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Organizational Factors and Gender Inequality in Ugandan Universities

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Abstract:

This paper analyzed the contribution of organizational factors to gender inequality. The study analyzed whether there are policies that institutions have that specifically facilitate women advancement. The study analyzed Organizational policies including the staff development and reward management policies, working environment and recruitment and selection practices at the selected universities. Most of the participants believed that there were no such facilitating factors. Participants noted that they may not be documented but they consider girl child in sciences more than boys, because if they get a girl in sciences, they take them as treasures since most of them are not interested in sciences. It was important hence to find out whether any policies in the institution militate against advancement of women to managerial positions. However, most of the participants did not agree. For example, participant 03 explained that everyone struggles within the existing policies. This was reiterated by 05 when he noted that they are pro female not against them.

Keywords: Organizational factors, gender inequality, organizational policies

1. Introduction and Background

In East African countries, affirmative action in education has been practiced in all countries since the early 1990s (Kwesiga 2002). Uganda in particular has taken strides to level the playing field as regards enrolment at the tertiary level of education. This began with the institutionalization of affirmative action since the National Resistance Movement (NRM) took over the government in 1986. The Constitution of Uganda, promulgated in October 1995, makes various provisions for gender balance and fair representation of men and women in the public and private sectors. Article 32:1 provides for affirmative action in favour of marginalized groups (Republic of Uganda Constitution, 1995). The third Millennium Development Goal (MDG) required national governments to develop or strengthen government mechanisms to promote women's equality and integrate gender perspectives in legislation and public policy in order to generate and promote women's equality through gender mainstreaming practices as well as zero tolerance to sexual violence and bullying at the workplace (Walby, 2009). Although Uganda's MDG progress report of 2013 indicates that progress on MDG 3 is on track (MDG Report for Uganda, 2013), the proportion of women holding senior managerial positions in both public and private universities remain disturbingly low. This study intends to examine the antecedents for gender ceiling, with particular focus on universities in Uganda. It will particularly investigate the upward movement of women in managerial and leadership positions in Ugandan universities, after their attainment of the Bachelor's degree. The researcher will examine the barriers that block women executives from penetrating the upper echelons of management even after they have been promoted to middle level positions, barriers that seem to constitute gender inequality.

Gender inequality is a metaphor for examining gender disparities between men and women within the workplace. The under-representation of women in administrative positions in universities is commonly seen as an effect or a result of the 'gender inequality' (Stockdale & Crosby, 2004). The gender inequality describes the invisible, but very prevalent, roadblocks that limit the progression of women within the workplace. Gender inequality describes how discrimination increases as people ascend the administrative hierarchy (Wright, et, al 1995). Heller and Stepp (2001) argue that women's presence in top-level managerial positions within organizations today is far from where it needs to be, especially given that although the majority of graduates in the major countries in the world are women, females still represent only 6% of executives in the largest companies worldwide. The underrepresentation of women in top-level managerial positions in most corporate companies is what the gender inequality is all about. This includes the perception of managerial roles being gendered as 'masculine,' and women in managerial positions being seen as an aberration, due to gender stereotyping (Atwater, et.al,2004and Powell, et.al, 2002). Perceptions and stereotypes, true or false, perpetuate the reality of the gender inequality as a distinct barrier. Fagenson (1990) significantly observes that advancement in a management career can be influenced by individual factors within the person, organizational factors within the organization, and societal and systemic factors. This study focuses on organizational, societal and systemic factors.

Wright (1998) noted that at the bottom of managerial hierarchies in most economically developed countries, around 25% to 30% of lower-level supervisors are women. In contrast, women constitute just a small percentage of top executives and Chief Executive Officers in large corporations. For his part, Fierman (1990) points out that only 0.5% of the 4,012 highest paid managers in top companies in the United States are women, while fewer than 5% of senior management in the Fortune 500 corporations are women and people from minority groups. In the same vein, Reskin and Padavic (1994) reported that although women held half of all federal government jobs in 1992, and made up 86% of the government's clerical workers, they were only a quarter of supervisors and only a tenth of senior executives. The same authors reported that, in Denmark, women represented 14.5 % of all managers and administrators, but only between 1 and 5 % of top managers; and that, in Japan, women accounted for 7.5% of all administrators and managers but only 0.3% of top management in the private sector. Similarly, research by Baguies and Esteve-Volart (2007) found an extremely low percentage of women in supervisory and management positions in both the private and the public sectors in most countries.

The situation is not different in Africa where gender inequality is manifested in most sectors. According to a recent survey by Africa Development, women make up only 14% of the boards of Africa's top 307 listed companies, in 12 African countries. This report indicates that Kenya has the highest percentage (19.8%) of women representation in foods and beverages, followed by South Africa, with 17.4% women representation in the Basic Materials and telecommunication sectors, and Botswana (16.9%) in the financial sector, and Zambia (16.9%) on Boards. These are followed by Tanzania and Uganda with 14.3% and 12.9% respectively women representation in the banking sector (African Development Bank Report July 2015). Despite efforts to reduce gender inequalities, the results have been far from satisfactory.

Uganda has used quota systems and financial assistance to female students to increase women participation and representation in political structures, and to increase female enrolment at Ugandan universities. Both the legal framework and other measures have been put in place to reduce gender imbalance, and help women to advance to high-level managerial positions. For example, Article 23 of the Republic of Uganda Constitution provides for equality between men and women, and for affirmative action. In addition, the Gender Policy of 1997, and its subsequent revision in 2007, is in conformity with the regional and global obligations on gender equity and women's empowerment that Uganda is party to. Gender equity is also addressed through a number of other mechanisms. These include the Protocol on the Rights of Women in Africa (July 2003) and the Inter-Government Authority of Development, Gender Policy and Strategy (July 2004). Moreover, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), through its programmers expected to enhance women's human rights. Finally, through the application of the Social Development Indicators and the AU Heads of State Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality (July 2004), Uganda should address gender equity issues. In addition, Article 23 of the Constitution is in line with Uganda's commitments under the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women which Uganda ratified in 1985. Several other key structures in Uganda are consistent with gender equity. These include the National Action Plan on Women of 1999, the establishment of the Ministry of programmers and Social Development, mandated to monitor and evaluate the progress and successful implementation of gender policies. The same effort, the 1995 Constitution created an overall framework for the pursuance of women's rights through affirmative action, supplemented by the promulgation of equal opportunities legislation which advocates gender equity.

The Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education introduced in 1997 and 2007 respectively have boosted the lot of the girl-child, in spite of their many weaknesses, such as the very high dropout rates and the very low completion rates, especially for girls. These policies have helped women to advance in education and other aspects. For example, the enrollment of girls in primary schools has risen from 24.6% in 2011 to 49.9% in 2013, creating a pool of potential women leaders. Similarly, women's representation in Parliament has risen from 24.6% in 2001 to 34.9 in the current 9th Parliament, currently presided over by a female Speaker. However, the 2010 World Economic Forum Corporate Gender Gap Report, that surveyed 600 leading companies across 16 industries in 20 countries, found that the average number of women holding Chief Executive Positions was less than 5%, and Uganda was among the countries that registered very low women representation in managerial positions. This indicates that, in spite of the laudable progress made so far, women remain significantly under-represented in top level managerial positions, which is clear evidence that gender inequality is still very much in place. The most aggravating factor is that the gender inequality problem has not spared the institutions of higher learning. According to Kwesiga (2002), Businge (2005) and Morley et al. (2006), this is so despite the fact that affirmative action in education has been practiced in universities since 1990s. Actually, as the African Development Report (2015) indicates, in Uganda, the business sector has performed much better than the tertiary education sector. Much as higher learning institutions are expected provide a level playing field for both men and women, and are responsible for training the future policy makers, as well as leading at the front of innovation and development, women are grossly under-represented in top university managerial positions. It is particularly concerning that, of the 43 public and private universities in Uganda, only 3 have a female Vice Chancellor. This indicates that in spite of the affirmative efforts made so far, women remain underrepresented in top managerial positions in universities.

2. Ugandan Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions

In 2001, the Ugandan Government passed the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act. The Act defined 'tertiary' and 'higher' to include 'both public and private universities and other tertiary institutions that provide post-secondary (post A-level) education, offering courses of study leading to the award of certificates, diplomas and degrees, and conducting research and publishing'. The goal of the Act is to establish a system of governing institutions of higher

education so that same or similar courses offered by different institutions of higher education are comparable across the system while respecting each institution's autonomy and academic freedom.

Universities and other tertiary institutions in Uganda are governed by the University and Other Tertiary Institutions Act 2001 and 2003. The Acts empower each university to constitute a governing board, a council, an appointments board, a senate and academic boards. The governing boards or university councils monitor and control entry, stay and exit of staff and the performance of universities as stipulated by the University and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 and 2003.

The tertiary institutions include 43 licensed public and private universities, 10 national teachers' colleges, 13 colleges of commerce, 7 technical colleges, 1 forestry college, 2 co-operative college and 3 hotel and tourism institutes. Others are 12 management institutes, 10 health and medical schools, 3 agricultural and animal husbandry colleges, 1 fishery training institute, 1 meteorological school, and 4 theological colleges. Among the public universities, Makerere University is the oldest in East Africa, founded in 1922, followed by Mbarara University of Science and Technology (1989), Kyambogo University (2001), Gulu University (2002) and others that were established later.

In efforts to increase women's representation, Makerere University established the Department of Women and Gender Studies in 1991, which was later in 2010 elevated to the status of the School of Women and Gender Studies, under the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In 2001/02, Makerere University developed a Gender Strategic Plan, and incorporated a gender mainstreaming perspective into the Strategic Plans of 2001/05 and 2002/2020. Makerere University began the creation of the gender mainstreaming support structures to coordinate gender mainstreaming activities in the university. This was done under the department of the Academic Registrar to address gender inequalities in the university (Kyomuhendo and Roton, 2009).

Kyomuhendo and Roton (2009) observe that there are significantly more women in lower- and middle-level positions than there are in senior academic positions. However, this should not be surprising because it is also true of men; and, in any case, there are less senior academic positions than lower- and middle-level ones to be filled. They further note that promotions are few and far between and that only one additional female professor was appointed at Makerere University between (2001) and (2012) a period of 12 years. Moreover, they add, only two women were in top management positions of the university as of 2010. They note further that the main challenges to gender equity at Makerere University lie at both the institutional and the individual levels, and that the problem is so serious that it needs immediate attention. University employment statistics have indicated that at the mid-level, women have gone some way in penetrating gender inequality; however, at the top level, a number of unidentified factors have persistently hindered women's access to leadership and managerial positions, which adversely impacts national development (Kwesiga, 2008).

Overall, it seems that though strategies have been designed to solve the problem, the strategies have faced implementation challenges. Yet, there is agreement that the quality of higher education in Uganda can be enhanced when both men and women are equitably represented in managerial positions. This equitable representation in managerial and leadership positions will promote equitable responses to the growing social demand for higher education and the needs of a globalized economy. As Uganda's vision for higher education, and a higher education strategic plan for the next 10 years (2012) indicate, the Government of Uganda is committed to addressing gender inequality, and has instituted a series of strategies to promote gender equity through the establishment of bodies that promote gender equity in education, employment and political representation (Johnstone, 2003). However, as Kyomuhendo and Rutuno (2009) note, and as shown in Table 3 below, despite these efforts, the gender representation in both public and private universities is excessively unbalanced. While discussing the aspect of organisational policy especially the reward practices, Sigelman, Milward, and Shepard (1982) looked at the effects that gender and job responsibility have on the salaries of men and women in executive, administrative, and managerial positions at a university. Consistent with prior research, they found significant salary differences between males and females (with a gap of approximately \$5,343 per annum). The fact that men held positions of higher responsibility than females accounted for over 60 percent of the male-female salary differential. Interestingly, a significant relationship was found between gender and authority type; significantly fewer females were found in line positions than males. The greater part of the explanation of the salary differential therefore had to do with the positional disadvantage of women, with men holding the great majority of positions with high levels of responsibility. Despite the fact that this is an interesting study, it has been over taken by time and there is need for replication in Uganda.

From the Canadian Press, (2012) it was revealed that the corporate culture, together with elements of restrictive social policy were clearly evident in some gender equality issues surrounding the national police force. Catherine Galliford, a 20-year veteran of the force, had complained about long term abuse within the force. She claimed that some supervisors treated her as a potential sexual plaything and that she was repeatedly propositioned for sex (The Canadian Press, 2012). What is relevant in this finding for this current study is that Commissioner Bob Paulson indicated that the structure of the system makes it nearly impossible to address. Galliford's allegations appropriately, stating that she was working with a system that 'was current 25 years ago' (The Canadian Press, 2012). Dysfunctional colleague partnerships that favour one gender, such as this example, create an unbalanced perspective that becomes the norm over time.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design

The study adopted a survey research design where both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analysis. A survey research design was used since it enables the researcher to collect data from a heterogeneous entity

(Amin, 2005). Quantitative data collection method is a random sampling and use of structured data collection instruments that fit diverse experiences into predetermined response categories. It is important because its results are easy to summarize, compare, and generalize. Qualitative research that was adopted by this study is a method of inquiry employed aimed at gathering in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior, it investigates the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, when, this is done with help of field notes, sketches, audiotapes, photographs, which improve the quality of survey-based quantitative evaluations by helping generate evaluation hypothesis; strengthening the design of survey questionnaires and expanding or clarifying quantitative evaluation findings.

The study population included both lecturers and administrative staff of the universities. These were included in this study because of their probable understanding on the problem at hand. For the purpose of this study, the researcher used purposive and simple random sampling technique to select the study population. Sampling techniques are scientific procedures of selecting those sampling units which would provide the required estimates with associated margins of uncertainty, arising from examining only a part and not the whole (Neuman, 1997). Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques shall be employed in this study. This technique is preferred because it is free of classification error, and it requires minimum advanced knowledge of the population other than the frame, its simplicity also makes it relatively easy to interpret data collected and it also offers the most for generalization thus informing the reasons for its use in this study.

Purposive technique was used to collect data from top administrators. This technique is preferred because it is very informative, it also reaches targeted sample quickly and it further gives researchers with the justification to make generalizations from the sample that is being studied. The three commonly used methods for data collection are questionnaires, interviews and observations (Sekaran, 2003, p219). For the purposes of this study questionnaire and interviews are the two main methods that were used for data collection. Secondary data was also collected through the documentary review method.

Themes were developed for qualitative data analysis. Important thematic areas such as direct quotations were extracted and reported in line with the study variable verbatim. The information from open-ended questions and interview responses was analyzed by listing down all respondent's views under each question or category. In this case, the tally mark method was used to group similar views expressed by more than one respondent. The total number of tally marks was used to construct tables for interpretation. Where necessary, quotes were used to strengthen the interpretation.

4. Results

This part of the paper analysed the contribution of organizational factors to gender inequality. The study analysed whether there are policies that institutions have that specifically facilitate women advancement. The study analysed Organizational policies including the staff development and reward management policies, working environment and recruitment and selection practices at the selected universities. Most of the participants believed that there were no such facilitating factors. Participants noted that they may not be documented but they consider girl child in sciences more than boys, because if they get a girl in sciences, they take them as treasures since most of them are not interested in sciences. It was important hence to find out whether any policies in the institution militate against advancement of women to managerial positions. However, most of the participants did not agree. For example, participant 03 explained that everyone struggles within the existing policies. This was reiterated by 05 when he noted that they are pro female not against them.

4.1. Organizational Policy

Though there were a number of organizational policies that were reflected on by the participants, the researcher got much attracted to the staff development policy and the reward policies. These are the ones that the participants put emphasis on during the interviews that the researcher conducted.

From the interaction with participants, a set of varying views were discovered in view of implementation of staff development policies. The study examined whether when a new staff comes in, he/she is given thorough training. Participants indicated that in most cases, one learns on the job. Most universities studied did not have a training program for a staff member but the supervisor is requested to make sure the new staff is assisted which is not done most of the time. It was found that the way different universities implemented this was varying. Though it affected both males and females equally, it was acknowledged that women were more affected because it was practiced in the lower-level jobs most of which were occupied by women.

It was investigated whether new employees are attached to senior employees before finally being independent. Participants revealed that when you get a job it is your job. The supervisor just tells you the basics and attaches you to colleagues to help you understand your roles. It was revealed however that some colleagues may not be willing to help because they tend to look at new employees as competitors than co-worker. This was revealed as having an ability of causing stress and general lack of interest in the job and the organization by the employee. Employees that were not so strong and innovative were bound to be affected. When the female administrators were interviewed on this matter, most of them revealed that they did not feel it affected their advancement but acknowledged the weaker members of the organizations are affected by such a problem. Participant number actually noted that the challenges of a new organization can lead to psychological effects that may affect the individual for a longer time.

The study assessed whether the policy in the university empowered supervisors to support employees in setting appropriate goals. It was observed that if this was being carried out it would have helped some of the members of the organization to exploit their potentials. Some of the participants revealed that most of the supervisors were not interested in listening to the demands of new employees. It was revealed that the employee is not supposed to set own goals but must do what the supervisor tells him or her to do. This challenge however was more pronounced in the administrative positions than the academic positions where there was some level of independence. It was revealed by participants 04 and 06 that supervisors were more cooperative in the academics than in administration. This was important for this study that is investigating academic leadership.

During interaction with participants of the study, a question arose whether supervisors always ask questions to understand the work of subordinates and actually most of the study participants were in agreement. It should be noted that during the interviews some participants explained that supervisors at times did not ask to understand so that they could help those who were finding challenges but asked to find error in the employee. One participant explained that most supervisors were focused to disciplining than guiding. *'They focus on error to discipline than to help'*. It was hence revealed that the supervisors were really not interested in helping but wanted individuals who could work independently yet young employees may not stand alone.

In assessing employees' perception of staff development practices, it was found necessary to study the aspect of job rotation because most of the participants highlighted as a strong leadership development approach. As such, the study inquired whether the staff are usually moved from one department to another to develop their leadership skills. It was revealed by participants that it was possible with administrative staff but was not yet possible with academic staff. It was revealed that an academic staff in one department can only have course units in another department. But an administrative staff can be completely moved to another department. However, it was revealed that there is a policy that is followed and not that one can move anyhow.

The study also examined whether the employees believed that job rotation is a good practice to develop leadership of the staff members and majority were in agreement. Most of the participants said that job rotation would be very good but many times it is done in bad faith. A participant said that many times a transfer is because one is not doing well with a supervisor and not because he/she is going to be developed. As a result, most employees tend to associate a transfer to punishment and this affects the ability of a staff member to develop under the transfer arrangement. This could be the same reason why, when the researcher inquired whether job rotation has helped employees understand their duties, there was mild acceptance. Participants revealed that job rotation was used as a discipline action and could not develop employee.

It should be noted however that staff members believed that job rotation is the easiest way to learn on the job. During interviews, respondents revealed that job rotation would be a good approach if it was managed very well. In another interaction on organizational policies, the study examined whether the employees get opportunities to attend workshops outside the universities that were studied. During the interviews, it was revealed that in most cases, attending a workshop was an individual initiative such that, should a staff member identify a workshop to attend, management will check whether on the vote, there is money that can facilitate the staff. If there is no money, the staff member can only be given official permission and then facilitate him/herself to the workshop. However, at times the university organizes its own domestic workshops which staff are free to attend.

In this same direction, the interaction raised whether there were seminars organized for the staff members. Participants revealed in the interviews that if a staff member goes for a short course, he pays for him/herself. It was revealed however, that some courses may be sponsored by an organization and the money goes through the university. In that case, staff members do not pay because the organization has paid.

In all the universities studied however, it was true that there is an employee training program for the entire university. This was clarified during interviews that there is a training program but only depends on the availability of funds. This means a staff member can be on schedule but because there are no funds he may not go for training. It was revealed however that any staff member who has received a scholarship from any organization can go for study any time he/she wishes. It was revealed by one of the participants that this did not depend on whether the employee was a male or female. This also indicates if the female did not exploit such an opportunity, the problem was individual than organizational based.

Finally, on staff development policy in the universities, the study examined whether employees always get training whenever they are recruited. Participants noted that, that they are oriented by the supervisors even if the training was for just a short time. The results hence indicate that in view of the participants of the study, staff development policy was not generally a basis for discrimination against women. Those who did not benefit from the policy were as a result of personal characterizes and not the policy itself.

4.2. Reward Policies

The study examined the aspect of reward management policy and its likelihood of influencing the gender inequality at the universities. The study aimed at studying the management of rewards policies in relation to reward scheduling, allowance management and benefit handling. The data was collected using qualitative approaches and analyzed accordingly. During the interviews, participants revealed a number of things about salary. They expressed that salary is the reason they are working. They are only happy and can only work hard if the salary is appropriate and paid in time and in full amount. It was revealed that it is always unfortunate when the little salary the staff earn comes late and at times coming in bits. The participants explained that it is true when one is getting the appointment letter, he/she may not

think much about salary. The salary is always specified but as work begins, challenges begin to increase and this also increases the need for more money. In fact, one respondent explained that what he read about Herzberg and salary is true. He explained that when he got his appointment letter, he was very happy and started calling his friends about the new job. He even started searching for the different cars on the internet to see the prices. He even started thinking of which area to buy a plot of land. He was surprised however when after a few months, he realized actually that the salary was not as much as he thought. One of the participants revealed however that most women were not agitating for more salaries and that this may relate to their ambition. The participant acknowledged that this could even explain why they were not agitating for higher positions.

The participant who was also a male acknowledged that if he was to meet all the needs he had aligned, he needed a double salary from the organization. It is from this view that the researcher became convinced that salary was a very important aspect that could be used to determine ambition and desire for organizational leadership positions.

The study also examined whether employees felt that the salary was fair for all of them and most of the staff members did not believe that it was fair. One of the respondents revealed that salary was not enough. The respondents revealed that as the salary increases, the taxes also increase and there is no significant difference. One respondent however revealed that the salary was fair if one can compare with those in other organizations and the payments in the university were being based on the positions. If employees are at the same level of position, they earn the same salary and one may not expect to earn like one in a higher position. Respondents revealed that when one goes outside the university, he/she may find that the University staff earn much better than employees in other sectors. The employee counseled that it was of great value that fellow employees started appreciating what they earn by comparing themselves with others. On the relationship between salary and the gender inequality, respondents revealed that it is not true that because even in most cases, men have more challenges to handle than the females. It was revealed by respondent 02 however that a number of men have left their responsibilities of taking care of the family to the women. This was affecting women effectiveness in exploiting opportunities that come on board.

Participants further revealed that that the salary was generally not enough to cater for all the needs. One respondent explained that today, school fees cost is very high, medical bills are very expensive and you find there is no university worker other than the top management who can afford bills of major hospitals in Uganda. It was reported by one respondent that it was not surprising that most university staff use university sick bays for treatment even when most of them are not up to standard. It should be noted however that participant 03 there is one staff member who wondered on how much is a sufficient salary and who can pay it? Precisely the researcher rested the interview with the same position as an appropriate salary is quite variable and difficult to pay by most organizations. Given however that the women are the ones taking care of most family needs, then the issues of salary affect their ability for career development.

The study examined whether the employees get allowances for a work well done which most of them did not believe. During interviews on policy issues, most of the participants did not say allowances are always paid to everybody. Instead, they noted that there were specific activities that were attached to allowances. These activities included extra teaching beyond the mandatory hours or overtime work by the administrators. It was revealed during the interviews that employees were always willing to work when they were called upon and know there was allowance. One participant revealed that some employees are tempted to do work slowly so that they can be given overtime. These activities are usually critical and the university must make sure they are successful. From the above views however, what is important is that it is made clear that allowances are very motivating and the jobs that attract allowance were for both males and females

The results generally have indicated that employee reward management policies are not directed towards discrimination. However, the already existing factors that lead to gender inequality are precipitated by the fact that women fail to position themselves for higher positions to earn bigger salaries.

4.3. Recruitment Practices

The study examined recruitment and selection as important aspects in determining the gender inequality. Our recruitment policies are not segregative in any form, jobs are given on merit once you qualify and you convince the panel that you will do the work, you have the right qualifications they give you the job without any kickbacks of any form at least for me I competed fairly. Respondent 03 noted that the recruitment process is fair for everybody, everyone is taken on merit. This was also reiterated by participant 05 that the recruitment policy is fair to all it does not consider female or male but it's based on merit the best takes it but as I had already hinted on it, if there is a tie, the female takes it.

The researcher was concerned with how can recruitment practices be improved to promote gender equity. Participant 01 explained that it may be heard because at recruitment level it may be too late, because the problem is not that chances are not there but people are not there and the ones who are there are not willing to pay the price of taking up top most positions because these positions come with challenges which most female hesitate to take, if they have chances of doing other jobs which are not so demanding.

In another opinion, participant 03 explained that it is important for the university to continue to be fair, though it is thought and actually encouraged that they should aim at 50/50 other than 30/70 which is currently in place. On the other hand, participant 05 noted that in fact the recruitment policy is clear as it is it does not need any improvement but the issue is that women to take on these positions are not just available.

Further interaction with participants indicated that some of the respondents reserved their opinions. Some of them argued that at times they do not know which jobs exist and that they may only know about their departments and not other departments. They revealed that they only understand from the human resource policy that the job must be

advertised and the details of the job should be indicated in the advert. The views indicated that management needed to do as much as possible to match the real duties of the job with what is placed in the advert because this was cited to be one of the causes of dissatisfaction at the university.

During the interaction on organizational policies, the study examined whether the employees understand whether the university encouraged external advertisement. One of the participants explained that in most cases, the jobs that are advertised externally are big jobs. For low level jobs, you wake up in the morning, you find someone is employed may be as a volunteer and the next day you hear he has been regularized. The findings hence conclude that it was not true that the university encourages external advertisement especially for the lower-level jobs but for higher level jobs they do. The researcher inquired on the implication of this to the gender inequality and it was noted by participants that it is not easy to tell who is favored by such a policy. Similar to the views before, some participants indicated that at times they do not bother to know whether the advert has run or not because they may not be interested in the job. One respondent said that one would be interested in the advert if the new employee is coming to the department the employee belongs and particularly if he/she is going to be a supervisor. Other than that, there would be no interest on whether an advert has run or not. It was therefore concluded that whether the advert was external or not did not have a significant contribution to staff retention on top management jobs but had a likelihood in lower management jobs because the employee's expressed dissatisfaction.

It was also of interest to the researcher to know whether the interested employees get to know when there is internal advertisement. During the interviews a participant from one of the universities revealed that internal adverts are for supervisory jobs such as the Dean, Heads of Department and particularly academic positions. However, for administrative positions, the people always get jobs through promotions and promotions are always automatic. That is, if one is a member of a department and has the qualifications, if the job falls vacant, the qualified person takes over headship of the department and if there is need for advertising especially where there are many who qualify, then all the interested candidates will get to know. The results deduced to the fact that relevant employees get to know when an internal advert is made though it was more common for the academic than the advert staff positions.

The study was also concerned about the selection process as an important aspect in enhancing employee advancement. Participants revealed that it was not always easy to know whether the process was transparent or not. In fact, one respondent explained that you can easily say it was transparent when you are the winner in such a process but you cannot say it was transparent when you were not a participant or when you were a participant and you have not got the job. If you are a participant and personally compare with the other people, you may feel you should have been short listed. Another respondent however stressed that in most cases, short listing is fair. According to the knowledge I have, the short-listing team always makes sure all qualifying candidates are shortlisted even when they have an interest in a particular candidate. Another respondent still expressing that short listing is always fair the selection process because the one short listing knows that the candidates know each other especially if it is an internal recruitment. However, with external adverts, short listing is not fair because the recruiting team will always include people of their interest against weaker candidates so that when they come for interviews the ones, they are interested in appear stronger than others. This means internal short listing was fairer than the external short listing as viewed by the respondents.

The study also examined whether external consultants are used during selection and the results indicated that majority of the staff did not believe. Participants indicated that the recruitment and selection process is handled by the university processes. It was also confirmed by staff that most of the recruitment is done by the human resource management team and department for the sake of academic staff and then approved by the university appointments Board. Hence the room for external consultants has always been limited. However, some of the employees recommended the need to use external consultants for some positions especially the top management because the incumbents have always managed to influence the process. The appointment process is at times compromised and needs external consultants to feature in for technical advice.

The study also examined whether the transfer policy to other positions is clear and most of them tended to agree. During the interviews, respondents explained that, universities being multi-model campus, there are clear policies for an employee to be transferred to another department in the same campus or to another campus. The employees understand this policy and if one is to be transferred without reference to the policy, it can be contested. Under recruitment and selection process, it was important to investigate aspects of deployment. This is an important aspect as a good employee may be properly selected but poorly deployed. It is for this reason, the researcher inquired whether new employees are usually oriented to policies. Participants revealed that at times the employee is given an appointment letter and asked to report to the supervisor. What the supervisor tells you is what you will be doing and how you will be reporting. At times they even tell you how you can get assistance in a number of ways and highlights on what you are expected of in terms of policy issues. This however can take even only 30 minutes not that it is a program for you and the supervisor. Some employees revealed that most of the policies are learnt as the employee gets used to colleagues.

From the above findings therefore, it can be concluded that though recruitment affects gender inequality, the practices were so covert that one cannot easily conclude in a directional way. Given that many women do not get through the process especially at higher level, one cannot deny the fact that some aspects of the recruitment are not fair to women and there is need for affirmative action.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This part of the study analysed the influence of work place environment and social cultural factors to the gender inequality in Universities. It aimed at assessing whether there are policies that institutions have designed that specifically

mitigate against stumbling blocks towards women advancement to leadership positions. The work environment and social culture factors assessed included: organizational policies, working conditions and recruitment and selection practices that exist to hinder women from shattering the gender inequality. This sub-theme analysed the influence the existing policies had on the gender inequality among employees of the universities surveyed universities. These policies included training and development policies, promotion policies, recruitment policies reward management policies which are closely associated with employee progression in the organization hierarchies. The study found that there were varying views between males and females on the status and fairness of the policies while male participants believed that the policies to be fair to all, female participants were of the view that on paper, the policies looked fair but indirectly discriminative to women. The study found that at times the discrimination is not built in the policies but in system of the universities and in cultures that exist within the organization, which challenges most women to utilize the good policies that exist hence sustains the gender inequality in the universities.

On the staff development policy for example, Document review indicated that each university had its way of presenting their staff development policies. While some universities had training policies as standalone document, others had incorporated their training policy in the human resource manual document. Documents indicated that, the training policies mainly covered, the training schedule for staff, staffs qualifying for training, mode of scholarship, expectations of the staff member after the training as well as expectations of the university after the training of the staff members, duration of different study programmes, relevant study institutions and many other aspects in guiding staff development and training. From the analysis of the training and development policy, there was no indication of discrimination amongst women in as far as policy was concerned.

Documents review on training policies contravened participants views when they asserted that, there was discrimination in the policies, much as it was not so direct for one to observe it easily in the documents. One participant lamented that, she was not protected by the training policy, when it came for her further studies. This is because when her schedule for training reached it was at the same time when she had delivered her baby, and the scholarship provided by the university could not cater for the baby, this implied that, she had to defer her training to a time when the baby is grown. This to her was an indirect discrimination because she missed this opportunity not because of her wish. This also made her miss a number of promotion opportunities because she did not qualify. This challenge is in line with the view of Kanter (2009) who notes that staff training is one way through which staff members can be given new directions and access promotion opportunities for their career growth.

Document review indicated that most of the universities, did not have separate promotion policy documents, but academic promotions were spelt out in their human resource manuals that is to be a teaching assistant, for some universities, one had to have a bachelor's degree, an Assistant lecturer for some universities, one can have a bachelor's degree or master's degree. To be a lecturer, some universities, indicated a master's degree while others a PhD. However, participants indicated that the National Council of Higher Education had released an instruction that compels all lecturers to have a PhD in order to harmonize remuneration especially in public universities. From the positions of Associate Professor and Professor the documents indicated it would depend on publications and community service. The documents review indicates a variation of requirements by different private universities as compared to public universities. Even views of participants, indicated that, the level of strictness to the requirements varied from private to public universities. It should be noted however, as far as the gender inequality is concerned, it was not reflected in the policy documents. Participants revealed that it was difficult for some categories of employees to meet the requirements especially women because, they did not match the concentration required to pursue academic qualifications and publications because of the other obligations especially family oriented.

As far as employee orientation policy was concerned, the study further found that some university staff are not willing to help new members who join the university because they tend to look at new employees as competitors than co-worker. This was revealed as having ability of causing stress and general lack of interest in the job among new employee. This was revealed by participants as a main problem especially where women are underrepresented. This is also supported by (Kandiko 2016; Altbach 2016; Lewis 2016; Ahikire 2011, Odhiambo, 2011; Endeley and NchangNgaling 2009; Mama 2009; Barnes 2007; Tsikata 2006,) while studying leadership in Ugandan universities point out that: 'women are grossly under-represented in higher education management'. This could be attributed to the limited orientation received new women employees.

Some participants were of the view that all the employees were affected equally by the policies, though middle positions were affected more significantly. It was emphasized by some participants that policies did not affect women advancement but acknowledged that because of women's home engagements they do not exploit opportunities as quickly as men do even when the opportunities are expressed in the policies. This paper analysed the influence of recruitment practices on the gender inequality among employees of the surveyed universities. It mainly focused on the process of recruitment, qualifications and requirements for recruiting the employees into university service and deployment of the selected staff.

On the recruitment practices and promotion of gender equity, some participants indicated that policies are not segregative in any form, jobs are given on merit once you qualify and you convince the panel that you will do the work, you have the right qualifications, and can compete favourably for the job, and you had all the opportunity. However, most female participants felt that the recruitment and selection practices were still full of biases they indicated that fairness is more on paper than in realities.

It was further noted that, much as recruitment and selection policies may depict fairness, different systemic factors and different university cultures and perceptions of appointments board members, seemed to influence the

recruitment practices in a direction that would disfavor and discredit some categories of applicants and women suffered more than their male counterparts specifically when pursuing higher level jobs.

One of the participants asserted that, during one of the promotional interviews to a higher-level job, she was subjected to biased questions such as, *'how many children do you have? The children are of which age? Don't you think if this job is given to you, you will be serving two masters? Your job and your children?'* such questions seemed to suggest that though the policy on recruitment was spelt out clearly on paper, the practice in recruitment for this position seemed to prefer candidates with less family obligations.

One of the participants wondered, whether it was true that there are no qualifying women candidates for the most senior positions in the universities, such as Vice Chancellors. She reiterated that, probably, most women, intentionally do not apply because they feel the practices in the recruitment for such higher-level positions are associated with unfairness, intrigue and negative attitudes toward women holding them. This the reason why even when even when they are advertised women do not respond in affirmative this explains why there have not been a women vice chancellor in some of the universities since their historical existence. This finding collaborates well with the findings of (Underdahl et al 2014 & ILO, 2015) who noted that recruitment and selection practices are major drivers of the gender inequality in most organizations and males are advantaged because they are willing to relocate and as a result, they are easily considered for selection and promotion than women. This is also supplemented by (Powell & Butterfield 2015) who noted that promotion of women was confronted with Underdahl personal attributes from the decision makers. Further views from participants indicated that, recruiters preferred men than women because of the need to avoid staff with more responsibilities such as child care, and other family obligations outside the job. This was supported by (Parcheta, Kaifi&Khanfar, 2013) who asserted that, the opportunity for men is wider than that of women and lies in the fact that their wives often take care of the household duties and children.

In a related finding Hurst et al. (2016) stated that men always favored the candidates with analogous cultural values and inclinations. This was explained by indicating that the selection committee appointed those employees who were similar to those already appointed, this disadvantages women in Ugandan Universities where those already on top are males and will prefer selecting fellow males. On the contrary to the above expression, that reflect on women inefficiency in leadership, some scholars have come out to support the power of women in generating results in organizations. For example (Post & Byron 2015) stated in their study that in organizations where women get leadership positions in boards and get access to power, those organizations perform better in gender parity, fair representation of women and shareholder protections along with observing high financial performance. In line with this finding, one of the participants in the study could have been right when he asserted that he enjoyed working with women who had understood the task, citing that *'when women grasp the task, they really deliver on it with good attitude and commitment'*.

Some participants revealed that, their promotions were affected because of increased public demand and advocacy by women in civil society, demanding for increased women inclusion in leadership. This view relates with that of Glass et al. (2016) who found that women get exposed to promotional opportunities only if the organizations face crises. It was also confirmed by Ryan and Haslam (cited in Sabharwal, 2013) who termed this situation as a glass cliff. One participant expressed that in most cases, women are encouraged to apply for higher positions when there is high risk of failing in performance so that females can take the blame. This finding is supported by (Glass et al, 2016), who explained that at the time of uncertainty and high risk, these positions pose challenges to meet expected results and outcomes and women get little support and authority to get desired results during such crises this could escalate high turnover compared to their male counterpart a belief that has escalated the gender inequality syndrome.

It has also been acknowledged by scholars such as Catalyst (2014) and Singh (2013) the gender inequality contains a negative meaning in itself with the impact that stifles the careers of talented women by blocking them from promotion and other opportunities including stopping them from handling higher responsibilities in the organizations (Sabharwal, 2013). It was further highlighted that this also restricts eligible women from being selected for decision-making positions especially due to stereotypical attitudes of the organizations that only support males holding these senior positions (Singh, 2013).

One of the participants regretted that, after she had been appointed to a higher position, she found that the demands for this position contrary to her family obligations and expectations and she had to resign the job. This finding is supplemented by Shen (2013) when he uncovered numerous power differences between males and females in organizations, including the finding that the number of promotions obtained and the corresponding hierarchical level achieved by managers in an organization are positively related for men, while these achievements are unrelated for women.

One of the participants further revealed because of the disadvantages of women in advancing in leadership positions, it has been acknowledged it now depends on the relationship or network between the women candidates and those on top in as far as training and promotions are concerned. This is supported by Hamel (2009) raises another issue in organizations when he states that promotion to senior positions requires more than superior skills and experience. In his view, promotion to senior positions may be influenced by unclear guidelines and parameters, such as amicable relationships with powerful people or other unstated expectations. Further, the ways to participate in opportunities for career development in organizations, such as training or travel, are often veiled in secrecy. According to Hamel (2009), this ambiguity increases when the employee is female. In his view, when trying to navigate the hidden expectations for job promotion, women's limited natural relationships with men at the top inhibit their ability to secure senior placements.

From the findings of the current study and those of other scholars, it can be observed that though the policies such as recruitment affects gender inequality, the practices were so covert that one cannot easily conclude in a directional way.

Given that many women do not get through the process especially at higher level, one cannot deny the fact that some aspects of the recruitment are not fair to women and there is need for change of attitude and level the ground through efforts that can expose the systemic factors and cultural biases in order to shutter the gender inequality in universities a place which is well known to prepare leaders to the higher heights.

6. References

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