The Paradox of Leadership and Gender, Women in Higher Education Management: The Zimbabwean perspective.

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Abstract

Successful Higher Education (HE) leadership entails possessing the knowledge, skills and understanding of effective leadership skills along with the personal ability to effectively implement those skills. In Zimbabwe the occupational and leadership status of women in HE is still suffering a wide gap, as there is unequal representation in leadership positions between men and women. Despite the fact that women constitute the majority of work force in Zimbabwe HE, they clearly remain poorly represented in leadership positions. Women experience leadership difficulty for example, most is aware of stereotype and sexism. In this article we argue that there are cultural and structural among other domains that impede the effective operations of women in leadership positions. In a sense we argue that the number of women in HE leadership positions are relatively low no matter what proportions, they will still be operating in a society where deep rooted constraints of society identify maleness with leadership. The study established that there are cultural, structural, economic and social barriers facing women in school leadership positions. We recommend that strategies should be set up for developmental programs for women in leadership positions. The article presents challenges faced by female Higher Education (HE) managers because of their gender. Findings from our analysis of research findings showed that female Heads of Departments (HODs) were not perceived as incompetent and unable by male colleagues only, but also by female staff colleagues as a result of an entrenched culture of male dominance. Among the challenges faced by female HODs included: negative attitude from some university community members and faculty staff who undermined them because of their gender and lack of confidence. Among the challenges faced by female HODs included the negative attitudes of university community members who lacked confidence in females taking the role of management especially where the former leader was male and was demonstrating high levels of performance. The study recommends the mounting of gender awareness workshops with university community members to orient them on gender equity issues. In addition, the study calls for mentoring and networking workshops, in service training opportunities and role modelling to be given to female HODs who aspire to, and have potential in leadership so that these female HODs can feel empowered and see that they have the potential of executing leadership roles.

Keywords: Gender, higher education, leadership, social realist, women in Higher Education management, Zimbabwe

Introduction

Gender inequality in leadership has been the central focus of studies in the field of educational administration many years (NanChi, 2006; Kiamba, 2008; Bilen-Green, 2008; Nazemi et al. 2012; Zinyemba, 2013; Shava & Ndebele 2014; Morley & Crossouard, 2016a). Throughout history, leadership roles were generally held by men (Sloan, 1999; Merchant, 2012; Day, 2014; Longman & Anderson, 2016). This social attitude or 'injustice' seems to have made women reluctant to pursue administrative leadership positions (Anewu, 2010). Msila (2013) posits that women leaders do not always get the necessary support from the communities and usually have to prove their capability as leaders under trying conditions in the

patriarchal society. There is much literature which shows that mistrust in women leadership is caused by a number of factors and these include tradition and culture (Cundiff & Vescio, 2016; Msila, 2013; Morley & Crossouard, 2016a). Lumby (2003) also contends that communities do not trust women to be appointed as HOD or manager because HE management is an important job which demands the seriousness they think only men could provide. The aim of this study was to understand challenges faced by female HODs in their day to day running of HE institutions. The analysis focuses on the challenges facing women in HE leadership. The analysis is based on the following research questions:

- What if at all are the institutional barriers to women advancement in HE leadership positions?
- What challenges do female HODs face in their day to day running of their faculties?
- How effective are women in HE management positions?
- What should be done to increase women in HE leadership positions?
- How do members of staff perceive women in HE management positions?

Women in higher education leadership, a review of literature

There has been a lot of research on gender and HE leadership the world over, (Hoobler, Lemmon & Wayne, 2011; Schwanke, 2013; Chaluvadi, 2015; Madsen, Ngunjiri, Longman, & Cherrey, 2015; Burton & Weiner, 2016). The literature generally shows that females are underrepresented in management positions in HE (Burton & Weiner 2016; Gobena, 2014; Lunyolo, Ayodo, Tikoko & Simatwa, 2014; Uwizeyimana, Modiba & Mathevula, 2014) and in higher education (Austin, 2016; Drake, 2015; Hannum, Muhly, Zalabak & White, 2015; Howe-Walsh & Turnbull, 2016; Shava & Ndebele, 2014). Females are often expected to stay at home instead of taking up roles previously dominated by males, such as management. At each step of administrative preparation, job seeking and selection, there are organizational processes that clearly indicate a preference for males (Hill, Miller, Benson & Handley, 2016; Hora, 2014; Lunyolo, Ayodo, Tikoko & Simatwa, 2014).

Stereotypical assumptions about the gender differences between men and women make conditions difficult for women to obtain the opportunity to be placed in senior leadership positions (Davis & Maldonado, 2015; Morley & Crossouard, 2016b). According to Drake and Owen (1998), in Indonesia, women executives experienced obstacles in the environment and stereotyping about gender roles which typecast them into nurturing, supporting types of jobs. There seems to be a patriarchal male culture of dominance and many schools tend to be saturated with masculine values (Bush & West-Burnahm, 1994: Davis and Maldonado, 2015). The domination of males leads to discrimination against females (Shakeshaft, 1993). Some males assume that certain gender roles are natural and normal (Hill, Miller, Benson & Handley 2016), while females are subjected to a patriarchal culture, where most of the responsibilities belong to males (Bush & West-Bumharn, 1994; Cundiff & Vescio, 2016; Gill & Arnold, 2015). As Hill, Miller, Benson & Handley (2016) show, whereas men are socialized to be confident, assertive, and self-promoting, cultural attitudes toward women as leaders continue to suggest to women that it is often inappropriate or undesirable to possess those characteristics.

Gender equity an overview

In Zimbabwe HE, the large number of females in management positions shows a history of domination and exploitation based on essentialist notions of womanhood rather than of encouraging the clear development of women. The existence of males as "gatekeepers" has been identified as a crucial organizational factor limiting the entrance of females to educational management (Shava & Ndebele, 2014). Mdluli (2002) strengthens this argument by indicating that only 9.3% of managerial positions in HE are held by women in Zimbabwe. This percentage of merely 9.3% can be attributed to many factors, including amongst other things the misperceptions about women leadership skills and potentials. Such a low percentage of women in managerial positions reflect discrimination at the workplace if one considers that women constitute 55% of

the Zimbabwe population (Mdluli, 2002). With regards to the education sector, as Kele & Pietersen (2015) show, history has shown that, females, regardless of their race, have been underrepresented in leadership positions in Zimbabwe higher education institutions for quite some time, while in the schooling sector, according to (Wills 2016, 28), "despite the feminisation of the teaching profession, school leadership positions are dominated by men," Wills (2016) notes that in 2012, 71 percent of all teachers were women but they held a mere 36 percent of school principal positions. Zimbabwe has emerged from a socio-political order that was characterized by discrimination against, and neglect of females. In South African, the new constitution has gone a long way towards ending this state of affairs. For example, according to Section 9 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), all South Africans are equal before the law. This equality imperative however is not readily observable in the management positions at school level or HE (Zwane, 2003). In this regard, Moorosi (2008) also concurs when she contends that in the schooling system women form only 30% of school principals although they constitute the majority (more than 70%) of the teaching population. Women discrimination has been seen to be common in both Zimbabwe and South Africa in both HE and school system.

Shava and Tlou (2018) states that gender inequity is still very much part of the Zimbabwe education system at all levels. Greyvenstein (2000: 75) asserts that "the traditional inequity between men and women may be traced throughout history, where it has been cloaked in the androcentric (male-centered) philosophies." As the Zimbabwean education system is undergoing a transformation process, both men's and women's abilities need to be used in managerial positions in order for the transformation to take place effectively at all levels of education. Yet women's under representation in managerial positions is not always acknowledged and given the necessary attention in organizations. In 1990, a Gender Equity Task Team (GETT) was established to, amongst others, identify means to correct gender imbalances, propose affirmative action strategies for increasing the under representation of women in professional leadership and management positions and for increasing the influence and authority of women leaders (Chisholm & September, 2005; Shava and Tlou 2018). Although the GETT report (1997) made the recommendations to ensure that equality in education management takes place, unequal distribution of men and women in leadership positions in education is still a reality in Zimbabwe (Chisholm & September, 2005; Shava and Ndebele 2014).

Shava,Tlou and Mpofu (2019) argue that while there is a gradual change today, women leaders are still far from achieving equality in the workplace in Zimbabwe . Whilst many will argue that the status of women in the workplace is gradually changing, it is doing so at a sluggish pace: sometimes even women have internalized that they are not ready for leadership and management jobs (Msila, 2013). After reviewing literature related to South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe, Greyling & Steyn (2015; Shava and Tlou, 2018) conclude that research findings shows an underrepresentation of women in management positions at all levels of the education system, including primary schools, high school, universities and other educational institutions. The paucity of women in management, therefore, suggests acute gender misrepresentation in leadership. It is important to research experiences of female leaders as these experiences might be detrimental to their performance. As Mollel & Tshabangu, (2014) tell us, female leadership is perceived less favourably and therefore an investigation of the challenges they encounter in their day to day operations might shed light why this is the case. This chapter presents findings on the challenges faced by the female HODs in Zimbabwe HE in order to advance recommendations to mitigate the challenges.

Critical realist Theory, the view point to analyse women in management

The research is framed on Archer's (1995, 1996, 2000) social realist analytical framework. Archer (2000) distinguishes between the people (agents) and the parts (structure and culture). She provides a model of social reality as comprising three milieus: structure, culture and agency. Archer's social realism is an explanatory framework for examining and explaining the social world through analysis of the interplay

between structure, culture and agency (1995, 2000). Archer challenges existing social theories that conflate the analysis of the social world. Archer advocates for the theory of 'analytical dualism' where she argues that the 'parts' (culture, structure) and the 'people' (agents) are two irreducible parts in a social world therefore they need to be analysed separately to avoid what she calls the 'fallacy of conflation'. The structural domain in Archer's social realist theory comprises things which exist in the system, such as policies (for example, which spell out the government position with regards to gender equity and the appointment of females in leadership positions) and committees (which are for example, responsible for the appointment of HE managers).

These structures, either constrain or enable the actions of the agents (for example, the beliefs of selection committee members would have an impact on whether females are appointed into HODs), and in turn, agents reproduce and/or transform structures (Danermark, Ekstrom, Jakobsen, and Karlsson, 2005). Culture, according to Archer's theory, comprises our value systems, beliefs, attitudes, ideas, ideologies, theories and concepts which are manifest through discourses that are used by particular people at particular times (Quinn, 2012). The beliefs held by members of staff and university community, for example, on the qualities of a good leader or on whether there are gender differences with regards to leadership (for example, whether or not females can lead as effectively as males) have an important influence on how female HODs are accepted and/or viewed in the organisation. Agency (the people), according to Archer (1996), refers to the personal and psychological makeup of individuals, their social roles and relates to the capacity that people have to act in specific ways. Agents can engage in concerted action to re-shape or retain the structural or cultural features they inherit in specific institutional settings. Agents coming onto the scene (such as new female HODs being appointed) inherit a set of doctrines, theories and beliefs which dictate what could have an impact on them and these shape what these agents (female HODs) can do (Quinn, 2006).

Agents, for example, new female higher education HODs coming into a system where the generally held belief is that HE management is for males can have a causal effect on the beliefs held about gender disparity in leadership by modelling good leadership and producing good results or perpetuate the belief that females are not good enough (by adopting male masculinity attributes in their leadership). Archer thus believes that social structures exert causal influence on social interactions, while the actions of individuals and groups affect social structures by modifying or reproducing them. This analytical theoretical framework is used in this chapter to analyse the challenges faced by female higher education HODs in their day to day running of their units. As Archer's social realist theory shows, structure and culture can influence the extent to which female university HODs are accepted as leaders. This chapter unpacks, from the data collected, the extent to which existing structures in HE system either enable or constrain the female HODs in their day to day running of their units. In order to infer from Archer's domain of culture, the article discusses the extent to which societal patriarchal beliefs about the ability of women to lead. In the domain of agency, the chapter considers the extent to which the female HODs (as agents) are able to mitigate these challenges and provide for organisational development. In a study by Shava and Tlou (2018) one of the most striking outcome of our research was that, despite many similarities in the way in which they worked and perceived themselves as leaders, the majority of the women were conscious of the tensions between their sex and power role. This was related to the natural leadership status of men and the association of women with private sphere of home and family. The consequence of this assumption was that women were less likely to be appointed as heads, had particular difficulties in the appointment process and could find their leadership contested once they were in post.

Women and School leadership

Higher Education leadership is not a simple process. It requires multiple strategies and abilities, whether assumed by men or women. Education systems are ever changing and these changes demand for visionary school leaders who understand that its culture is rigid, inhibiting and progressive. According to Gardner

(1990) leadership in the process of persuasion by which an individual or leadership team induces a group to pursue objectives held by the leader. This definition does not specify or give suggestions for how women should lead to address specific issues that are related to female leadership. Thus leadership involves inducing followers to act towards achieving goals that represent the values, motivations, wants and needs and the aspirations of both the leader and followers. Women school leadership in Zimbabwe and the world over face many challenges that stand in their way in their effort to provide for successful school leadership. A United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) reported in Ramsey, (2000) found out that globally, women were grossly underrepresented in education management with men out numbering women at about five to one at middle management level. Women on the other hand have limited ambitions, they lack confidence in themselves and their work is affected by discontinuity in the work place (Abu-Khdair, 2012, Shava and Tlou 2018).

Women in leadership the wider concept

This part of the analysis reviews the literature on women in school leadership positions. Among the concerns of the United Nations International Female Education Management (UNFEM) and UNICEF (2002) were the elimination of all forms of prejudice and discrimination against women especially in assuming leadership positions in preservation of the woman's rights and her role in the inclusive development. In response to the concerns of UNFEM and UNICEF, there has been a considerable expansion in the role of women in school leadership. Prior to these developments, the attainment of independence in Zimbabwe in 1980 also marked radical changes towards achieving gender equity. The government alluded to several national and international gender declarations and conventions. These include but not limited to: 1965 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD):the 1979 United Nations Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against women (CEDAW) (Chabaya, et al, 2009) Responding to the conventions, several policy initiatives were put in place in Zimbabwe, for example Affirmative Action Policy of 1992, Public Service Commission Circular No 11 of 1992; Public Service Commission Circular No 22 of 1996; Public Service Commission Circular No 1 of 1997, and the National Gender Policy of 2004 (Chabaya, 2009). In all these policy and circular initiatives, the key issues were on the elimination of negative economic, social, political cultural and structural practices that impede equality and equity of sexes and the promotion of equal opportunities for both men and women in leadership positions. Despite the considerable expansion and promotion of women to leadership position the review of literature established that, women are facing a different reality from their male counterparts due to various structural and cultural factors that impede their effectiveness as leaders Amenkash et al, (2007) Martin, (2011) argue that, while overt gender discrimination is no longer as prevalent the world over, it is being replaced by more subtle forms of institutional discrimination in the form of, institutional practices, structural arrangements, cultural ideologies, and gendered roles that recreate patriarchal ideologies that are oppressive to women. Institutional discrimination refers to the policies, practices, norms, and traditions of the dominant racial, ethnic or gender group and the implementation of policies that disadvantage one social group for the advantage of another group (Baumgartner and Johnson-Bailey, 2010). Another form of institutional discrimination involves gendered roles, a practice that marginalizes women in less appreciated professional activities, such as teaching infant classes. On the other hand structural discrimination involves policies and actions that are neutral in intent yet disadvantages other groups of people (Pincus, 2003). Martin (2011) and Klein (2007) remark that other challenges facing women in leadership positions include a negative institutional climate, patriarchal leadership, an absence of peer mentoring and networking, a lack of understanding of the unwritten rules of organizational culture, and the need to develop a professional communication.

Psychologists have noted that prescriptive gender stereotyping- assumptions about the roles that women play often conflict with the role of leadership (Prime et al., (2009). Women leaders are seen often seen as violating their prescribed feminine roles, while men in leadership positions are perceived as acting in

compliance with their prescribed masculine roles Prime et al., (2009). In the view of Martin (2011) for women leaders, gender labelling is particularly problematic. For example, men who assert themselves as strong leaders are respectfully addressed as the "boss" whereas women with similar traits may be called a disparaging name. Ideologies of male supremacy are so ingrained in many countries that they are taken as the natural order of things, while suggestions to established new definitions are rejected as ludicrous, illogical or an attack on cultural norms (Stromquist, 2006).

Thus, home and family responsibilities provide obstacles for women in administration as managers because of their femininity, the women not only must effectively juggle all her tasks, she must also contend with the bulk of male school boards presidents who erroneously believe that not only is she unable to manage the balancing act but that it is inappropriate for her to even attempt it Shakeshaft 1989:113)

The roles and skills of women leaders have received attention by researchers in education all over the world (Omair, 2008; Stead and Eliot, 2009: Shakleton et al., 2006 and Al- Ahmadi, 2005). This growing interest is triggered by the importance of leadership as an essential element to the survival of the education system and as an instrumental factor in striving for excellence (Stead and Eliot 2009; Grogan and Shakeshaft, 1989. Studies conducted by Al- Hussein (2011); Chabaya et al, 2009 and Martin (2011) established that women have distinct leadership traits and skills in leading especially educational institutions, even though they face certain difficulties and challenges that impede their leadership effectiveness. This was confirmed by Jennif (2008) who argued that women have the ability to balance between their work as a school leader and the family role in spite of all the various pressure. These studies have shown that women school leaders have leadership characteristics that may not exist in men. Heferran (2008:1) maintains that, "while rural women are often silent, hidden and under-appreciated, they represent probably the world's most powerful untapped natural resource, and they are surely more than ever before a key to world stability and understanding". While Zulu's (2011) study established that the woman in leadership is characterized by strong communication and dealing skills with others, abilities to possess the information and share power, as well as her participatory style of work. This is contradicted by Jabber's study of (2005) which showed that, women in leadership positions face challenges to reach the leadership position due to the negative stereotype of the women in the mind of both the males and women. Research conducted by Wilkinson (1996) found that women leaders worldwide share a number of challenges which include, stereotyping, lack of role models and the lack of access to training. Also Stead and Eliots' study in Arab Gulf countries found that the challenges faced by women in leadership positions included discrimination at work, cultural taboos, negative attitudes towards working women and lack of confidence and trust in women leaders. Cooke (2007) also identified several inhibiting factors for women that include organisational factors, such as personnel systems, traditional career paths, male employee attitudes and women's own attitudes. Cooke (2007) argue that, culture which is reflected in the set of beliefs, values, practices and norms associated with the local community as well as in the work place, can adversely reflect on the effectiveness of women leaders and their ability to exercise a positive leadership role. This was confirmed by Shahine, (1997) who argue that, despite the growing leadership role of women in society, traditional beliefs and practices on behalf of the community prohibit the career advancement of women. Some traditional beliefs are reflected in associating leadership abilities and positions with men and not women (Effindi, 2003, Metcalfe, 2008 and Coleman, 2001) The cultural identification of women as caring, domestic and implicitly of lesser importance and status than men needs to be examined (Coleman, 2000, 2001). Culture reflected in the set of beliefs and practices associated with the local community, as well as in the work place, can adversely reflect on the effectiveness of women leaders and their ability to exercise a positive leadership role (Shava and Tlou 2018)

While women frequently serve longer as HE leaders and in the teaching service, they encounter multiple obstacles to their effective operations in these positions. When the study participants were asked to explain the major challenges faced by women in school leadership positions, a number of interview participants

including focus group discussions pointed out that woman in leadership positions face challenges related to:

- Negative attitudes of school community towards women as school heads.
- Family attachment and family roles
- Lack of support from community members including teachers.
- Social cultural barriers in the school environment.
- Low self esteem and the general lack of confidence among women school heads.
- Lack of leadership skills.
- Organisational structures in the schools.
- Gender stereotypes against women.
- Institutional discrimination.
- Patriarchal leadership structures in society
- Personal barriers.
- Negative institutional climate.

Research findings have revealed that women in HE leadership positions face multiple challenges which to a great extent affect their operations in these positions. Research findings by Shava, Tlou and Mpofu established that women who are heads of schools encounter numerous dilemmas as both parents and heads of schools. Family attachments and especially taking care of children was found to be the major barrier to women effectiveness in school leadership positions some women are not even prepared to take positions of school head away from their family especially in a situation where she is to take a leadership position away from her husband and family. This finding is in line with Dorsey (1996) who argued that, from an early stage of child development girls are groomed towards their marriage roles of wife, mother and family care taker.

In other words women are finding it difficult to move away from their families to take a leadership position. Where these women have moved their effectiveness is compromised due to isolation and lack of motivation. Women in HE leadership positions struggle with unfair elitist culture, a lack mentors and role models and tensions between work ,family and community(Arment,2004) Cooper et al.,2007 Wolfinger et al.,2009). Many women in leadership positions face the multiple threats of being female, leaders and mothers at the same time. As leaders, women encounter multiple layers of discrimination and multiple layers of challenges emanating from their family orientations. Women tend to place a strong emphasis on the extended family and community, domestic and family care responsibilities which in turn create serious barriers to their effective operations at the work place. In this context we argue that balancing work and family responsibilities is a major hurdle for women in leadership positions. While family responsibilities may influence the carriers of all parents, women especially those with new born babies and preschool children may have disproportionate work in caring for the children and also making a significant contribution to the achievement of organisational goals. Armenti, (2004) describes the irony women face as their child bearing years parallel their journey in the leadership. Family care issues have a more negative impact on promotion and work effectiveness than for man since women have a disproportionate share of domestic duties (Cooper et al., 2007, Shakeshaft and Grogan 2011, Martin,2011 and Dominicia et al., 2009)

The synthesis of research findings show that family responsibilities remain the preoccupation of women. As women begin to take leadership positions in HE, striking a balance between family life and leadership roles become a problem. Armenti (2004) confirms that striking a balance between family life and leadership roles becomes controversial when women ascend to higher positions. These research findings demonstrate the dilemma women face in making decisions about taking leadership positions. Society associates the position of manager with man and the moment there is a female manager this does not ogre well with members of the community. To them there is no such term as head "mistress" but head "master." Ramagosh (2005) point out that, the culture of associating the position of manager with a male figure persists and continue to

undercut the policy of gender equality. In this article we argue that, that stereotypes in society consider women as inferior and not suitable for leadership positions. In the words of Lagan (1999:4), "culturally defined desirable feminine behaviour is nurturing and caring for others, placing importance on relationships and the quality of life", rather than leading organisations. To most man a woman cannot be the head of an organisation as much as she cannot be the head of a family unless in the absence of a man (Shava and Ndebele 2014). On the other hand Effende, (2003) assert that, probably the single most important hurdle for women in management in developing countries is the persistent stereotype that associated management being male position. We also argue that because most Zimbabwean cultures are patriarchal, most societies and organisations including HE institutions have in fact placed women in a passive role at work and even in the family. Due to patriarchal orientations it is unacceptable for a woman to lead an organisation where there are men. Our culture and customs of the tribal community assume that men should lead while women follow. Collectively, research findings have established that, culture reflected in the set of beliefs, roles, values norms and practices in the organisation and the local communities affect women's' execution of leadership roles. Traditional beliefs are reflected in associating leadership positions in organisation with men and not women. The cultures and customs of the tribal community prevailing in the area contribute to the conservative orientation towards women.

Structural factors hindering women in Higher Education Management

Hand in hand with cultural barriers, are structural factors which can present a serious challenge to women leadership and organisational practices which often put women in lower leadership positions that do not give them access to power. Evidence from research similarly indicates that women leaders in Saudi Arabi face a number of structural challenges, including limited authority, which is disproportionate to the size of their responsibility (Abdullah, 2008; Almenkash et al., 2007; Al- Halawan, 2002) Lack of empowerment can be another challenge facing women in school leadership which is reflected in their inability to influence the decision making processes and achieve organisational goals due to lack of tools or methods of empowerment(Metcalfe, 2008). According to Effindi, (2003) empowerment enhances the moral and physical sense of belonging and affiliation with the organisation giving a positive effect on the attitude of the individual and hence feelings of appreciation and importance to the institution. This therefore is an indication that several structural factors some which are associated with the personality of women leaders and their social circumstances may hinder their ability to fully effectively exercise leadership roles in schools.

Some of the challenges facing women in HE leadership positions include lack of self-confidence, fear of responsibility, difficult of balancing professional responsibilities and family obligations and the mere sense of isolation in leadership position. Abrahim (1997) confirm that feeling of frustration, isolation and suffering among women in leadership increase because of the sense of marginalization, inferiority and lack of self-confidence. As reported by Al-Lamki,(1999), the main obstacles for women leaders were:

- limited opportunities to higher education,
- discriminatory appointments and promotion practices,
- traditional attitudes of male bosses towards working women,
- male dominated sectors,
- male resistance to women in management,
- absence of policies and legislation to ensure participation of women in management positions,
- lack of professional networking,
- lack of female role models,
- lack of professional management development programmes,
- lack of a significant number of quality day care centres,
- dual responsibilities of traditional and professional roles,

- balancing traditional and professional roles and family obligations as a wife and a mother for childbearing and child rearing.

Basing on the literature review and our analysis, it can be concluded that women leaders face multiple challenges that limit their effectiveness and prevent them from providing effective school leadership. These challenges include organizational structure, culture, policies, practices, as well as individual factors such as personal skills capabilities, confidence, support, ability to achieve balance and a sense of empowerment. In this article we argue that the advancement of women to leadership positions is an important goal for Zimbabwe and Africa as a whole and effort should be made by all concerned and involved to eliminate barriers that impede the effective operation of women in HE leadership positions. Such effort will make a significant contribution in the implementation of the eighth development plan, and the achievement of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which strongly emphasise the need for women empowerment and advancement in society. Efforts should perhaps start by addressing the imbalances in education where women prevail in total numbers but men dominating in power and authority. Klein, (2007), Chosholm, (2001), Jansen (2007) and Kiamba, (2008) affirm that, the overwhelming number of males in positions of authority sheds intimidation upon the female educator pursuing a leadership role. Structural factors include physical and technical challenges and obstacles related to the physical work environment, and technical issues that limit the ability of the women leader to achieve educational goals. Structural factors can also include organisational challenges related to the administrative organisation that may hinder women leaders to achieve the objectives of the institution (Abu-Khadair, 2012; Al- Kubasisi, 2004 and Al- Minquiash, 2007). Structural challenges may also include the under-empowerment factors that limit the ability of leaders on taking the right decisions and eliciting the change required to realise success and distinct in performing leadership roles (Abu-Khadair, 2012). As indicated structural discrimination involves policies and actions that are neutral in intent yet disadvantages other groups of people in an organisation (Pincus, 2003). According to Omar and Davidson, (2001) structural factors can present an important challenge to women leaders due to managerial and organisational practices and roles. Stromquist (2006) argues that while access to leadership positions has allowed women to challenge traditional institutional practices, policies and structures, the pathway for women remains obstructed by institutional structural barriers. Evidence from the research findings show that managers experienced some form of resistance from their members of staff. The degree of resistance varied from open defiance to subtle non- compliance among staff members both male and females. Despite the considerable expansion of in the role of women in society, evidence from literature view and empirical research indicates that women in leadership positions are facing different reality from their male counterparts due to various structural and cultural factors that impede their effectiveness as leaders (Almenkash et al.,2007).

From our synthesis of publications it is evident that traditional stereotypes were the major cause of rejection of female HODs in HE which falls under Archer (2000) domain of culture. From the findings it is also clear that male dominance was an entrenched culture among the senior members of staff. As Archer (2000) shows, structures, in this case the senior academics as a structure, can either constrain or enable the actions of the agents (for example, the beliefs of senior members of staff on the ability of females to lead had an impact on how the female HODs were received and supported). It can be concluded that traditional stereotypes in the senior members of staff structures were the major cause of rejection of female HODs in these units. As Chan, Ngai, Choi. (2016) argue, when gender norms in society prescribe different, and often inferior, roles to women, these shape the way departments or units are organised and the social perception of leadership. "Sexism tends to prevail when the university management or selection committee is dominated by men, who are more likely to hire and promote other men who look, think and act like them." (Chan et al. 2016: 195). These from our also concur with those by Faulkner (2015) who notes that despite the equal opportunities legislation introduced in many countries, including Zimbabwe, in the last three decades, traditional stereotypes of women's roles, positions, characteristics and abilities continue to exist. For female HODs to break this glass ceiling, they need to invoke and exercise their agency. As Chan et al. (2016) note,

almost total absence of formal institutional support implies that women have to turn to their own means (agency) and bear personal costs when pursuing career progression.

Attitudes of senior members staff towards female heads of departments

According to Archer's (2000) framework, structures play a significant role determining whether female HODs are accepted in the department.

Findings from our analysis show that the general attitude of the university community towards female HODs were positive even though there was an element of doubt in the beginning with female HODs indicating that community members were supportive and gradually developed trust in them. In Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwean Schools Act 94/1990 states that all stakeholders in education must accept responsibility for the organization of schools. Section B of the SASA 86/1990 points out that members of local communities are often in the best position to know what a school really needs and what the problems are. Section B of the South African School Act allows for all stakeholders including parents, teachers, students and the school community to participate in their school affairs. According to Van Deventer & Kruger (2003:262) the South African government also states that education can only succeed if all stakeholders are involved in running the school affairs by being actively involved and accepting their responsibilities. The results of this analysis seem to contradict those of Faulkner (2015) who found that the women's experiences of leadership were adversely affected by the prevailing and entrenched patriarchal attitudes within the communities they served (Zikhali & Perumal 2016).

Work-related challenges faced by female Higher Education managers.

Findings from our analysis showed that female HODs faced a number of challenges as they assumed their roles for the first time. Amongst the challenges faced included: negative attitude from some community members; jealousy; being undermined because of their gender and lack of confidence on their side. Findings from our synthesis of literature showed that female managers were not only perceived as incompetent and unable by male colleagues only, but also by female staff members. One would expect the female colleagues to support women leaders because they share the same common feature which is their femaleness, but it is not like that. This is supported by Weeks (2009)'s research which demonstrated that women managers continue to face the perceptions of others which recognized men as more suited for management positions than women.

Similarly, results from a study by Arar & Abramovitz (2013) indicate that, on the whole, the population of Arab academics in Israel still has prejudiced perceptions of women in management. Even though academics are professionally trained, they continue to view women managers negatively. Culture and tradition could have a noticeable impact on how staff members view women managers. HE institutions are an extended organ of the community. Cultural beliefs also manifest themselves in the institution. Members of staff are part of society and they carry with them their cultural beliefs at their places of employment. When members of university staffs enter the institution, they do not leave behind their cultural belief systems at home. Some cultural beliefs feel that women are inferior to men and thus cannot be managers over men. Because of their femaleness, they are thus considered to be weak and not fit for management positions. They do not believe that women managers are capable of delivering. In a study in Zimbabwea, by Zikhali & Perumal (2016), school heads made it clear that some male teachers did not want to be led by a 'petticoat' government. Furthermore, female colleagues were described as being jealous of other females. The Department of Education (Republic of South Africa 2004) cited in Nzeli (2013) also observed that men and women who hold values that consider women to be inferior to men are more likely to create difficulties for women managers. Literature suggests that gender inequity is still very much part of the Zimbabwean education system. Greyvenstein (2000:75) asserts that "the traditional inequity between men and women may be traced throughout history, where it has been cloaked in the androcentric (male-centered) philosophies." The

underrepresentation of Zimbabwean women in educational leadership and management in the literature is blamed on institutional culture, with a strong argument that unhelpful cultural expectations about women prevail to the present day (Chisholm, 2001; Diko, 2007; Diko 2014; Mahlase, 1997; Moorosi, 2008). In a study by Coleman (2002) women head teachers reported that they were taken to be secretaries by parents visiting the school, or that if accompanied by their male deputy to a meeting, he is assumed to be the head and she the deputy.

Personal challenges faced by female higher education managers

The challenge of balancing their work and their roles as mothers can be classified under Archer (2000)'s domain of culture where women are expected to care for the family. This can be seen as a constraint in the domain of culture according to Archer (2000). Culture, according to Archer's theory, comprises our value systems, beliefs, attitudes, ideas, ideologies, theories and concepts which are manifest through discourses that are used by particular people at particular times. The cultural belief that it is the woman's responsibility to look after the children militates against their assuming leadership positions. As Kaparou & Bush (2007) found in their study, women do not feel able to hold senior positions in HE because of the dual demands of management and family responsibilities. The evidence from the interviews in their study revealed that motherhood took priority over work and hampered women in balancing their work and family life. Similarly, participants in a study by Longman & Anderson (2016) opted not to pursue promotions that would require more time away from their families, favouring personal balance over higher salaries or positional authority. In this regard, Lumby & Azaola (2014:31) argue that, "the gendering of family roles is an example of different bandwidths and of a social location where the expectations of what it is to be a mother or a father are generally different and have implications for the individual that reach far beyond the family milieu." The results of this study as shown above also showed souring family relationships as a result of females assuming leadership positions. This could be attributed to the patriarchal culture that sees the role of the woman as that of nurturing the family. Literature also shows the importance of family support for successful leadership careers of females. Sanderson & Whitehead (2016) report that, of the nine women interviewees who were married, some commented on the fact that having a supportive partner was critical to their ability to seek promotion. In the same vein, Kaparou & Bush (2007) tell us that support and encouragement from their husbands, families and peers influenced women's attitudes to promotion.

Absence of agency in higher education management

In this study, in the domain of agency, lack of confidence on their female managers' own ability to run institutions was an issue that emerged in from our synthesis. Agency (the people), according to Archer (1996), refers to the personal and psychological makeup of individuals, their social roles and relates to the capacity that people have to act in specific ways. Agents can engage in concerted action to re-shape or retain the structural or cultural features they inherit in specific institutional settings. Also the Department of Education (Republic of South Africa 2004) cited in Nzeli (2013) points out, the women manager may be managers' worst enemy as this feeling of inferiority makes women managers let everyone walk over them instead of taking charge. When a woman does not approve herself, she must not expect others to value her. Low self-esteem affects one's performance at work. Howe-Walsh & Turnbull (2016) commented that, individual perceptions of ability challenge many women.

Major differences in leadership styles between men and women

A number of reviews have pointed out the major differences in leadership styles between men and women leaders. The assumption was perhaps the leadership styles adopted by women influence the challenges they face in their leadership positions. It was however interesting to note that, there is little difference between the leadership styles of successful males and female managers. Hymowitz,(2006), White (2011), and Avilio (2010) assert that, there is no significant difference between the leadership styles of successful men and

women leaders in organisations. **S**ex related differences are present in school leadership styles, but the differences according to our assessment are insignificant. Literature on women in leadership positions has established that:

- Women are good at prioritising and they have multiple skills.
- Women are more sociable, while men are less socially sensitive and men are more focused on the rational, practical and commercial aspect.
- Women tend to meet deadlines and they deliver on promises.
- Women empathise well with others, they are socially sensitive and they are good listeners.
- Women are more generous in the way they judge their colleagues.
- Women leaders enhance teamwork, they encourage innovation through collaborative improvement of colleagues.
- Women encourage personal development.
- Women school heads listen, motivate and provide support to their subordinates yet men do not have a skill of listening.
- Women in school leadership tend to place more emphasis on communication, cooperation, affiliation and nurturing, they have more communal qualities compared to men.
- Female managers on average are more democratic and participative in decision making.
- Women allow inputs from colleagues in decision making.

Effects of women's leadership styles

Findings from our review of literature revealed that, participative, democratic and team work leadership styles were mainly dominant styles of leadership among women heads. These approaches according to our analysis have the potential to enhance the achievement of goals in organisations. This analysis is in line with Harris (2014) who argued that, the adoption of distributed leadership in schools can contribute to the achievement of organizational goals. Harris (2014) established that women school leaders tend to place more emphasis on communication, cooperation affiliation and nurturing. These communal qualities are seen to be crucial for school leadership and improving learning outcomes. Effective communication in institutions is crucial for the achievement of organisational goals. The idea that women school leaders advocate for team work, stability, motivation, recognizing trends and acting on new ideas make them powerful leaders who have the potential to sustain quality improvement. It emerged from synthesis that woman leaders have the potential to motivate their subordinates as a result of the participative decision making approaches they adopt. Motivation is crucial for members of staff to be more effective and procedures.

Conclusion

In conclusion, among the challenges faced by female managers, in HE the most prominently featuring are; negative attitudes from educators regardless of gender; negative attitudes from some community members, though to a limited extent; jealousy; being undermined because of their gender and lack of agency due to lack of self-confidence on the part of the female managers themselves.

Based on research findings, it can also be concluded that female managers are not well received by other staff members at the institution, where the majority of the staff members express an element of doubt in female managers' ability to lead. Gender awareness workshops for male staff members can, in the researchers' view go a long way in mitigating these negative effects patriarchy.

The analysis also concludes that women managers are not perceived as incompetent and unable by male colleagues only, but also by female staff members. As established in this synthesis, female colleagues were described as being jealous of other females. One would have expected the female staff members to support

female managers because they share the same common feature which is their femaleness. However as the review of literature has shown, the effect of culture and tradition, wherein females are acculturated to believe that they are inferior to and have to bow down to males could have impacted on how female members of staff viewed female managers. The study concludes that attitudes of the university community at large on female managers were generally positive. This is indeed a positive sign which, it is hoped might eventually filter down to the institutional context as institutions are part of the communities they serve. The difficulty of the part of female school managers to strike a balance between work and family responsibilities is also a major conclusion from this synthesis. Such a dilemma leaves the female manager having to choose between career advancement and the risk of family breakdowns. It however remains the optimistic hope of the researchers that it is indeed possible to break the barriers to women advancement to senior positions in HE leadership.

It is fascinating, yet perhaps not surprising that a profession in which the majority of staff members are women is mostly lead by men due to challenges that frustrate woman in these leadership positions. A typical characteristic emerging from this synthesis is that Zimbabwe's HE leadership is for some reasons dominated by men. There are social biases and stereotypes that still exist in most institutions and communities and this is working against women, thus undermining Government's Affirmative Action and Employment Equity policies. On the other hand, female managers virtually absent mothers to their children and families, ultimately going against the social and cultural expectations of women being relegated to particular roles such as child rearing and performing house hold chores (Kolb et al.,2010). Despite several strides that have been made on gender equality in response to feminist ideologies, affirmative action and other global initiatives on gender parity, there are still embedded gender masculine dominating in HE institutions as highlighted in our study. Findings from our analysis are confirmed by Al- Hussein (2011) who showed that women in HE face several challenges in their way to approach the leading position, such as the negative stereotype of the women in both the men and women minds, limited ambitions among women, lack of confidence in themselves and their abilities, interruption of work on maternity leave and the main cultural and structural barriers. Our findings from this analysis are also consistent with those of Al-Raqab (2009) study which illustrated that the most challenges expressed by the study sample were, social, cultural and structural challenges followed by political challenges and finally personal barriers. We therefore conclude by indicating that even though women have become an increasingly large proportion of the HE staff in Zimbabwe and have all the excellent leadership styles identified in the analysis, they still cannot hold a proportionate share of the leadership in HE management due to multiple challenges identified in this desktop analysis.

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