



Organisational Cultural Factors and Barriers Affecting Women's Career Success at a Selected Institution of Higher Learning in South Africa

Sahumani, N.¹; Majola, B.K.¹, Ngirande, H.²

¹ Department of Business Management, University of Limpopo, South Africa

² Department of Human Resource Management and Labour Relations, University of Venda, South Africa

E-mail: nsahumani3@gmail.com; Kwazi.majola@ul.ac.za; hlanganipai.ngirande@univen.ac.za

<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v6i11.1743>

Abstract

The paper aims to identify organisational cultural factors and barriers that affect women's career success at the University of Limpopo in South Africa. In developed and developing countries, women of all races were marginalised for decades based on their gender, class, and level of education. After 1994, South Africa introduced prescripts such as the new Constitution (108/1996) and Employment Equity Act (55/1998) to redress past imbalances and to empower women. Nonetheless, after almost three decades, women are still underrepresented in senior management positions and academia, with no exception from other sectors. Women aspiring to occupy management positions are expected to work twice as hard as their male counterparts. Besides various barriers, organisational culture plays a supportive role in modifying women's career success. The paper adopts a correlational non-experimental research design and a quantitative approach. The convenience sampling method was used to select 70 women academics from all levels of a lectureship in the Faculty of Management and Law at the University of Limpopo to complete an online structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using SPSS version 28.0. The results show a significant relationship between organisational cultural factors and women's career success. However, no relationship was found between career barriers and women's career success. The results revealed that women still experience barriers such as the glass ceiling and gender stereotyping in their career progression. The paper recommends reviewing employment policies and adopting strategies and programmes, including mentorship, to influence organisational cultural change and remove barriers for the benefit of women's career success.

Keywords: *Career Barriers; Higher Education; Organisational Culture; Underrepresentation; Women's Career*

Introduction

Women in developing and developed countries were marginalised for decades in all aspects of life. Women were excluded from political, religious, cultural and work-related decision-making processes based on gender, race and class. To address this exclusion of women, the United Nations (UN), as an international institution, persuaded member states to remove all discriminatory practices and empower women with its conventions, recommendations, and conferences, such as the Convention on Ending All Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995) to achieve greater equality and opportunity for women. Whitmore (1988) argues that empowerment is an interactive process through which people experience personal and social change, enabling them to take action to achieve influence over the organisations and institutions which affect their lives and the communities in which they live. The new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Constitution) with a clause on equality (section 9) was promulgated after the first non-racial elections. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (BCEA), and Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) were reviewed. New laws were introduced, such as the Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 (SDA) and the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 (EEA) to accommodate people from historically disadvantaged backgrounds, such as Blacks (Indian, Coloureds, Africans, and Chinese), people with disabilities and women. South Africa has established structures for gender equality and women empowerment, such as the Ministry of Women, national gender machinery; Offices on the Status of Women; Gender Focal Points and Women's Forums; Parliamentary Women's Group and the Women's Empowerment Committees and the Committee on the Improvement of the Quality of Life of Women in Provincial Legislatures (van der Walldt, Fourie, van Dijk, Chitiga-Mabugu, and Jordaan, 2019). The Department of Education was divided into the Department of Basic Education and the Department of Higher Education to meet international standards. This increased women's representation and participation in the labour market.

The representation of South African women in the upper position ranks is discouraging as they obtain qualifications at a rate incomparable in history (McTavish and Miller, 2019). According to Boluk, Cavaliere and Higgins-Desbiolles (2019), the rate decreases as the position becomes higher until at the highest-level management positions. Over the years, with equal opportunities and access to education, more girl children attended school. Warner and Corley (2017) argue that more than half of students graduating with first degrees in universities are female, but only a quarter of these women are in management positions. South Africa has more women than men (StatsSA, 2017). Yet, 66.9 % are men compared to 33.1% of women in managerial positions (StatsSA, 2021). This shows that women still experience barriers in their career progression to higher management. Academia is no different from the larger professional world as gender correlates more with occupational type in the working environment (Doubell & Struwig, 2013). In an organisational setting, women's advancement to leadership positions can be influenced by several factors ranging from individual factors (personality) and organisational factors found within the organisation (Nyoni & He, 2019). Organisational culture plays a supportive role in the modification of females' career success (Datta & Shah, 2020). Moodly and Toni (2019) define organisational culture as the collective effect of people's shared beliefs, behaviours, and values within a company. The organisational cultural factors can either promote females' advancement in an organisation or pull them down. The paper aims to investigate organisational cultural factors affecting women's career success at the University of Limpopo in South Africa. It also identifies barriers that affect women's career success at the same higher-learning institution.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is guided by three theories: patriarchy, social cognitive career and career capital theories, as discussed next.

The Patriarchy Theory

According to Powell (1885), the Patriarchal theory was exposed by Sir Henry Maine in 1861 after a class of writers in Europe long held it. Patriarchy is used in feminist societies to describe the power between women and men (Sultana, 2011). In patriarchal organisations, the organisation's hierarchy automatically classifies men's and women's work. Sultana (2011) highlighted that patriarchy acts as an obstacle to women's career success in higher education because patriarchy encourages male leadership, domination, and power where women are subjected to dependency on males, and lack of participation in decision-making, although there are differences in dominations. However, the fact remains, "Men are in control". In the 21st century, appointments are made on merit in higher education; women can stand their ground against men, but patriarchy continues to hinder women from moving forward in society (Adisa, Abdulsheem and Isiaka, 2019). Patriarchal organisations are responsible for the inadequate representation of female leaders in higher positions in educational institutions.

The Social Cognitive Career Theory

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) is founded on Bandura's social cognitive theory and was developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett in 1994. The SCCT is a dominant intellectual and motivational process concept that has been applied to the study of many areas, including academic performance. According to Brown and Lent (2017:2), "the SCCT is a theory that is aimed at explaining three interrelated aspects of career development: (a) how basic academic and career interests develop, (b) how educational and career choices are made, and (c) how academic and career success is obtained". The SCCT looks into academic and career success, the choices people make in choosing a career, and how the career is obtained. Whenever women are passionate about a profession or success in the academic field, they tend to work hard to achieve their goals (Brown & Lent, 2017).

The Career Capital Theory

Career capital refers to the stock of resources that increase the future impact of an individual's career. It comprises skills, connections, credentials, and runway (Todd 2021). People dedicate their time and effort to investing in their careers, and by doing so, they expect a worthwhile outcome in improving their career competencies. Individuals make three interdependent types of career-based investments through which their careers unfold, namely, knowing why, knowing how and knowing whom (Järlström, Brandt, & Rajala, 2020). Understanding why is about an individual's identity, aspirations, motivations, and self-discovery, knowing how it relates to the skills, competencies and expertise required for a particular occupational role or a specific industry and transferable to other professional contexts. and knowing who is about developing and managing one's professional and social networks in the interest of career progression (Järlström, et al., 2020).

Legislative Framework on Women's Empowerment in Higher Education

South Africa is a signatory to various international laws and conventions by the United Nations (UN) and Africa Union (AU), which supports and encourages governments to play a vital role in empowering, encouraging, and supporting females when climbing the ladder in their careers. The UN Convention (CEDAW), which aims to end all discrimination against women Article 10 (a-h), affirms women equal education opportunities and career guidance. Furthermore, Article 11 demonstrates equal employment opportunities, the same rights to work, employment opportunities, and equal remuneration. The African Union's (AU) Strategy on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) 2018-2028 is a transformational policy which aims to mitigate or eliminate the main constraints hindering gender equality and women's empowerment so that women may participate fully in economic activities, affairs of the State, and social endeavours. GEWE's Pillar 1 recognises that for women to have a voice, they need to

be equally represented in all areas of decision-making and be able to participate with impact through the removal of all forms of barriers (Ntlama-Makhanya & Lubisi-Bizani, 2021).

Chapter 2 (The Bill of Rights) of the Constitution (Republic of South Africa, 1996) states that the State may not unfairly discriminate indirectly or directly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, sex, gender, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic/social group, age, disability, culture, language, and birth. Section 6 of the EEA prohibits unfair discrimination against an employee on arbitrary grounds, including race, gender, and many others, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce. The LRA aims to protect individuals in the workplace and promote economic development, fair labour practices, peace, democracy, and social development (Naidoo, 2016). The SDA aims to expand the knowledge and competencies of the labour force to improve productivity and employment (Parliamentary Monitoring Group, 2000).

Organisational Culture to Women's Career Success

The study conducted by Bonzet and Frick (2019) pointed out that the setting of the organisational culture plays an essential role in improving women's careers. In this study, the researcher adopted Hofstede's six cultural dimensions to explain better the organisational culture approach to women's career success. Out of the six, only three were chosen because of how the questionnaire was designed (individualism vs. collectivism, power distance and masculinity vs. femininity). This was applied to check whether women in academia prefer an individualistic organisation or collectivism, how they value or behave towards power in the hands of the opposite gender and how these women act in masculine organisations.

Individualism vs Collectivism

Individualism in the workplace is sometimes called organisational individualism. It refers to an organisation where employees gain recognition for what they bring to the table as an individual rather than a team. This culture focuses on personal goals, rights, freedom, and autonomy (Nambira & Engelbrecht, 2020). In a group setting, such employees earn top-talent reputations. However, in this culture, creativity and high individual performance are fostered because of the need to stand out and be on top.

On the other hand, a collectivist culture values the employees to work together to achieve a common goal or the goal is for the greater good of the organisation. The rewards and recognition go to the highest-performing teams. Individual autonomy and decision making is discouraged. Hierarchies of power are enforced, and the management reinforces those whose behaviour shows a collective attitude (Musambira & Matusitz, 2015).

Power Distance

According to Uzun (2020), power distance refers to the degree to which individuals in organisations accept inequalities about power, status, and wealth. In other words, it is an organisation's unequal distribution of power. It affects the decision-making mechanism and structure. Employees' perceptions of power distance affect their attitudes and behaviours. Employees in low power distance organisations are obedient and show strong respect to those who lead them as opposed to low power distance organisations (Chinyamurindi, 2016).

Masculinity and Femininity

Globally, the higher education context continuously remains a "masculine" as opposed to feminine setting; numerous females face many barriers in climbing the ladder to leadership positions in institutions of higher learning. Moodly and Toni (2017) opine that the masculine environment creates

unfair expectations from women who have managed to occupy senior positions to behave like males. These women are expected to work twice as hard as their male counterparts to be considered enough. Nguyen (2013) indicated that women who aspire to occupy leadership positions are expected to rise above the socially constructed norms of what Kele and Pietersen (2015:13) refer to as "femaleness" to fulfil the socially prescribed roles of a leader. On the same note, Moodly and Toni (2019:181) highlighted that a "think manager-think male" approach is rooted amongst men in institutions of higher learning. Such opinions inhibit women's career success because the assumption is that women do not possess such masculine characteristics concerning leadership.

A study by De Meulenaer, De Pelsmacker, and Dens (2018) viewed women as strategic thinkers, but masculine organisations view women as affectionate, interpersonally sensitive, and gentle, contributing to barriers in leadership and management positions. According to Osituyo (2018), male counterparts are easily accepted in leadership positions because they are labelled to have the desired traits, which include assertiveness, competitiveness, forcefulness, self-reliance, dominance, and aggressiveness which differ from the nurturing characteristics of female traits.

Career Barriers to Women's Career Success

Women in higher education institutions encounter several hindrances when climbing the ladder to senior management positions. According to Hopkins (2017), most research focuses on the diverse nature of women's career paths, with less attention paid to the barriers women encounter in the workplace, particularly in higher education. Doubell 2011 identified career barriers which are discussed next.

Family Responsibility

In most cases, women are confronted with what is called "role conflict" in the literature, which concerns a setting wherein women should balance family responsibilities and their careers (Dendan & Marques, 2017). They are expected to play the role of being a wife, mother, and a professional career woman. According to Rirhandzu, Abigarl, and Christopher (2020), females' career ambition to senior positions can be hindered because of the responsibility to choose which role to focus on between their careers and household issues, although societal morals command that family should be put first above everything and that a woman's role is in the kitchen. For instance, women who have a family tend to compromise their careers; if the husband moves or gets transferred to work, they automatically move with the husband. As a result, their careers get interrupted. Social mobility then becomes another barrier in attempting to move upward in their careers in higher education (Rirhandzu *et al.*, 2020).

Gender Stereotype

In African cultures, most women are expected to focus more on domestic and family duties, depriving them of their academic life. Chitsamatanga *et al.*, (2018) observed that the choice usually originates from what is believed to be right morals that regard a man's career success as an achievement duty to his family. Additionally, women sacrifice their careers at their husbands' expense because of the archaic view that only the husband provides for the family and women should be subordinated to their husbands. The economic reason is that a man's profession is given priority over a woman who makes such sacrifices. At the youngest age from childhood, girls are taught traditional values different from boys (Allen, Butler-Henderson, Reupert, Longmuir, Finifter-Rosenbluh, Berger, & Fler, 2021). Women are trained to be modest, submissive, affectionate, and nurturing, while boys are taught to value leadership, aggressiveness, assertiveness, task orientation, and competitiveness (Karadag, 2018). This automatically acts as an obstacle to women's traits which do not follow the archaic masculine characteristics of traits. A university study conducted by Karadag (2018) on first-entering students was based on the impact of the gender of the group leader. Karadag (2018) found that the gender disparity produced by the study was the same as other studies on the same issue. Many female students preferred a male leader.

Glass Ceiling

The "Glass ceiling" is a metaphor used in literature as an invisible barrier that prevents women from climbing the corporate ladder to senior positions (Hopkins, 2017). The term was first used in management literature but has also been used in higher education. According to Doubel (2011), the term was coined "by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy of the Wall Street Journal" in 1986, who transcribed, "Even those few women who rise through the ranks will eventually get crashed into the invisible barrier".

According to Davis and Maldonado (2015), women experience invisibility, exclusion, isolation, and lack of support within higher education due to the glass ceiling. This is evidenced by the act of males who prefer to mentor other men as opposed to the other gender which reduces women's chances of networking and serving in leadership positions in higher education. Women's mentorship in the workplace plays an important role in helping women succeed by gaining managerial skills and confidence, resulting in increased promotion possibilities. However, a lack of women's mentorship can result in poor self-efficacy and confidence, reinforcing the glass ceiling.

The glass ceiling remains a barrier, even though no explicit obstacles prevent women from occupying senior positions (Bertrand, 2018). For instance, when advertising senior posts in higher learning institutions, recruiters ensure that the post is not discriminatory since equal employment opportunities forbid gender discrimination. Still, they lie beneath the surface (Huang, Krivkovich, Starikova, Yee and Zanoschi, 2019). When this discrimination is exercised in higher education, they look for the most justifiable reason to explain their decision. Jarmon (2014) further elaborated that, this is usually done by citing highly subjective qualities which will push an individual to the edge.

Male Domination as a Barrier

According to Dlamini (2019), men in management contribute to the obstacles preventing the success of women through the decisions and actions of leadership within the organisation they make. These decisions cause women's stagnation due to the fear of losing power to women. However, Hopkins (2017) highlighted that since most African cultures are patriarchal, including South Africa, the society's perceptions of women's roles are at home, and women are also conditioned to perceive themselves as such. Furthermore, Hopkins argued that the traditional model of patriarchy had taught several females to view others differently and as less capable than their male counterparts.

According to the "intra-gender micro violence" research conducted by Mavin, Grand, and Williams (2014), there are male figurative order shapes that constrain women's social relations with other women, as suggested by the authors. Furthermore, the authors identified three microaggressions women face in the working environment: "disassociating, suppression of opportunity, and the abject appearance of being judged on physical attributes". This is supported by Hopkins (2017) who mentioned that it demonstrates how the traditional model reveals the relations between women co-workers and usually feels threatened by the success of other women in their organisation. These studies show that the obstacles to females' career success are not only imposed on them but can also be enacted by them consciously or subconsciously. Females sometimes indulge in things that restrict their specialised fields when confronted with the need to choose between their families and their careers because of assumptions about gender and work.

The Challenges Faced by Women in Higher Education Institutions

According to Moosa and Coetzee (2020), women have made notable progress in attaining more degrees than men in higher education. In 2016-2017 about 57% of bachelor's degrees were conferred to women in South African universities (Shreffler, Shreffler & Murfree, 2019). Fry (2019) states that women constitute half of the University's learned staff. Nevertheless, although recognising the improvements in

the figures of educated females, it is important to address the challenges that confront women in higher education equally.

Women in higher education are in the minority in senior positions and receive less remuneration than men (Carr, Gunn, Raj, Kaplan & Freund, 2017). Women are underrepresented in full professorship positions, which restricts their opportunities to succeed or advance into formal university leadership positions (Carr et al., 2017). Yet, from research, it is known that there is no shortage supply of qualified and ambitious women. This is often defined as the "glass ceiling", which is the main challenge hindering most women in mid-management and the main barrier to women's career success as discussed above (Shreffler et al., 2019). Naidoo (2019) labelled it as the "labyrinth" in the context of academics which simply means that women in academics are not denied top management positions at the peak of a long career but rather such opportunities seem to disappear at countless points along their paths.

Rosa, Hon, Xia, and Lamari (2017) highlighted that women in senior positions are confronted by difficulties related to organisational structures and systems and the mindsets of people that need to be transformed. However, gender disparity and bias demonstrate an elusive mindset that is taken for granted and an important challenge for women. Furthermore, most universities' hierarchy and culture discourage women's voices from being heard and fruitful because women are used as symbolic figures to comply with certain legislation. The ideas, suggestions, and programs these women develop are accredited to males, or the ideas are perceived as soft and will be dismissed. In higher education ethnic, culture interconnects with gender because the research conducted by (Shreffler et al., 2019) showed that 86% of administrators in higher education are of people of colour while only 13% are black and less than a third of college or University are women.

Material and Methods

The study was conducted at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus) under the Faculty of Management and Law in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The paper adopted a correlational non-experimental research design and a quantitative approach. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions in South Africa, a convenience sampling technique was used to select 70 women academics. Data were solicited using a structured online questionnaire. Doubell's (2011) scale was adopted to measure organisational cultural factors such as power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, and career barriers such as family responsibility, gender stereotypes, and the glass ceiling. The scale was measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree.

Fifty-five usable questionnaires were returned from the women academics, giving a response rate of 78.5%. A pilot study was done before the main study to ensure the reliability and validity of the questionnaire. The Spearman-rho correlation analysis was used to analyse data using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 28.0 software. The University's TREC issued the research ethical clearance approval before data collection.

Findings

The respondents in this study were 55 female academics at the University of Limpopo, with some characteristics according to race, age, position, and work period. The sample characteristics are described as follows: 76% of the respondents were Blacks or Africans, 18% were Coloureds, 4% were Whites, and 2% were Indians. This result might be because the University of Limpopo is in a rural setup and is a previously black institution.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Cultural Factors Women's Career Success.

Organisational Cultural Factors	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Individualism/collectivism	55	2.9394	.66075
Power distance	55	2.8582	.58458
Masculinity/femininity	55	2.5309	.67793

Career Barriers			
Family responsibility	55	2.7091	1.22735
Gender stereotyping	55	3.5000	.76679
Glass ceiling	55	3.1273	1.0550

Source: Authors

Table 1 above illustrates the mean and standard deviation for organisational cultural factors and career barriers identified to influence women's career success. A mean score of (2.94) on individualism vs. collectivism suggests that the respondents are more concerned with their careers than organisational goals. A mean score of (2.86) on power distance indicates that the respondents like power equality. The mean score of masculinity and femininity (2.53) signifies the respondents' beliefs concerning fair requirements for leadership positions and equal employment opportunities.

The descriptive findings showed that career barriers negatively influence women's career success. In measuring career barriers, the score on family responsibility was reversed, meaning a low mean indicates high influence. This is due to how the questions were structured. A low mean score of (2.71) was obtained on family responsibility, which signifies a considerable barrier to career success for women. A high mean of (3.50) on gender stereotypes was found, highlighting that women still experience gender stereotyping as a barrier. Additionally, a mean score of (3.13) on the glass ceiling indicates the invisible barriers still acting as obstacles to women's advancement to higher education leadership positions.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was used to test the influence of organisational cultural factors and barriers on women's academic career success.

Relationship between Organisational Cultural factors and Women's Career Success

Hypothesis one states that there is a significant influence between organisational cultural factors and women's career success. The results in Table 2 revealed a positive significant relationship between organisational cultural factors and women's career success ($r = 0.259$; $p\text{-value}=.028$). This shows that organisational factors influence women's career success. Thus, women will likely succeed if the organisation's culture values and recognises women. Therefore, hypothesis one is supported.

Table 2: Relationship between Organisational cultural factors and women career Success

Spearman's rho	Organisational cultural factors	Correlation Coefficient	1	.259*
		Sig. (1-tailed)	.	.028
		N	55	55

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Source: Authors

Relationship between Career Barriers and Women's Career Success

Hypothesis two assumes that there is a negative influence between career barriers and women's career success. Results in Table 3 depict an insignificant relationship between barriers and women's career success ($r = -0.188$; $p\text{-value} = 0.085$). Therefore, hypothesis two was not supported. These results contradict the theoretical proposition that career barriers hinder women's career progression in higher education.

Table 3: Relationship between career barriers and women's career success

		Career barriers	Women career success
Spearman's rho	Career barriers	1	-.188
	Correlation Coefficient		
	Sig. (1-tailed)	.	-.085
	N	55	55

Source: Authors

The stated study hypotheses and decisions made under each are summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Summary of Tested Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Decision
H ₁ : There is a significant influence between cultural environment and women's career success.	Supported
H ₂ : There is a negative influence between career barriers and women's career success.	Not Supported

Source: Authors

Discussion of the Findings

The purpose was to investigate the influence of organisational cultural factors and barriers on women's career success at a selected South African institution of higher learning. A significant influence between cultural environment and women's career success was found. The results are in line with Chinyamurindi (2016), who revealed that people react differently when they fail to compromise with the organisational culture, which negatively affects the company's productivity.

However, an insignificant relationship was found between career barriers and women's career success. The data statistically rejected the hypothesis. These findings contradict the study of Nambira and Engelbrecht (2020) on critical factors influencing women's advancement to managerial positions. The study revealed that the most significant barrier is gender stereotyping and the glass ceiling. This was also equally argued by Bertrand (2018) that the glass ceiling as a barrier to career success remains a problem that deters women's advancement to leadership positions. Burkinshaw and White (2017) also agreed that women's career success continues to be congested by glass ceilings and barriers.

Literature also argues that women are anxious that although the government and organisations' efforts to provide legislation and policies to ensure that they are recognised in the workplace, their progress and success might be limited or blocked by the glass ceiling. In addition, seventy-five per cent aspire to progress to upper management roles. However, they still face barriers when climbing the ladder to the top (Doubell, 2011).

Practical Implications

Based on the research paper's findings, there are several practical implications for organisations and policymakers that can help support women's career success. The study revealed that organisational cultural factors significantly influence women's career success. To improve gender equality and support women's career growth, organisations should strive to create a gender-neutral work culture. This can be achieved by fostering an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone has equal opportunities to succeed, regardless of gender.

The study also highlights that career barriers hinder women's progress. These barriers might include gender bias and limited access to leadership roles. Therefore, organisations need to identify and address these barriers to ensure a level playing field for women through leadership development initiatives and diversity training. Organisations may also tailor their policies and practices to address women's specific needs and challenges. Gender-specific surveys and focus groups may be conducted to understand the unique experiences of women academics in the workplace and then develop policies that cater to those needs. By implementing these practical implications, organisations can create a more inclusive and supportive environment that fosters women's career success and contributes to gender equality in the workplace.

Conclusion

The paper investigated the influence of organisational cultural factors and career barriers on women's career success. The findings show a significant impact between the organisational cultural factors and career success for women. The mean obtained indicates that women at the University of Limpopo support power equality and value competition and assertiveness, although they lack competitive and assertive characteristics. This means that they do not prefer men to hold power positions but believe that they can also do well in positions of power.

References

- Adisa, T.A., Abdulraheem, I. and Isiaka, S.B. (2019). "Patriarchal hegemony: Investigating the impact of patriarchy on women's work-life balance", *Gender in Management*, 34(1): 19-33. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1108/GM-07-2018-0095>.
- Boluk, K. A., Cavaliere, C. T., & Higgins-Desbiolles, F. (2019). A critical framework for interrogating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 Agenda in tourism. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, (27)7:847-864.
- Bonzet, R., & Frick, B. L. (2019). Gender transformation experiences among women leaders in the Western Cape TVET Sector: A narrative response. *Education as Change*, 23(1): 1-21.
- Brown, S. D., & Lent, R. W. (2017). Social cognitive career theory in a diverse world: Closing thoughts. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 25(1):173-180.
- Burkinshaw, P., & White, K. (2017). Fixing the women or fixing universities: Women in HE leadership. *Administrative Sciences*, 7(3): 30.
- Carr, P. L., Gunn, C., Raj, A., Kaplan, S., & Freund, K. M. (2017). Recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in academic medicine: how institutions are addressing gender disparities. *Women's Health Issues*, 27(3): 374-381.

- Chinyamurindi, W. T. (2016). A narrative investigation into the meaning and experience of career success: Perspectives from women participants. *SA Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(1): 1-11.
- Chitsamatanga, B. B., Rembe, S., & Shumba, J. (2018). Are universities Serving Lunch before Breakfast through Staff Development Programmes? A comparative study of the experiences of female academics in South African and Zimbabwean universities. In *Women's Studies International Forum*, 70,79-88. Pergamon.
- Crenshaw, K. (2018). *Demarginalising the intersection of race and sex: A Black feminist critique of antidiscrimination doctrine, feminist theory, and antiracist politics [1989]* (57-80). Routledge.
- Datta, S., & Shah, S. (2020). Satisficing career choices of Indian women managers. In *Career Dynamics in a Global World*. Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Davis, D. R., & Maldonado, C. (2015). Shattering the glass ceiling: The leadership development of African American women in higher education. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 35, 48-64.
- De Meulenaer, S., De Pelsmacker, P., & Dens, N. (2018). Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and the effects of source credibility on health risk message compliance. *Health communication*, 33(3):291-298.
- Dlamini, D. F. (2019). *Narratives of Young Black Female Academic on Gender and Race Transformation in Public Universities: An Explorative Study Between the University of Venda and the University of the Witwatersrand*. (Master's dissertation) University of Johannesburg. Retrieved from: <https://hdl.handle.net/10210/453598>.
- Doubell, M. (2011). *Factors contributing to the success of professional and business women in South Africa* (Doctoral dissertation) Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University. Retrieved from: <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/145053855.pdf>.
- Doubell, M., & Struwig, M. (2013). The contribution of environmental factors to the professional success of women. *Africa Insight*, 42(4): 144-165.
- Doubell, M., & Struwig, M. (2014). Perceptions of factors influencing the career success of professional and businesswomen in South Africa. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences*, 17(5): 531-543.
- Duffy, J. A., Fox, S., Punnett, B. J., Gregory, A., Lituchy, T., Monserrat, S. I., & Miller, J. (2006). Successful women of the Americas: the same or different? *Management Research News*.
- Fry, R. (2019). *US women near milestone in the college-educated labour force*. DOI: <https://pewrsr.ch/2ZEVQB3>.
- Greenhaus, J. H., Parasuraman, S., & Collins, K. M. (2001). Career involvement and family involvement as moderators of relationships between work-family conflict and withdrawal from a profession. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 6(2): 91.
- Hopkins, T. H. L. (2017). *Sustaining Career Success: Senior Management Women Careers in the Resources Sector of Western Australia* (Doctoral dissertation) Curtin University. Retrieved from: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=10325>.
- Huang, J., Krivkovich, A., Starikova, I., Yee, L., & Zanoschi, D. (2019). Women in the Workplace 2019. San Francisco: Retrieved from McKinsey & Co. Retrieved from: <https://www.McKinsey.com/featured-insights/gender-equality/women-in-the-workplace-2019>.

- Industry News. (2016, September 08). *Understand How the Labour Relations Act Affects You in the Workplace*. Sabinet, Blog. Retrieved from: <https://sabinet.co.za/understand-labour-relations-act-affects-workplace-08112016/>.
- Irefin, P., Ifah, S. S., & Bwala, M. H. (2012). Organisational theories and analysis: A feminist perspective. *International Journal of Advancements in Research and Technology*, 1(1): 71-97.
- Järllström, M., Brandt, T., & Rajala, A. (2020). The relationship between career capital and career success among Finnish knowledge workers. *Baltic Journal of Management*, 15(5), 687-706.
- Karadag, N. (2018). Determining the Difficulties Female Managers Experience in Higher Education and the Factors Supporting Them. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 13(3): 74-88.
- Kele, T., & Pietersen, J. (2015). Women leaders in a South African higher education institution: Narrations of their leadership operations. *OIDA International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 8(05): 11-16.
- Lent, R.W., Brown, S.D., and Hackett, G. (1994). *Social Cognitive Career Theory*. Retrieved from: <https://career.iresearchnet.com/career-development/social-cognitive-career-theory/#:~:text=Brown%2C%20and%20Gail%20Hackett%20in,health%20behavior%2C%20and%20organizational%20development>.
- Majola, B. K., (2020). Factors Affecting the Number of Women Ward Councillors in South Africa. *Journal of Reviews and Global Economics*, (9): 366-377.
- Marginson, S. (2019). Limitations of human capital theory. *Studies in Higher Education*, 44(2): 287-301.
- Mavin, S., Grandy, G., & Williams, J. (2014). Experiences of women elite leaders doing gender: Intra-gender micro-violence between women. *British Journal of Management*, 25, 439-455. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8551.12057>.
- McTavish, D., & Miller, K. (2019). Gender balance in leadership? Reform and modernisation in the UK further education sector. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 37(3), 350-365.
- Moalusi, K. P., & Jones, C. M. (2019). Women's prospects for career advancement: Narratives of women in core mining positions in a South African mining organisation. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 45(1):1-11.
- Moodly, A. L., & Toni, N. (2019). Do institutional cultures serve as impediments to women's advancement towards leadership in South African higher education? *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 33(3): 176-191.
- Moodly, A. L., & Toni, N. M. (2017). Re-imagining higher education leadership—in conversation with South African female deputy vice-chancellors. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.18820/2519593X/pie.v35i2.12>.
- Moosa, M., & Coetzee, M. (2020). Climbing the illusive ladder: Examining female employees' perceptions of advancement opportunities at a higher education institution. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 30(5): 397-402.
- Murray, P. A., & Southey, K. (2019). Can institutionalised workplace structures benefit senior women leaders? *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 1-24.
- Musambira, G., & Matusitz, J. (2015). Communication technology and culture: Analysing selected cultural dimensions and human development indicators. *International Journal of Technology Management & Sustainable Development*, 14(1): 17-28.

- Nambira, G., & Engelbrecht, A. D. (2020). Critical Factors Influencing Women's Advancement to Managerial Positions in Corporate Business Industry at Standard Bank Khomas Region Namibia. *International Journal of Academic Accounting, Finance & Management Research*, 4(5): 1-10.
- Namibia, S. (2017). The SADC Protocol on Gender and Development is for you. *Sister Namibia*, 29(2): 26-28.
- Ncayiyana, D. (2019). Communicating across cultural barriers in South Africa: topical. *Plus 50*, 14(6): 14-15.
- Ngcobo, A. D. (2016). *Analysing the empowerment of women leadership: a case of the Durban University of Technology* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from: https://openscholar.dut.ac.za/bitstream/10321/1706/1/NGCOBO_2016.pdf.
- Nguyen, T. L. H. (2013). Barriers to and facilitators of female Deans' career advancement in higher education: an exploratory study in Vietnam. *Higher Education*, 66(1):123-138.
- Ntlama-Makhanya, N., & Lubisi-Bizani, N. (2021). The Africa we want in the African Union's Agenda 2063 on the realisation of women's human rights to access justice. *African Human Rights Law Journal*, 21(1): 290-310.
- Nyangiwe–Ndika, W. (2015). *An analysis of barriers which affect women in leadership positions in Eastern Cape Municipalities. Case study of Amathole District Municipality*. (Doctoral dissertation) University of Fort Hare. Retrieved from: <http://hdl.handle.net/10353/2049>.
- Nyoni, W.P., and He, C. (2019). Barriers and Biases: Under-Representation of Women in Top Leadership Positions in Higher Education in Tanzania. *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research*, 3 (5):20-25.
- Osituyo, D. (2018). Underrepresentation of career advancement of women in the South African public-sector setting. *International Journal of Women's Studies*, 19(3):171-186.
- Osituyo, O. O. (2018). Deliberate ceiling for career progress of female public service employees: A contemporary transformation trend in South Africa. *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 19(3): 172-186.
- Republic of South Africa. (1996). *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Rirhandzu, M. R., Abigarl, N., & Christopher, N. (2020). Towards closing the gender gap in higher management: gender analysis of education management policies in Zimbabwe. *Gender and Behaviour*, 18(1): 15163-15175.
- Rosa, J. E., Hon, C. K., Xia, B., & Lamari, F. (2017). Challenges, success factors and strategies for women's career development in the Australian construction industry. *Construction Economics and Building*, 17(3): 27.
- Shreffler, M. B., Shreffler, J. R., & Murfree, J. R. (2019). Barriers to advancement of female faculty in higher education: an examination of student evaluations of teaching, work-family conflict, and perceived organisational support. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 19(8):72-85.
- StatsSA (2017). Women in power: What do statistics say? Retrieved from: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=10325>.
- StatsSA (2021). South African labour market is more favourable to men than women. Retrieved from: <https://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=14606>.

- Subbaye, R. (2017). The shrinking professoriate: Academic promotion and University teaching. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 31(3), 249-273.
- Subbaye, R., & Vithal, R. (2017). Gender, teaching and academic promotions in higher education. *Gender and Education*, 29(7), 926-951.
- Sultana, A. (2011). Patriarchy and women's subordination: A theoretical analysis, 05. 2017.
- Todd, B. (2021). Career capital: How best to invest in yourself. Retrieved from: <https://80000hours.org/key-ideas/career-capital/>.
- Uzun, T. (2020). Relationships between Power Distance, Organizational Commitment, and Trust in Schools. *Educational Policy Analysis and Strategic Research*, 15(3): 359-371.
- Van der Waldt, G., Fourie, D., van Dijk, G., Chitiga-Mabugu, M., and Jordaan, J. (2019). A Competency Framework for Women Empowerment: The Case of the Local Government Sector in South Africa. *Problem and Perspectives in Management*, 17(2): 348-364.
- Warner, J. & Corley, D. (2017). The Women's Leadership Gap: Women's Leadership. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/womens-leadership-gap-2/>.
- Zenger, J., & Folkman, J. (2020). Research: Women are better leaders during a crisis. *Harvard Business Review*, 30, 1645-1671.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).