

## **FEMALE LECTURERS' PROMOTION TO ELEVATED MANAGEMENT POSITIONS: EMERGING TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigated trends on the promotion of female university lecturers to elevated management positions. In Zimbabwe, women have gained legal rights through government pronounced policies such as the constitution, Gender policy and Affirmative Action policy. The theoretical framework employed is critical feminism which deals with issues that marginalise females from elevated management position in universities. A qualitative research design was employed. Inductive reasoning was used to explore the research argument. The design enabled the researcher to establish how society perceives the practice of selecting top management in institutions of higher learning. A sample of sixty lecturers, thirty males and thirty females was drawn from a population of six hundred lecturers in four selected universities. Data was collected via a questionnaire and semi-structured focus group interviews. The study found that very few females were in elevated management positions. There was a culture of fear on the part of the females to apply for top management position vacancies. Males and senior management were not keen to support elevated female management. The study recommends the need for a paradigm shift and change of mindset regarding females to seriously take senior management posts that come their way. Women need to assertively compete with men for elevated management positions whenever opportunities arise.

**Keywords:** management, higher education, institutions, lecturers, elevated

### **INTRODUCTION**

Management literature is abounding with research examining the believed differences between male and female management styles (Richardson and Loubier, 2008: 142). A multiplicity of explanations for gender related differences, such as biology (Bass, 1998; Kolb, 1999), societal role expectations (Mugweni et al, 2011; Chabaya et al., 2009; Kosh, 2004); characteristics (Jackson et al., 2003); values-drive perceptions (Claes, 1999), management suitability and management efficiency (Gherardi, 1996; Sinclair, 1998; Power, 2002) have been advanced. Experience shows that from the Holy Bible to present-day gender practices, management is viewed from a patriarchal perspective. Broady and Hammet (1999) describe management as an exclusively product-driven process where efficiency, control, power over, accountability, motivation and manipulation strategies are used. It is about one holding power over subordinates (Watkins, 1989). From a feminist view, leadership is a transformational practice (Broady and Hammet, 1999). It means that females in elevated management positions are seen as playing a transformational role. They are viewed as agents of change and hope for fellow women. Their attainment of management positions is seen to challenge Biblical, historical and traditional stereotypes that are gender blind. The stereotype view is a constraint for females gaining management positions because it assumes and demands a determined personality that challenges and transforms the status quo. Cultural and social factors are the most important barriers to women advancement (Mirghafouri, 2006: 101).

there should be a proportion of seats held by women in organizations (UNESCO, 2005: 294). On the contrary, regarding promotion to elevated management posts, females have low self esteem and seem to lack confidence (Mugweni et al., 2011; Chabaya et al., 2009: 235). Women perceive that their role in the family overrides all other roles. In most instances, women lack support from family their members and workplace colleagues. It was also noted in this study that sometimes women are passive, submissive, tame, timid, quiet, passive and unpredictable. The assumed gender differences account for lack of females in elevated management posts in universities (Winkler, 2000: 737). The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is an international bill of rights for women. It defines discrimination against women as: "...any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field (Women Leadership and Governance Institute, 2002: 31)". By ratifying the convention, Zimbabwe as a member state also committed itself to undertake a series of measures to end prejudice against women in all forms. This qualitative study attempted to search and understand lived experiences of female university lecturers' regarding promotion to elevated management positions.

The third Millennium Development Goal endeavour to 'promote gender equality and empower women', that is,

### THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

Top management in Zimbabwean universities still reflects the long-established mythology that empowers males and prejudice females. The persistent shortage of females in top management positions shows this tendency. Stereotyping, discrimination and gender blind practices also account for the marginalization and very low numbers of women in university elevated management (Mugweni et al., 2011). The gender policy in Zimbabwe is meant to attain social justice, equality and equity in all institutions – including higher education and service sectors. However, there is still a persistent gender bias tradition and gender imbalance in university elevated management.

The study sought to answer the following three research questions:

1. How females are positioned in elevated university management positions?
2. What do female lecturers identify as factors militating against their promotion to elevated management positions?
3. How does male-dominated university management impact on female lecturer's professional growth and development?

### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Feminism was employed as the theoretical framework of this study. It is an ideology that seeks to unravel the mysteries of gender relations and to transform the existing gender affairs that are oppressive (Gentine, 1999). The framework is political in nature, because it seeks to disengage the status quo. Feminism is against any and all forms of oppression although its main focus is to resist gender hierarchy and male supremacy (Women Leadership and Governance Institute, 2002). As a philosophy, feminism seeks to establish equality of the sexes. It advocates for equal opportunities and participation of men and women in institutions. It also offers a critique of male dominated institutions, values and social practices that are oppressive and destructive. Feminism views women's status as a result of conditioning.

The social conditioning takes place in all educational and socialisation processes which define masculinity and femininity. In this study, the feminist principles directed the researcher in methodology, in terms of choosing instrument items as well as in the production and discussion of findings. Feminism asserts that patriarchy is used worldwide to describe the situation of male dominance over women and children within the family and the extension of the practice into all other areas of society (Mugweni et al, 2011). The ideology subsumes women's oppression under a system of patriarchy (Broady and Hammet, 1999). Under patriarchal practice, any man regardless of his status, age and achievement is considered superior to any woman no matter how she may surpass the men in status, age, and achievement. Patriarchy is dominated by male privilege and dominance where women play the subordinate role in public as well as private (Chabaya et al., 2009). In the humanity

nowadays, women may be subjugated and underprivileged in areas such as attainment of higher educational qualifications; participation in positions of authority; decision making and occupational structure (Women Leadership and Governance Institute, 2002). In these critical areas women are mostly found at the lower levels of management and operations. It was consequently the consent of this study to explore emerging trends in higher education institutions regarding the promotion of women to university elevated management positions and search ways to minimise challenges encountered for gender parity and justice.

### METHODOLOGY

A qualitative research paradigm was employed in this study (Creswell, 2007). A descriptive survey was engaged. Inductive reasoning and narrative was used to explore the research argument. The qualitative approach used enabled a researcher to solicit rich data on attitudes, beliefs and feelings (Cohen et al., 2005: 37). Employing the design, the researcher was able to investigate educational, cultural and social arenas of the problem (Wiersma, 2000). It also enabled the researchers to establish how the practice of selecting managers in institutions of higher learning is viewed in Zimbabwe. A purposive sample comprising of sixty lecturers – thirty males and thirty females from a population of six hundred lecturers was selected in order to attain equal gender representation of lecturers in four universities. The purposefully selected participants were seen to be rich data sources for the study. Data was collected via a questionnaire and a semi-structured focus group interview. The questionnaire comprised forty items seeking responses on issues regarding promotion of women to elevated management in institutions of higher education. The questionnaire included open-ended items sourcing lecturers' views on the research problem (De Vos et al 2011; Ely et al., 1997).

### DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analysed using the descriptive analysis technique. Vignettes and excerpts were employed as narratives that carry within them an interpretation of the respondents' experiences. The analysis was conducted according to descriptive analysis and a coding system. Relevant themes, categories and sub-categories were generated from the data to allow a presentation, synthesis and discussion of the results. Tesch's method of data analysis was employed to analyse all the data from the focus group interviews and open-ended questionnaire. The method involved the following processes outlined in Creswell (1994:154-155), Skhosana and Peu (2009:5) and Mugweni (2012:112).

For the open-ended questionnaire, the researcher initially organised and analysed data according to individual research participants (the sixty lecturers). I considered all the responses of each individual before moving on to the next participant's responses in order to preserve the coherence and integrity of the individual response and to develop a holistic image of each participant (Cohen *et al.*, 2007:467). On completion of the questionnaire responses,

the researcher could reflect on salient issues emerging and we developed tentative themes, categories and sub-themes.

During data analysis I used thick description vignettes (Ely *et al.*, 1997:70) and quotes from the interviews and questionnaire. The strategy created mental images that brought to life the complexities of the variables inherent in emerging trends in higher education institutions regarding the promotion of female lecturers to elevated management posts (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006:16). In presenting data I chose to consider the results and findings in relation to the reviewed related literature and the theoretical framework – critical feminism.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

### *Gender issues*

Regarding gender issues in relation to the promotion of female university lecturers to elevated management positions in Zimbabwean universities, the results reveal that seventy percent (42) of the participants assert that women's rights to elevated management positions are limited. On the statement that internalisation of established gender stereotypes makes women inferior to men, eighty-seven (52) participants agreed with the issue. Eighty-three percent (50) of the participants reported that women are viewed by what they are and not what they do. These results reveal that lack of women promotion to elevated management positions emanates from cultural stereotypes and patriarchal beliefs.

### *Management issues*

Results on management issues show that seventy percent (42) reported that in management issues women are good followers. Sixty-one percent (38) agreed to the view that women do not participate equally with men in management roles. On the other hand, sixty-one percent (38) of the respondents disagreed with the view that men do not see female lecturers as equals and capable leaders. Whilst female lecturers were viewed by the participants as equals and capable, the results reflect that women experience reticence in applying and stereotypically gendered notions. As a result, the females opt to remain supporters. Results also show that women are good followers. They do not participate equally with men in elevated management roles. Women do not apply for advertised top management positions within the university systems. If promoted to management posts, female managers tend to emulate a dominant male-oriented management characteristic. It was also found that men do not see eminent female managers as equals and capable in management position.

### *Gender and management*

On gender and management issues, results show that ninety-seven percent (58) of the respondents confirmed that women are capable of performing any elevated management role, whilst, seventy-one (44) of the respondents acknowledged that women management style is different from that of men. Another sixty percent (34) participants reported that women are discriminated against because of their gender but they are capable of

performing any management role. Male lecturers expressed the sentiments such as: the government and universities' policies are against the discrimination of women; while universities preach the gospel of gender parity, reality on the ground is different; women are not in elevated management positions in universities because there are few women lecturers; it is up to women to take initiatives towards their promotion; women can match men in their management capability; some women are even better managers than men if given the opportunity; society needs to be conscientised in as far as the roles and capabilities of women are concerned; society tends to favour males at the expense of females; hence, females suffer from an inadequacy complex. The male participants also viewed that females should be visible in all university activities whether they be academic or is something to do with workers' union; women are not interested in being given responsibilities and they rarely volunteer to take top posts but talk and complain of being left out. From these male participants' sentiments, of interest to note is that male lecturers blame the female lecturers for failure to attain elevated management positions in universities.

Contrary to the male participants' views, female lecturers reported that while it is true that in higher education institutions women are sidelined, it is important to note that some organisations in the country including universities are doing a sterling job on respecting women's rights to elevated management positions. Internalisation of traditional gender stereotypes makes women feel inferior to men. Men were seen to be business minded, serious, assertive, fearless and fast in executing tasks. The female participants confirmed that some women are timid, easily frustrated, cannot endure pressure and have low self-efficacy

### *Challenges to female promotion*

Results on the different challenges to female university lecturers' promotion to management positions show that one hundred percent (60) participants disagreed that women are not suitably qualified for elevated management positions in universities. Subsequently, eighty-seven percent (52) agreed to the statement that there are more men in appointment boards whose decisions dominate and want to maintain the status quo. The results show that society in general discriminates against women because of their sex. The gender policy is not being effectively implemented in universities and yet these results demonstrate that it is wise to entrust women with elevated management positions. Women may not be suitably qualified for elevated management positions in universities. The university top managers seem not to be keen to promote women in elevated management positions. It is unwise to assign women with elevated management positions. Women do not engage in career preparation. Government is not facilitating gender equity in institutions of higher learning like universities. The gender policy is not being effectively implemented in universities.

### ***Feminism issues***

Society is patriarchal and it upholds male-defined values. Societies in general view women as being weak hence need male management. Women attain leadership positions through very hard work unlike men. Women have low self-esteem they need men to encourage them to accept management positions. Women should always submit to male dominance and management. For their success women leaders exploit men with management qualities. It was also found that female managers may be assets to institutions of higher learning including universities. Regarding job in upgrading and the promoting women, women sometimes are their own culprits. They look down upon themselves, and they have a low self-esteem. In most cases they do not apply for elevated management posts but they want to be in post. There is need for a campaign to encourage women to apply for higher posts and brave themselves for management posts. Management may not be viewed as basically a male domain because some people were born leaders whether they are male or female, and the socialisation process that people receive during nurturing exposes them to various management styles hence they end up adopting from society. The sentiments of the female lecturers are in agreement with male lecturers' views that female lecturers have themselves to blame for not attaining elevated management positions.

Female lecturers further responded that the government needs to seriously facilitate gender equity in universities; female leaders are real assets to institutions and they are usually fully committed to duties delegated to them. Women culturally are considered inferior to men and as such feel they cannot take up top management positions but with enlightenment and encouragement some are very keen to take up these positions. Women have the management qualities that can change the status quo. They are organized and surpass men in terms of producing results because they always want to see the best results. Regarding positions such as dean of faculty and chairperson of department, man and women should alternate so as to ensure equality; if they are open to votes, the tendency to vote for male managers is very strong; and the feminine touch can be very effective in moulding law abiding citizens and efficiency in organisational structures. The sentiments expressed by female lecturers show that women are efficient and can be better leaders than man; all they expect is a paradigm shift in the sense that both man and women should be socialized to remove gender blindness and stereotyping.

### ***Views on women management at university level***

From the respondents it was found that women are still very much under-represented; women can be competent leaders although their management styles may be different; women command respect and men demand respect; leadership for both men and women is equally effective and women performance is equal to that of men in all aspects; those who are in leadership, while their performance is satisfactory they need to be more assertive and decisive in decision making; and women are good and effective leaders but female management in

universities is almost 'invisible'. A deduction into the respondents' views reveals that although women management is invisible in universities, women are equally competent and they command respect in their management style while men demand respect.

### ***Willingness of women to take up top university management posts***

Results indicated that in most cases women are not willing to take up key positions because of social responsibilities such as pressure of work and family, for example many women put their families and marriages first; some women are equally courageous and more than willing to take up management positions; the majority lack confidence considering that most lectures in university departments are males; women fear serious competition from men, and they encounter challenges of a society which is patriarchal; some are willing but do not qualify while others do not want to work to earn these positions; and women past child bearing age, who have grown up children and supportive husbands are willing to take up management posts. These sentiments imply that most women are willing to take up management posts but they are incapacitated by social responsibilities.

### ***Individual lecturers' response to taking up university leadership posts***

Respondents who were willing to take up leadership posts expressed the following views: With the experience, it is everyone's wish to show potential and make a contribution to university administration; managers are born and not made; if women have top posts there is nothing which can stop a man from occupying higher posts; there are benefits attached to leadership posts such as improved salary; leadership helps one to grow professionally, one learns how to carry out other duties besides teaching; there are a lot of things that men do not do well and women can assist to make things better; those willing to take up leadership posts need the necessary support from the administration and colleagues. Those who were not willing to take posts gave the following views: Remuneration does not tally the amount of workload; management is too involving, lecturers need time to do personal business, and some were very comfortable in current area of operation as mere lecturers. An analysis of these views indicates that most lectures are willing to take up leaderships posts due to various benefits and experiences enjoyed.

### ***Reasons why women are under-represented in key university leadership positions***

On this issue respondents had this to say: In the traditional society fewer women had schooling opportunities; women have been discriminated against from a cultural and policy point of view and this has resulted in the system developing very few women to top management positions; on aggregate, women are less educated than men, and professionally, there are fewer females in universities; cultural bias affects women as they feel that men should lead; there is fear, lack of self-esteem and fear of pressure from the university's highest offices; many women first consider those management

positions that do not compromise their families' stability, they do not apply for top positions; female lecturers are discouraged by fellow women; they are safe under male management; in universities top leaders are males who still feel that males are more capable managers than women; in some faculties it could be that some men feel threatened by the affirmative action; women do not qualify for such positions because they are erratic in their coming to work; most women are not interested in taking challenging duties because they are afraid of the stresses associated with management as well as conflicts; and the gendered nature of universities against women holds them back, coupled with cultural factors which view women as more appropriate for supporting roles. To a large extent pre-colonial government policies contributed to the under representation of women in university leadership. Women themselves are also to blame because given a choice and even when they are in the majority they do not vote or support each other. Men do not subscribe to female management; society at large takes the blame, there are cultural stereotypes, as women are socialized to be docile hence find it difficult to take up challenging leadership posts.

#### ***Reasons for female lecturers' failure to apply for university elevated management posts***

The following were respondents' views: Very few female lecturers apply for advertised management posts, and the number is so insignificant given the high number of male applicants; women usually do not like to be harassed by authorities over work related issues; fear of pressure and also uncertainty of success in interviews militate against their willingness to apply; women underrate themselves, they feel they are not suitable for the posts; women do not apply due to lack of interest and fear of being intimidated by male counterparts who may also be interested in the key posts; women are bound by family ties; they normally do not want to move far away from their families; grapevine stories of harassment of women in leadership at universities have scared away potential women applicants; There are few models in leadership positions for women to emulate; management is associated with conflicts and stresses, some women need peaceful duties and environments; women fear that they would upset the 'perfect order'; and balancing domestic responsibilities and leadership duties are a mammoth task to most women.

#### ***Benefits of society from women management***

Respondents indicated that: Society benefits because in most cases women are hard working, take a motherly approach, understanding, and are more tolerant than men, they are good listeners and hence prudent in decisions; women have passion, expertise and skills that can benefit society other than being mothers; when women assume management positions, society can benefit a lot since it can shift from seeing women and girls as second class citizens; in most cases, women leaders are good role models for the youths and society would benefit from them; and as custodians of culture and its teachers, women are best suited for leadership.

#### ***The impact of male-dominated university management on women's professional growth and development***

Respondents expressed that: Male-dominated management stifles women's professional growth, as they are not given the opportunity to explore their potential, and would view themselves as not management material; A lot of women who are potential good managers are left to decay, hence, they do not realise their potential; this explains why very few women who start very well do not reach the top; They remain oppressed by men; This constrains women's professional development because there will be a lack of paucity of a feminine touch in all university activities; they feel looked down upon and rate themselves unable; women's professional growth and development is thwarted, as a strategy of avoiding competition, it is hindered greatly; and the relegation of female leadership voices would cascade down to the marginalisation of women in all facets of life. <sup>179</sup>

#### ***Effects of male-dominated university management on national development***

Participants expressed the following: Demographically, women are in the majority nationwide, as a result it follows that they should take a lead in development; depriving them of that role may have a negative impact on national development; Since capable women are left out of influence, the effect may not be apparent as the nation has been going on with insignificant contribution of women; male-dominated university leadership is against national goals and it encourages segregation against women; it leads towards male-dominated national leadership; this translates into low representation even in other areas where women could make a positive contribution; Male leaders can derail national development because of corruption; it promotes inferiority complex on the part of the female population; the nation will continue to develop in the traditional way, since it is the culture of most national institutions; politically and religiously, men have more management roles than women; women's interests are ignored and undermined; women remain under-represented in all government institutions and parastatals; A one dimensional view of issues emerges, leading to lack of diversity and alternatives which usually spur development; and Where both men and women are represented in leadership the society develops holistically.

#### ***Are women comfortable with situations where they are always subordinate to men?***

Participants revealed that: Women are not comfortable at all, they also want management positions; A lot of women groups have agitated for equal representation, but the reluctance by women are an indication that they are not capable at all; It appears women are at home with the male dominance or the status quo because they do not apply for leadership positions; Suppression and oppression have a negative effect on women and people may not see it now but it retards development at national level; most women are comfortable with male-dominated leadership since they feel as if they have time to do other duties while men resolve crisis; women are good

followers and so they are comfortable but not always, especially if someone who does not qualify is leading just because he is a man; women always complain about some decisions made by male leaders to show their discomfort; selected ladies are not comfortable since they are just as good as men and want to see women elevated; Women are not a homogeneous group, for those with leadership qualities they will always look for opportunities to climb up the ladder, frustration takes centre stage if denied the chance to prove themselves especially those who know they can perform better than the incumbent; and it seems as if women will continue to suffer male-dominance if they are not bold enough to take up leadership challenges.

***How could female lecturers be empowered to take up elevated management positions in universities?***

Respondents stated that: A fifty-to-fifty percent scenario would be ideal though women are more than men demographically; There should be deliberate efforts to leave some university posts to be occupied specifically by women; this would encourage women to apply; mounting gender empowerment staff development workshops to eradicate gender blindness in men and develop women to be confident and assertive on management issues; attend national, regional and international women empowerment conferences and workshops to share ideas on leadership; developing and implementing a policy that promotes women in leadership positions; Women themselves should be assertive in trying to attain gender equality in elevated management positions; they should agitate for equal representation in decision making positions; they need to apply to take up leadership posts knowing that they are capable of being leaders; women associations and support groups within universities should encourage and help each other; talent should be identified, nurtured and encouraged instead of being looked down upon, intimidated and made to feel insecure; women should be given scholarships to further their education and then take up management posts; A quota system in appointment should be adopted and appointments should be rational in all areas, if a term for a male officer expires, the next office bearer should be a woman; and female lecturers can empower themselves by studying for higher degrees and research extensively, to widen their horizons. From the results, the researchers comment that it is time women themselves realise that they are fearfully and wonderfully made, hence they are equal to everyone else and should be aggressive in trying to attain gender equality in leadership positions.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The study found that university female lecturers face many barriers to management promotion emanating from many variables and practices. Gender roles tend to place both men and women in engendered positions. Women's heavy involvement in reproductive work is seen as a barrier to better employment opportunities. For men their less involvement in reproductive work gives them the opportunity to participate actively in public space and exploit opportunities as they arise (Women Leadership and Governance Institute, 2002). In the work place, stereotypes result in certain jobs being barred for a certain

sex, and thereby deprive the nation of the best person for the job. It also results in what is called occupational stereotyping (Mugweni et al, 2011). Gender stereotypes prevent women from realizing their full potential because of the societal barriers. Women who aspire to be leaders are not accepted by the society because of cultural values, they are victimized, face open attack in word and deed by their male counterparts, and endure careless talk about them as well as negative labels. Women suffer from intrinsic, internal or personal barriers which are mostly psychological. From a national perspective it means women are disadvantaged (Gentine, 1999).

From the results, women's contribution is being ignored and as a result development suffers (Winkler, 2000; Mirghafouri, 2006). There is need for efficient and effective development through the integration of women in existing management and developmental processes. There should be equal opportunity for women in terms of access to education, access to formal employment, access to positions of power and influence, and access to managerial positions (Mugweni et al, 2011). Women claim affirmative action in the provision of education and training; it entails more than equal opportunity, it is about gaining power and control within the decision making processes. There is a skewed power relationship between men and women (Cobb-Clark, 1999). There is need to embark on a process that will enable women to deconstruct the stereotyped images, which would remove barriers of accessing factors of production and the barrier which limit women in their participation in decision making. The need for both men and women to participate in the process that transforms the oppressive gender relations cannot be overemphasised. There is need for conscientisation of both genders on women's subordinate position (Williams et al., 1997). Burke and Nelson (2002) emphasise that the new challenge in the management arena is to foster the advancement of capable women to the ranks of executive leadership. In authors' view, the evidence to date suggests that this challenge is formidable because competitiveness in the 21st century will depend on the quality of leadership guiding today and tomorrow's organizations (Gentine, 1999; Power, 2002; Women Leadership and Governance Institute, 2002). The effect of the deeply entrenched stereotype view of women remains at the core of modern society (Brown and Jordanova, 1982).

Women today are stereotypically identified with the so called caring professions of teaching, nursing and social work. It is observed that women are naturally tireless models of motherhood (Mugweni et al, 2011). The culture of organizations, including institutions of higher learning has been shaped by men. Sinclair, 1994: 7; Sinclair, 1998: 1) describes the executive culture in Australia as "a man's world" not just the domain of man. Congruent to the idea, Power 2002) concluded that there is an overriding dilemma, identified as 'male advantage' experienced by women. Intrinsic, internal or personal barriers found in this study are in most instances psychologically inherent and have to do with a person's value system and attitude. These are the so called female

limitations that are ingrained in the traditional and stereotype attitudes of societies about typically feminine characteristics (Van der Westhuizen, 1997). Stereotypes to women are based on certain views about women, and include the following: lack of self assertion, poor self-esteem and images, lack of self confidence. The general accepted characteristic leadership resembles behaviour of the patriarchal society (Burke and Nelson, 2002). The researchers are of the view that society simply accept that women leaders should reflect the masculine leadership styles. This expectation prejudices most women who endeavour to attain leadership roles at their work places.

Another challenge to university female lecturers' promotion found is the stereotype attitude that women in elevated management positions diverge from the accepted norm of a women's personality profile. The researcher contends that it is assumed that women in top management should emulate masculine behaviour and suppress their feminine approach to life. In most cases women are coerced by the endocentric perception to behave both masculinity and femininity in order to attain elevated management posts in institutions of higher learning (Mirghafouri, 2006).

#### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

The study explored trends in institutions of higher education (universities) promotion of female university lecturers to elevated management positions. Feminism was employed as a theoretical framework. Overall the findings revealed that there are many challenges to university female lecturers' attainment of elevated management positions and yet management is a critical factor of acknowledging gender equality and equity practices. Recognising gender representativeness can inform policy, beliefs, attitudes, decision making and work related behaviours. It was also found that trends in institutions of higher education show that female managers are assets to the higher education institutions but they seem to attain a small number of elevated management positions through very hard work, hence forth they succumb to male dominance and rule.

Basing on the above findings, the study made the following recommendations: Gender policies have continually remained a political and academic exercise with very little commitment and genuine enforcement plan from both policy makers and implementers. These policies must be reconsidered to determine the extent to which they encourage equality and equity in universities and other employment sectors. There is need therefore, to call upon both political and academic leaders to ensure their enforcement for women empowerment and development.

There is need for paradigm shift and change of the mindset of women to seriously take management challenges that come their way; the women must assertively compete for elevated management positions whenever opportunities arise lest they remain peripheral and spectators in a context where they are in the majority to play a functional role. Women should move out of their entrapped and ingrained socio-cultural cocoons, to

embrace a more assertive advance when it comes to competing for elevated management positions.

From time immemorial, women have played a very significant supporting role to men in their quest for management positions. It is now time for men to support women to take up elevated management positions and when they are in leadership. Universities should challenge inequality and empower females via scaffolding and providing morally planned assistance.

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