended strategies that include:

- retaining and nurturing staff
- being transparent and fair
- balancing personal and professional activities and
- identifying members of other racial groups for promotion and development

The results of this study also indicate that the leadership of middle management roles include among others, external liaison, communicator, nurturer, visionary, and decision maker. In addition, results have shown that the role of middle management also includes consultation, delegation, sharing of authority, managing people and managing change. To this effect, the findings further indicate that various responsibilities are associated with the job and the findings of the study articulate that the leadership of middle management is accountable for the following aspect:

- Staff recruitment/selection

- Performance appraisal
- promoting staff development
- chairing departmental meetings and managing finances

Generally, findings demonstrate that female participants have a huge work overload that prevents them from participating fully in academia. The results have shown that participants are teaching huge classes and are allocated many research students to supervise every year. Furthermore, the findings have shown that academics are also expected to attend various departmental activities, workshops, and training aimed at self-development. This deters them from engaging in research and publications. More so, the findings show that for female part-timers and junior lecturers, it difficult to conduct research as they don't receive any institutional support to do their research and publications. Importantly, results have shown that most women are unable to advance their careers because they lack mentorship. The literature used in this study demonstrates that household responsibilities are part of the challenges that hold women back.

#### **5.3.4. How women can best enter and succeed at leadership/management levels**

The findings suggest that women's entrance to leadership positions/management levels depends on their individual knowledge, skills, and experiences. Apart from both academic qualification and work experiences, participants suggested "*engendered policies, Training workshops, and women empowerment strategies through mentorship programme*" to increase their success at the leadership position/ senior management level in the University.

Furthermore, the findings from the participants articulate that mentors would help to present future leaders as a powerful tool that may be used to bring about effective labour practices. The findings have shown that for women to thrive in obtaining leadership positions in a workplace, mentoring must be observed. In addition, the results also articulate that mentoring experience should be incorporated into the University policy as to make it a normal operation in the institutional job performance; as each employee will do best in the job specification.

The results have shown the useful strategies in addressing the employment challenges especially in leadership position, in what follows are the results of inappropriate and appropriate strategies for addressing employment challenges in leadership management; the findings show that ‘using flexible student admission procedures’ and ‘using consultants’ as strategies for addressing middle management position job challenges does not seem appropriate or applicable. What appear to be useful strategies, according to the participants, the appropriate strategies are ‘staff retention and nurturing’ as well as ‘transparency and fairness’. Moreover, the results further show that middle management positions challenges could be addressed by ‘establishing support networks’, ‘balancing personal or professional activities’ and ‘deliberately seeking out members of other racial groups for development and promotion’.

Importantly, results have alluded that the aspects of ‘power sharing’, ‘professionalism’, ‘integrity, personal example and persistence are ‘very important’. Therefore, the findings from the participants indicate that there is a necessity for intervention, through gender mainstreaming to promote these aspects amongst female academics.

#### **5.4. CONCLUSIONS**

Hegemonic masculinities still dominate institutions of higher learning. Moreover, women representation in most of the institutions remains very low especially at the University of Venda. Women are still lagging behind in leadership positions.

#### **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Recommendations are made at three levels: policy, workplace, men, and women as seen in what follows.

##### **5.5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY MAKERS**

The first recommendation is directed at the level of policy. HEIs must develop a broad gender policy framework, from which HEIs will develop institutional policies. Kyambogo University (2012) recommend that gender equality principles must guide university policies; regulations; and the development of university strategic plans: Firstly, Institutions of higher learning would need to improve women’s safety via improvement of social and physical infrastructures, including provision of lighting; efficient campus security system; legislating against sexual harassment and other gender-based

violence; instituting grievance procedures for victims of gender-based violence; as well as challenging discriminatory attitudes. Secondly, Affirmative action policies are important to correct age-long discrimination against women. Staff development programs should reinforce gender equality policies and affirmative action schemes.

Kamau (2010) further recommends that women should be agents of transformation within the workplace, societies, and communities as well as within families. To this effect, the following recommendations are made by Kamau (2010):

- That any affirmative action meant to empower women must be run by women themselves, and not by men for they portray a masculine role-image and not a female one;
- That woman be involved themselves, or at least be truly consulted, in any programs that are designed to help empower them;
- That women-friendly issues should form the main basis of the content of the course/s that is meant to empower them;
- That flexible admission rules and policies be applied to allow women into such centers that are meant to empower them;
- That even part-time courses for working women be offered; and finally,
- That women-centered teaching approaches be applied so as to create an image of a female model in the process.

Moreover, it is recommended that mentorship and mentoring programmes should be introduced, and a flexible system of allocating mentors should be adopted. For instance, mentoring a woman does not necessarily have to be by another woman. The choice should be left to the mentee to take the initiative to recommend a mentor with whom she is compatible. Women aspire to middle or senior management positions should, therefore, be encouraged to participate in mentoring and formal preparation programmes designed by the institution.

In terms of advertising and promotion procedures, it is recommended that advertising and promotion procedures should be structured to give first preference to internal candidates, especially women.

## 5.5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING

The researcher further recommends that women in leadership must be seen to be doing things differently, practicing the culture of inclusion, challenging the power status quo, rather than being co-opted into the dominant power structures. In addition, Women assuming leadership positions have to challenge established patriarchal and hierarchal styles of leadership, redefine power relations rather than allowing themselves to be co-opted and take risks of advancing the transformation and reconstruction agendas (Tsoka & Mathipa 2001:07). Lastly, it is recommended that:

- Institution should encourage the formation of academic and leadership support networks for women
- Deans of faculties should support women who aspire to move up the academic ladder instead of frustrating them
- Institutions should formulate policies geared at fast-tracking women with leadership potential
- Employment equity policies should be fairly implemented so as not to advantage one ethnic or racial group over another, a larger scale study is needed that will cover a considerable number of institutions to gain deeper insight into the problem.

To sum up, let us learn from a famous idiom that says ‘teach a man, and you teach only an individual, but teach a woman, and you teach the nation.

## 5.6 Future Research

Finally, suggestions for possible future research are made. The researcher earnestly hopes that women and institutions will take a critical consideration of the subsequent recommendations. Therefore, it is recommended that women aspiring to as well as those already in leadership and management positions:

- Plan early for career advancement
- Involve women in managerial work to gain experience
- Develop a good research profile

- Be proactive in choosing their mentors
- Be bold and confident, persistent and determined in the pursuit of their goals
- Form networks with other women in similar positions.

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## Appendix A: Consent Letter

I am Munyai Ndivhuwo, a Masters student at the University of Venda. I am undertaking a study titled *“Experiences of Academic Employees members in relation to Gender Equality in Leadership Position: A Case Study of Semi-Urban University in Limpopo Province, South Africa”*. The main aim of this study is to probe the experiences of academic employee’s members in relation to gender equality in the leadership positions at a semi-urban University in Limpopo province.

I request your participation in my study as respondents to my research questions. Please note that your participation in this study is voluntarily and that it will not cause any harm as whatever information you provide will remain strictly confidential between you and I. More so, I pledge that I shall ensure anonymity where required and as agreed between us through the use of code names.

You are free to withdraw from this study at any time of your choice without any negative consequences to you.

**Researcher**

.....

**Mr N Munyai**

**Respondent**

.....

## Appendix B: Questionnaire

### Appendix B: Questionnaire (Experiences of Academic Employees Members in Relation to Gender Equality in Leadership Position: A Case Study of a Semi-Urban University in Limpopo Province)

#### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Instruction: please choose the appropriate answer by putting a tick in the provided space.

##### 1. Age range

<b>30-35</b>	
<b>35-40</b>	
<b>40-45</b>	
<b>45-50</b>	
<b>50-55</b>	
<b>Other</b>	

##### 2. Gender

Female	
Male	

##### 3. Marital Status

Single	
Married	
Widowed	
Divorced	

##### 4. Racial Group

African	
Indian	
White	
Coloured	

**5. Academic Rank**

<b>Professor</b>	
<b>Senior lecturer</b>	
<b>Lecturer</b>	
<b>Junior lecturer</b>	

**6. Level of education (please indicate your highest qualification only)**

Diploma	<b>1</b>
Bachelor's degree or equivalent	<b>2</b>
Honours degree or equivalent	<b>3</b>
Master's degree	<b>4</b>
Doctorate	<b>5</b>

**7. Number of years with current institution:**

<b>1-5</b>	
<b>6-10</b>	
<b>11-15</b>	
<b>16-20</b>	
<b>21+</b>	

**8. Have you ever heard of the concept 'gender equality'?**

Yes	
No	

**9. If yes, how did you learn about it?**

Friends	
Family	
Media	
Informer	
Other	

**10. If through the media, which type?**

Television	
Radio	
Newspapers	
Internet	
Other	

## SECTION: B CAREER ADVANCEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

**1. What do you think helped you get to your present position? Check all that apply**

Self-motivation	1	
Support of family	2	
Encouragement by colleagues	3	
Encouragement by mentor	4	
Managerial involvement	5	
Employment equity	6	
Previous head of department	7	
Publications	8	
Qualifications	9	
Other (please specify) ..... .....	10	

**2. Did you have any formal preparation for YOUR current position?**

Yes	1	
No	2	

Please motivate your answer

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3. If yes, what was the nature of the preparation?

(Please check **all** that apply)

Mentorship Programme offered by institution	1	
Managerial training offered by institution	2	
Self-initiated managerial training	3	

4. Do you have any specific steps or actions to advance further in your academic career? (e.g. enrolling in a management course) etc.

Yes	1	
No	2	

5. If yes, please indicate where you would like to be in your career in the long term? (i.e. 5 years) from now.

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**SECTION C: GENDER REPRESENTATION AT UNIVEN**

*Please the below table:*

Do you think women are adequately represented in the following employment	Yes	No	Why do you think this is the case?	Do you think there should be 50/50 gender parity at all the	Please support your answer
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levels?				stated levels?		
				Yes	No	
Executive/Senior Management						
Middle Management						
Deans						
HODs						
Professor						
Senior Lecturer						
Lecturer						
Junior Lecturer						
Assistance Lecturer						
Part-Time Lecturer						

#### **SECTION D: CHALLENGES OF WOMEN IN ACADEMIC CAREERS**

1. To what extent do you agree the following are **challenges** to you in your current job situation? Please use the scale below to indicate your response.

**SCALE: 1. Strongly Agree/ 2. Agree/ 3. Undecided/ 4. Disagree/ 5. Strongly Disagree**

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
		1	2	3	4	5
	Developing new programmes for accreditation					
	Promoting gender equity					
	Promoting racial justice					
	Balancing family and career					

Managing cultural diversity					
Responding to the needs of a diverse student population					
Assessing program quality					
Maintaining program quality					
Addressing issues of accountability					
Implementing quality assurance measures					
Strengthening the curriculum					
Managing the needs of the department in the face of increasing financial constraints					
Attracting and retaining non-traditional students					
Assessing teaching effectiveness					
Dealing with difficult department staff members					
Managing departmental data using current technological systems					
Dealing with unsatisfactory staff performance					
Building an effective team					
Building networks					
Undertaking and fostering creativity and initiative					
Office administration					
Personnel management					

2. Would you apply for a senior management position at UNIVEN?

Yes	
No	

**Please support your answer**

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3. Which of the following leadership position would you apply for?

Vice-Chancellor	
Deputy Vice-Chancellor	
Registrar	

**Please support your answer**

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4. Do you have any challenges with regards to publication?

Yes	
No	

**Please support your answer**

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5. How many published articles do you have? If any please outline them

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6. Have you attended any article publication workshop?

Yes	
No	

***If yes, have they helped you? Did you get a helpful feedback?***

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7. Other employment challenges: Please specify

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## SECTION E: HOW WOMEN CAN BEST ENTER AND SUCCEED AT LEADERSHIP/MANAGEMENT LEVELS

1. Below are listed several strategies useful in addressing the Employment **challenges** listed in the previous **section C**. Please use the scale below to indicate the extent to which you agree that the strategies would be useful to you in your current position.

**SCALE:** 1. Strongly Agree/ 2. Agree/ 3. Undecided/ 4. Disagree/ 5. Strongly Disagree

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	1	2	3	4	5
Staff professional development workshops					
Increasing participation of women students and staff in all areas of academic life					
Deliberately seeking out members of other racial groups for development and promotion					
Balancing personal and professional activities					
Being fair and transparent					
Evaluating teaching and assessment techniques					
Attracting, nurturing and retaining good staff					
Evaluating current departmental performance in					

	leadership development					
	Building strong support networks with other Heads/Chairs					
	Seeking external funding					
	Clearly specifying roles and responsibilities for HoDs/Chairs					
	Participating in leadership and management training workshops and seminars					
	Using flexible student admission procedures					
	Participating in social events and programs focused on common areas of interest					
	Using consultants					

## 2. Leadership and management

To what extent do you think the following are **important** in the management and leadership of your department: Please use the scale below to indicate your response.

**Scale:-1.Very important/ 2. Important/ 3. Neutral/ 4. Not very important/ 5. Not important**

	Very Important	Important	Neutral	Not Very Important	Not Important
	1	2	3	4	5
Cost-efficiency					
Value-for-money					

Audit					
Performance indicators					
Intellectual development					
Professionalism					
Collaboration					
Open and egalitarian collegiality					
Performance, standards and improvement					
Equal opportunities/employment equity					
Social justice, equity and cooperation					
Efficiency, individualism and competition					
Inspirational vision					
Integrity, personal example and persistence					
Nurturing creativity, learning and autonomy					
Sharing power with members of the department					
Delegating responsibilities to others					
Encouraging teaching staff to use a wide variety of teaching approaches					
Programmes designed with flexible entry and exit points					
Recognition of prior learning					
Selective admissions policies					

Preparing students to meet the needs of business and industry					
The concept of life-long learning programmes					
Providing academic development programmes for students					

3. Other Strategies: Please specify

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4. Do you think gender should be mainstreamed at Uneven?

Yes	
No	

Please elaborate

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**Thank you for your time**

## Appendix C: Ethical Clearance Certificate

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:

**Mr N Munyai**

Student No:

**11624172**

PROJECT TITLE: **Experiences of academic employees in relation to gender equality in leadership position: A case study of semi-urban University in Limpopo Province, South Africa.**

PROJECT NO: SHSS/17/GYS/10/0210

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof TD Thobejane	University of Venda	Supervisor
Dr TD Sikhwari	University of Venda	Co-Supervisor
Mr N Munyai	University of Venda	Investigator - Student

ISSUED BY:

**UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Date Considered: September 2017

Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee Granted

Signature of Chairperson of the Committee: .....

Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Prof. G.E. Ekosse



University of Venda

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TELEPHONE: (015) 962 8504/8313 FAX (015) 962 9060

*"A quality driven financially sustainable; rural-based Comprehensive University"*

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION 2017 -10- 06 Private Bag X5050 Thohoyandou 0950
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