



**CAREER ADVANCEMENT STRATEGIES OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AT  
UNIVERSITIES OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

**By**

**Mabel Awung**

**Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements in respect of the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in  
Public Administration  
in the  
Department of Public Management and Economics  
in the  
Faculty of Management Sciences  
at the  
Durban University of Technology**

**APPROVED FOR FINAL SUBMISSION**

**Supervisor: Prof. N. Dorasamy**

---

**Signature**

21/8/19

-----  
**Date**

## DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, certify that:

- I am familiar with the rules regulating higher education qualifications at Universities of Technology in South Africa and understand the seriousness with which UoTs will deal with violations of ethical practices in my research;
- Where I have used the work of others, to my knowledge this has been correctly referenced in the bibliography. Any research of a similar nature that has been used in the development of my research project is also referenced;
- This project has not been submitted to any other educational institution for the purpose of a qualification;
- I understand that I am expected to publish an article based on my research result; and
- I understand that plagiarism is wrong and incurs severe penalties.

I HEREBY DECLARE THAT THE ABOVE FACTS ARE CORRECT

Signed\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to God almighty, my beloved husband Dr Awung, my mum Mrs Elizabeth Anyizi, and to my children for all their love and support.

With Love

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Ultimately, I thank the Lord Almighty for giving me a sound mind and a healthy body to complete this study.

My sincerest gratitude and appreciation go to my supervisor, Prof. N. Dorasamy, for her constant assistance and wholehearted support, guidance and encouragement. To her, I owe a million thanks.

I would like to thank the Directorates and management of the research committee for the Durban University of Technology scholarship that catered for some of the costs related to my studies.

I am also grateful to my family and friends whose support and advice have been invaluable assets throughout the course of my research.

Most importantly, my gratitude also goes to all those women who participated in this study, for providing me with information and their co-operation. Without their input, the study would not have been possible.

I will like to thank Ms Sara Bibi Mitha for her guidance, support and encouragement in this project.

Finally, I would like to thank my husband and children for their love, understanding and patience.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study aimed to investigate the career advancement strategies of women in leadership positions at Universities of Technology (UoTs) in South Africa. The study focussed on female vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors; registrars and vice-registrars; directors and deans, as these ranks are classified as senior management. It is argued in the study that research has focused more on the challenges women face in their careers, while little has been said about the experiences of women who have advanced to leadership positions. The lack of progress is as a result of inflexibility and unpredictable scheduling at the workplace, networking, mentoring, stereotypes at the workplace, work-life balance, organizational structures and policies, socio-cultural perceptions and societal values that continue to oppress women. However, there is limited literature on the experiences of women who have advanced to leadership positions despite these challenges. Therefore, it is for this reason that this study sought to investigate how women managed to advance to leadership positions in the higher education sector. The researcher believes that focusing on the advancement strategies of women in leadership would provide a more effective response in handling the challenges that women face in advancing to leadership positions in higher education because solutions that are based on analyzing challenges are hypothetical and may not be feasible in real situations, while success strategies are more reliable solutions as they are factual and proven. Furthermore, strategies that have negatively impacted women's progress were highlighted. It is in this regard that this study adopted the Social Cognitive Theory to investigate the strategies that women in higher education leadership have used to advance in their careers. The central role of this theory is that, the individual in his or her environment can observe others and reflect on their interests, career choices and performance, and alter his or her development accordingly in their careers.

The study was conducted at all six Universities of Technology in South Africa, with a target population of 37 women in executive management positions. The study used a qualitative research design. Telephonic and face-to-face semi-structured interviews

were used to collect data. An interview guide containing open-ended questions was used in guiding the interview process. A thematic approach was used to analyze the advancement strategies of women in leadership. Themes that emerged were organized and coded accordingly. The findings revealed that socio-economic status affected women's career advancement, as was how these women viewed and balanced their complex roles in society. The findings also revealed that women's advancement to leadership positions was through their own creative ways and abilities, as well as through the support structures inside and outside their organizations. With women's low representation in leadership positions, the participants agreed that policies and support to increase women's advancement to leadership positions were not enough. They also noted that women had to work harder and show strong determination to become leaders. This may imply that in order for women to advance in their careers, women themselves need to focus more on their strengths and ability, and stop focusing on their weaknesses or challenges.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRACT .....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	vi
LIST OF TABLES .....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS.....	xiv
CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Background to the study.....	1
1.3 Research problem .....	4
1.4 Aim of the study .....	4
1.5 The objectives of this study are:.....	4
1.6 Research questions.....	5
1.7 Significance of the study .....	5
1.8 Keywords and clarification of concepts .....	6
1.8.1 Leadership.....	6
1.8.2 Career advancement .....	7
1.8.3 Higher education.....	8
1.8.4 University of Technology .....	8
1.9 Universities of Technology in South Africa .....	9
1.10 Research methodology .....	10
1.10.1 Research design .....	10

1.10.2	Population and target population .....	11
1.10.3	Sampling method .....	12
1.10.4	Measuring instrument.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
1.10.5	Recruitment process.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
1.10.6	Data collection method .....	14
1.10.7	Data analysis .....	15
1.10.8	Delimitations.....	15
1.10.9	Limitations .....	16
1.10.10	Confidentiality and anonymity.....	16
1.10.11	Validity and reliability .....	17
1.10.12	Ethical considerations.....	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
1.11	Structure of thesis / Thesis Chapters .....	17
1.12	Conclusion .....	19
CHAPTER TWO – WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT AND LEADERSHIP .....		20
2.1	Introduction .....	20
2.2	Historical background of women in employment globally .....	20
2.2.1	Role of feminism and women in employment .....	21
2.3	Global perceptions of women in leadership.....	24
2.3.1	Perceptions of female leadership styles .....	24
2.4	Benefit of equity in employment .....	26
2.5	Challenges experienced by women in career advancement .....	29
2.5.1	Factors hindering the career progression of women in employment.....	30
2.6	Support towards the advancement of women .....	42
2.7	Conclusion .....	47



CHAPTER THREE – WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA .....	49
3.1 Introduction .....	49
3.2 Women in the workplace in South Africa.....	49
3.3 Women in higher education in South Africa .....	51
3.4 Support towards gender equality in South African workplaces.....	52
3.5 Advancement strategies of women in leadership positions .....	60
3.6 Legislative and statutory framework guiding employment in South Africa....	64
3.6.1 Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No 75 of 1997) .....	65
3.6.2 The Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1995 (LRA).....	67
3.6.3 Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998) .....	68
3.6.4 The White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa .....	70
3.6.5 Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997.....	73
3.7 Conclusion .....	75
CHAPTER FOUR – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY .....	76
4.1 Introduction .....	76
4.2 Overview of Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory .....	76
4.2.1 Bandura’s Triadic Reciprocal Model .....	78
4.2.2 Self-efficacy .....	83
4.2.3 Outcome expectations .....	86
4.2.4 Personal goals.....	87
4.3 Application of the Social Cognitive Theory .....	88
4.4 Criticisms of Bandura’s Social Cognitive Theory .....	92
4.5 Conclusion .....	93

CHAPTER FIVE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	95
5.1 Introduction .....	95
5.2 Research design .....	95
5.2.1 Types of research designs.....	96
5.3 Population and target population.....	97
5.4 Sampling method .....	97
5.5 Measuring instrument.....	99
5.6 Recruitment process .....	100
5.7 Data collection method.....	100
5.8 Data analysis.....	103
5.9 Delimitations.....	104
5.10 Limitations.....	104
5.11 Confidentiality and anonymity .....	105
5.12 Validity .....	105
5.13 Reliability.....	106
5.14 Ethics in research .....	107
5.15 Conclusion .....	108
CHAPTER SIX – RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	109
6.1 Introduction .....	109
6.2 Section A: Biographical data .....	109
6.2.1 What is your highest academic qualification? .....	110
6.2.2 How long have you been working in higher education? .....	110
6.3 Section B: Challenges faced by women at UoTs .....	111
6.3.1 What is your opinion about women under-representation in leadership position?.....	111

6.3.2	What challenges have you faced in rising to the position of leadership at your university? .....	116
6.3.3	How do you motivate yourself?.....	123
6.4	Section C: Perceptions of women and leadership aspirations.....	128
6.4.1	What motivated or inspired you to become a leader? .....	129
6.4.2	When and how did you become a leader?.....	135
6.5	Section D: Strategies used by women to advance in their careers .....	136
6.5.1	What strategies did you use to advance in your career? .....	136
6.6	Section E: Organizational factors that hinder and /or promote the advancement of women at UoTs.....	141
6.6.1	What support system does the university have in advancing gender issues? .....	141
6.6.2	How has your organization helped you to advance in your career? ....	143
6.7	Section F: Upward Mobility of Women in Higher Education .....	145
6.7.1	What strategies do you think would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education? .....	145
6.7.2	What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?.....	148
6.8	Discussion of the findings.....	152
6.8.1	Challenges and strategies used by women to advance in their careers ....	153
6.9	Conclusion .....	165
CHAPTER SEVEN – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....		166

7.1	Introduction .....	166
7.2	Summary of the study .....	166
7.3	Conclusions on the key findings.....	167
7.3.1	Challenges that women face in rising to positions of leadership in higher education.....	168
7.3.2	Advancement strategies used by women to advance in their careers .	169
7.3.3	Perceptions of women occupying leadership positions in the workplace ... .....	170
7.3.4	Organizational factors that hinder and/or promote the advancement of women from a Social Cognitive perspective.....	170
7.3.5	Recommended strategies that would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education .....	171
7.4	Implications .....	171
7.5	Contributions of the study.....	174
7.6	Recommendations .....	176
7.6.1	Recommendations to the management of UoTs .....	176
7.6.2	Recommendations to women .....	177
7.6.3	Recommendations to higher education .....	178
7.6.4	Recommendations for future research.....	179
7.7	Conclusion .....	180
	References.....	182
	APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE.....	208
	APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT .....	212
	APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF INFORMED CONSENT .....	214

## **LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1.1 Total number of female staff in executive management at UoTs-----12

Table 5.1 Total number of female staff in executive management at UoTs-----99

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1 Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Model-----	80
Figure 4.2 Social Cognitive Theory variables-----	83

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

- UOTs: Universities of Technology in South Africa
- DUT: Durban University of Technology
- CPUT: Cape Peninsula University of Technology
- CUT: Central University of Technology
- MUT: Mangosuthu University of Technology
- TUT: Tshwane University of Technology
- VUT: Vaal University of Technology
- S A: South Africa

## **CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

The challenges that women in higher education face in taking leadership functions have been well documented (Jackson 2012, Kelly 2016, Mayet 2015 and Chiloane-Tsoka 2016). However, very little is known about the success stories of women leaders' career advancement in higher education, especially at UoTs. The lack of understanding of how women succeed in overcoming barriers to their career advancement underpins this study. Additionally, it would be interesting to find out how women in leadership positions break the so-called glass ceiling. This study therefore investigates the career advancement strategies of women in leadership positions at Universities of Technology in South Africa in order to encourage women who seek similar positions. This chapter provides an overview of the background to and rationale for the study, the problem statement, the aim and objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study, the definition of key concepts, a preliminary description of the research methodology of the study and the structure of the thesis.

### **1.2 Background to the study**

There is concern about the under-representation of women in many professions, particularly in leadership and administrative positions (Vanderbroeck 2010:8; Lewis and Simpson 2011:3 and Nguyen 2012:6). This has prompted many higher education institutions worldwide to transform the professional and managerial positions of women in the sector by ensuring equal representation of women and men in leadership positions (Swam 2011; Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012:). Several actions have been designed worldwide in an attempt to rectify imbalances. Various Countries across the world have introduced legislative interventions such as the Employment Equity Act and



Affirmative Action policies to address the issue of discrimination and fairness in the workplace, with European countries leading the way in this regard by offering reasonably paid childcare facilities, parental leave, and gender training to administrative staff and faculty members (Boushey and Farrell 2013:6, Coward 2010:10 and Chiloane-Tsoka 2010:4). Employment equity legislation endeavors to ensure women and other designated groups are equally represented in all occupational categories and levels in the workplace. In other words, employment equity has been seen as a lasting programme to ensure a fair chance for all employees in the workplace, while affirmative action is seen as a short-term strategy to eradicate systemic discrimination in the workplace. For instance, it aims to put to an end to the exclusion of women from the workplace for reasons not related to job requirements (Hunter 2012, Thomas 2002 and Lewis and Simpson 2011).

Apart from the Employment Equity Act and Affirmative Action policies which have been introduced in several countries across the world, it is worth mentioning that South Africa is making great strides to address issues of equality, discrimination and fair labour practices. Some of these efforts can be seen in the various policies governing the country, namely the 1996 Bill of Rights, introduced to guarantee all citizens equal treatment. Furthermore, in order to enhance the position of women in workplaces, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA) No 75 of 1997 was also introduced. The aim of this Act (BCEA) is to improve economic development and social justice by regulating the right to fair labour practices, such “as employment and remuneration, work time, leave, termination of employment and the variation of basic conditions of employment to all employees and employers”. These legislative measures have given women equal participation in the labour market as well as the opportunity to pursue previously male-dominated professions. It has also helped to empower and assure children, people with disabilities and women about their rights and freedoms.

With the case of universities of technology in South Africa, there have been sustained efforts to support the progress of female staff through the design and implement policies relating to staff development, employment equity, appointment and promotion of staff at the university. It is important to note that the universities of technology in South Africa recognise the Affirmative Action and Employment Equity Legislation of South Africa as an important part of transformation from apartheid. They therefore commit themselves to the transformation and eradication of past discriminations by setting up a constitution to ensure that the Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998 achieves its goal.

However, with the increasing availability of such options for women, the question one may ask is: Has enough been done to ensure that equity is achieved in all positions in an organization? Research has shown that policies have not been adequate to redress the challenges face by career women in their professions (Morley 2014:3, Moorosi 2010:3 and Coward 2010:1). Although, there are challenges for women to advance in their careers, it is worth stating that a few women have succeeded in advancing to leadership positions in organizations (Boushey and Farrell 2013:6). It would be interesting to identify exactly how other women can be empowered to follow in their footsteps and move into leadership positions. The researcher believes that the answer to this could be that more research should center on the experiences and advancement strategies of those women who hold leadership positions in their careers.

This study thus investigates and discuss the career advancement strategies of women in positions of leadership at UoTs in South Africa. The study argues that women may still be faced with challenges in occupying top positions within different organizations. Therefore, attention has been paid to their strategies and coping mechanisms in leadership positions. Research on these aspects will be of value to address factors mitigating their progress.

### **1.3 Research problem**

Women in higher education leadership as a population have not been widely studied in Africa as a whole and at UoTs in particular, which represents a gap in higher education literature. Additionally, research has focused more on the challenges women face in their careers, while little has been said about the success stories of women who have advanced to leadership positions (Speradino 2011:12 and Mayet 2015:9).

The researcher believes that focusing on the success strategies of women in leadership would provide more effective opportunities in handling the challenges women face in advancing to top positions in higher education. Moreover, it would provide a first-hand account of women who have navigated through the leadership web successfully, through their own creative ways and support structures inside or/and outside their organizations. The researcher also draws attention to strategies that negatively affect progress. This may possibly inspire women who aspire to be in similar positions to follow the same strategies. Lastly, a lack of understanding on how women manage the dual roles of gender and leadership underpins this study. Furthermore, it would be interesting to find out how women in leadership positions break the so-called glass ceiling.

### **1.4 Aim of the study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa.

### **1.5 The objectives of the study are to:**

- Investigate the challenges that women face in rising to positions of leadership in higher education;

- Investigate the advancement strategies used by women to advance in their careers;
- Identify the leadership perceptions of women in executive management;
- Analyze the organizational factors that hinder and /or promote the advancement of women from a social cognitive perspective; and
- Recommend strategies that would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education.

## **1.6 Research questions**

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the following research questions are addressed:

- What challenges do women face in rising to positions of leadership in higher education?
- What strategies do women in higher education use to advance in their careers?
- How is leadership perceived by women in executive management?
- How can the social cognitive theory help to understand the factors that promote/hinder the advancement of women in an organization?
- What strategies would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education?

## **1.7 Significance of the study**

The transformation of the higher education system in South Africa is outlined in the Education White Paper 3 (July 1997: preamble). The document offers a framework for the identification and implementation of strategic interventions that are needed to transform the higher educational sector. With the transformation agenda in place, South African Universities continue to experience serious transformation challenges that have been the subject of various studies. Some of the factors that hinder the career

progress of women are: Institutional cultures, gender imbalances and poor equity profiles (Minister of Higher Education and Training 2013). This has necessitated a new focus on the need to investigate the challenges faced by women in higher education globally.

Recent research has found that the representation of women in higher education leadership is low, despite the policies and structures in place to help fight gender imbalances (Chiloane-Tsoka 2016:4, Hofmeyr and Ndobe 2012:2, Harris and Leberman 2012:7, Marshall 2009:4, Yinhan, Qi and Kai 2013:15). In this regard, this study will firstly contribute to directing attention to the success stories of women in leadership, so that they serve as lessons to other women who find it difficult to rise up their ranks. Secondly, the study will make recommendations that would facilitate the upward mobility of women in general, and in higher education in particular. In addition, this study will serve as a foundation for other researchers who may want to undertake further research on a similar problem within their organizational context. Lastly, the study will contribute in generating additional data for research in the area of social cognitive theory and the career advancement of women.

## **1.8 Keywords and clarification of concepts**

### **1.8.1 Leadership**

Leadership is important in all institutions or societies, whether it is in the political, social or religious arena. In this study, the researcher aims to investigate the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions at all the Universities of Technology in South Africa. However, as the researcher seeks to investigate the advancement strategies of women who have made it to leadership positions, it is important to understand what leadership is. The word leadership has different connotations for different people. For the purpose of this research, leadership is defined as “the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it

can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objective” (Yukl 2002:7). In the same light, Luthra and Dahiya (2015), describe a good leader as “a person who can make people willing to contribute fully to the team, even when they do not agree with the direction an organization is taking”. They believe that a leader should have qualities such as; the ability to inspire confidence in others, good communication skills and leadership experience. John (2013:6) believes that leadership does not demand enthusiasm, loyalty and respect, but it is an approach that creates. He believes that the secret to organizational productivity, profit, morale and results is good leadership. From these explanations, it is understood that leadership is the driver of organizational wellness, because it entails inspiration and performance.

### **1.8.2 Career advancement**

Career advancement may be viewed in different ways. To some, career advancement refers to the upward movement of an individual's career (Blouie 2013). According to Blouie (2013), this type of progress can be accomplished in a single profession by moving up from an entry-level position to a leadership position. This advancement may possibly come after one gains experience, completes additional training, earns a degree or receives certification. Still, other ideas of career advancement may also arise in the form of a career change from one occupation to a related one that has greater responsibilities (Nguyen 2012). Usually, more experience and additional education is required in career advancement. The term ‘career advancement’ in this study is used to refer to what women have accomplished in their careers, such as promotion, accomplishment and the positions they occupy in organizations.

### **1.8.3 Higher education**

Although the definition of higher education varies from country to country, the chosen definition for this research is: higher education specifically refers to universities or colleges that offer qualifications such as National Diplomas, first Degrees, Honors degrees, Masters Degrees and Doctorates (Saichaie and Morpew 2014:3). In the South African context, higher education refers to “all learning programmes leading to qualifications greater than grade 12 or which is equivalent to the National Qualifications Framework, as expected by the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Act No. 58 of 1995)”. Higher education studies in South Africa is usually full-time, part-time or by distance learning (South Africa Higher Education Qualifications Framework 2008:2). This study seeks to find out how women have made progress in these institutions. It also highlights the factors that hinder the career progression of women in higher education, especially at UoTs.

### **1.8.4 University of Technology**

The concept of a University of Technology is used in this research as per the South African context. There are three types of universities in South Africa, namely Traditional universities, Comprehensive Universities and Universities of Technology (UoTs.) Since the study is limited to the Universities of Technology in South Africa, it is important to briefly explain how UoTs came into existence and how they differ from the other two types of (Traditional and Comprehensive Universities). Universities of Technology in South Africa are new-generation knowledge Institutions that came into existence in 2003. Unlike in the past where UoTs were trapped with the history of Diploma offering institutions, today they are now expected to perform as a university. This has forced UoTs to assess their mission and goals in order focus on innovative problem solving research and to develop partnerships with industry/government/business and communities as end-users (Matiki 2014). According to Matiki (2014), the difference between UoTs, traditional and Comprehensive Universities is that “traditional

Universities refer to the older established universities prior to the higher education restructuring exercise, while Comprehensive Universities were mostly formed out of the merger between technikons and universities". It is important to note that the purpose of UoTs is not to copy the Traditional Universities, but to cultivate a different mission and build on unique programs that have been historically offered in partnership with industry.

## **1.9 Universities of Technology in South Africa**

South Africa has twenty-six public universities in total: eleven traditional universities, six Universities of Technology and nine comprehensive universities. There are also many private educational institutions and training colleges. The six Universities of Technology in South Africa was developed in 2001 by Kadar Asmal, with the guidance of the South African constitutional commitment. The six UoTs are as follows:

- Cape Peninsula University of Technology, with four campuses in Cape Town, one in Wellington and one in the Western Cape;
- Central University of Technology, Free State, with campuses in Bloemfontein and Welkom;
- Durban University of Technology with four campuses in Durban, and two in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal;
- Mangosuthu University of Technology with one campus in Umlazi, in KwaZulu-Natal;
- Tshwane University of Technology with one campus each in Malahleni, Ga-Rankuwa, Nelspruit and Polokwane; two campuses in Soshanguve; three campuses in Tshwane, Gauteng, Limpopo, Mpumalanga, North West; and
- Vaal University of Technology with a main campus in Vanderbijlpark and delivery sites in Ekurhuleni, Klerksdorp, Secunda and Uppington, Gauteng, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape.



The main aim of creating these universities was to restructure and rationalize programmes to: encourage institutional cooperation and capacity building; improve awareness; refocus new institutional identities; and redress race and gender inequities created by the former apartheid government (Matiki 2014). This led to mergers between traditional universities. Traditional Universities is the term reserved for the established universities that existed prior to the mergers) and Technikons (the name given to the more academically advanced technical colleges) to form a new setting. What makes a University of Technology different from the traditional university in South Africa is the area of innovation in entrepreneurship and community engagement programmes (Matiki 2014). However, the idea of creating and merging these universities has not been easy to achieve in practice, especially the idea of achieving equality in the workplace.

Research in South African higher institutions has shown that despite a slight increase of women at the executive level, women are still under-represented in leadership positions (Mabel and Dorasamy 2015 and Chiloane-Tsoka 2010, Priola 2007 and Southall 2016). There is therefore need to find out why equity, especially in leadership, has not been achieved and also to provide strategies on how this can be improved.

## **1.10 Research methodology**

### **1.10.1 Research design**

According to Mouton (2011:5), a research design refers to plans and procedures of how one intends to conduct one's research. In order to understand the career advancement strategies of women in higher education leadership, a case study was used. A case study, according to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:103), is "an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context". A case study was suitable because it allowed the researcher to examine a particular instance in a great deal of depth, rather than looking at multiple instances rapidly (Rule

and John 2011:7). It is in this regard that instead of examining the career advancement strategies of women in all universities, this study focused on the Universities of Technologies in South Africa only. The reason for using UoTs is for the purpose of convenience because it will be challenging to study all the universities in South Africa. Secondly, in terms of section 23(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1997 (Act no, 101 of 1997), Technikons Universities were to transform as public higher education institutions by January 2005, meaning they then became Universities of Technology 14 years ago as compared to the other traditional Universities in South Africa. Thirdly, all UoTs are formerly merged Technikons with diverse historical backgrounds from the apartheid era. Lastly, UoTs are still under the influence of deeply gendered histories as being a male dominated space.

The study used a qualitative approach to gather information from women leaders about their experiences in leadership positions, as well as what they did by way of advancing themselves. Qualitative research generates extensive data that is also rich and it provides “complex textual descriptions of how people experience a given research issue” (Marshall and Rossman 2011; and Howitt 2010). The qualitative technique was applied through telephonic and face-to-face interviews. It elicited views and key information from the participants. A thematic approach was used to analyze data and themes were emerged were organized and coded accordingly.

### **1.10.2 Population and target population**

According to Gerard (2013:76), the term “population” in social science refers to the units of interest to the research. In this case, the population comprised all women at Universities of Technology in South Africa. Furthermore, the term “target population” refers to the entire number of respondents that meet the chosen set of criteria. In this study, the target population was all women in executive positions (vice-chancellors and deputy vice chancellors, registrars and deputy registrars, directors and deans and

deputy deans) at all UoTs in South Africa. The total number of female academic in executive positions at all UoT is 37 female. This number was obtained from the institutional website lists of women in executive management and statistics from human resource offices of these UoTs (2016-17). The reason for choosing these universities is that research of this nature has not been conducted at these universities. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:243), a target population was necessary because it was not easy to collect data from the entire population. This helps to reduce fatigue and errors.

### **1.10.3 Sampling method**

The process used to select the participants of a study is known as the sampling method. The sampling technique used in this study is the non-probability sampling technique. Non-probability sampling focuses on the units that are investigated and it help researchers to select units from a population that they are interested in studying (Sekaran and Bougie 2013:254). Since there are limited women in executive management positions (vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors, registrars and deputy registrars, directors and deans) at the UoTs in South Africa, it was reasonable to include the entire population. A purposive procedure was used to select women in leadership positions at these Universities of Technology in South Africa. Purposive sampling is a technique where “she or he is using their judgement to actively choose those who will be best able to help answer the research question and meet the objectives” (Saunders and Lewis 2012:138). Purposive sampling is therefore preferable for this study because participants were subjectively selected by the researcher as they were considered to be individuals who had the knowledge, expertise, information and experience to contribute to the success of the study. The researcher was convinced that they have rich and valuable information due to their experience in leadership responsibilities and the fact that they are women and understand what it means to work in gendered surroundings, in which they have

managed to withstand their leadership roles. Table 1.1 below demonstrates how samples were selected.

**Table 1.1 Total number of female staff in executive management at UoTs**

Names of Universities	Executive management (including deans)		Total number of Sample drawn (Female)
	Male	Female	
Durban University of Technology	17	5	5
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	10	7	7
Central University of Technology	14	6	6
Mangosuthu University of Technology	11	3	3
Tshwane University of Technology	40	14	14
Vaal University of Technology	9	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>

Source Self-generated by the researcher

Table 1.1 shows that the total number of male staff occupying executive management positions at all the UoTs is 108, while females is 37, indicating that women constitute just 34% in executive management positions in UoTs. All 37 female staff were sampled. This number (sample size) was obtained from the institutional website lists of women in executive management and statistics from human resource offices of these UoTs (2016-17). Four aspects were considered before using this sample size, namely precision, confidence, variability in the population and cost consideration (Sekaran and Bougie 2013:262). This sample size increased the possibility of producing results that are more reliable.

#### **1.10.4 Data collection protocol**

The procedure used in collecting data was that, the researcher personally phoned and approached the participants in their various offices. A letter was sent to them prior to the interview explaining the purpose of the study as well as included the researcher's details. The signing of a letter of informed consent to participate and ethical considerations. The total number of women the researcher intended to interview were 37. Out of this, the researcher interviewed 30.

#### **1.10.5 Data collection method**

The data collection method was the interview. An interview is a purposeful conversation that is directed by someone in order to get information from the other for the study. (Bogdan and Biklen 2003:45). It is usually between two people although it can sometimes involve more people. The researcher used telephonic and face-to-face semi structured interviews. According to Howitt (2010:8), "semi-structured interviewing is a data collection method where by the researcher approaches the conversation with some pre-written questions in the form of an interview guide". Telephonic interviews were used in four of the UoTs (CPUT, TUT, VUT and CUT) as they were far away and costly for the researcher to travel, while the face-to-face interviews were used in the remaining two universities (DUT and MUT) because the researcher was based in this province (KwaZulu-Natal) and it was not too costly to conduct. With these methods, the researcher asked the participants questions and recorded the answers. The reason for choosing this option was that the women in executive positions usually have very busy schedules. The questions were structured with the aim of achieving the objectives of the study. All questions were in English and were expected to be answered in English since the medium of communication is English. The questions were clear and easy to answer. The place and time of the interviews were determined by the participants since they usually had a very busy schedule. The duration of interviews ranged from

approximately 45 minutes to 60 minutes, depending on how open and willing the participants were to share their information.

#### **1.10.6 Data analysis**

The study used qualitative data analysis. Qualitative study is non-numerical, it is usually in the form of written words or video tapes, audiotapes and photographs (Virginia and Clarke 2013:24). According to Norman and Lincoln (2011:118) qualitative research emphasizes the qualities of individuals, procedures and meanings that are not experimentally measured. The method used to analyze the data was the thematic method. According to Braun and Clarke (2013:24), “thematic method is used for identifying themes and patterns of meaning across a dataset in relation to a research question”. For instance, the researcher started by reading interview notes and listening to the audio tapes, then data was sorted into different categories based on the common themes identified from the participants’ responses. The different types of responses recorded were noted down on separate sheets of paper. After noting them down, the researcher then separated the data into groups or themes that shared similar characteristics. Each question was addressed based on the responses given. It started from the larger categories and then proceeded to smaller ones. Finally, the interpretation and explanation was inductive, whereby the analysis was shaped by the researcher’s standpoint, disciplinary knowledge and epistemology (Braun and Clarke 2013:174). Recommendations are made to facilitate the upward mobility of women in higher education based on the results of the analysis.

#### **1.10.7 Delimitations**

According to Simon (2011:9), a delimitation is a characteristic that limits the scope and defines the boundaries of a study and is within the researcher’s control. Participants in this study were delimited to female staff occupying executive management positions at

UoTs in South Africa. The study excluded female in mid-management and male staff. Additionally, the study was delimited to examining the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions at UoTs only. Finally, the study sampled 37 female executive management staff with the assumption that the results would facilitate the upward mobility of other women in higher education.

#### **1.10.8 Limitations**

Limitations are weaknesses in the study that are out of the researcher's control (Simon 2011:10). The limitation of this study is that the population to be studied was female staff only. Male staff viewpoints were not included which can be investigated in a broader study of the same topic. Additionally, the fact that the study is limited to Universities of Technology in South Africa implies that the results can only describe the career advancement strategies of female staff at UoTs and no other higher education institutions. Lastly, the results of the findings were limited to the period in which the study was conducted.

#### **1.10.9 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality refers to how the researcher holds the data in confidence and keeps it from public consumption (Henn, Weinstein and Foard 2009:94). The transcript will be kept in a confined place for 15 years, after which the data will be destroyed. Anonymity means that the project does not collect identifying information of individual subjects (e.g. name, address, email address, etc). In this case, participants who agree to be interviewed were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the research. No names were required during the interview or mentioned when analysing the data. No identification of any sort was asked and no identity of any respondents was known. The information received during the study was only used for research purposes. The

information was not for any employment-related performance evaluation, promotion or disciplinary purpose. The reports were kept in the department and the library.

#### **1.10.10 Validity, reliability and ethics**

Validity and reliability are elements that determine the quality of the measurement instrument. An indicator is said to be valid if it adequately measures the underlying concept, while reliability measures the consistency in measurement (Treiman 2009: 243). To confirm the accuracy of the instrument and to ensure the validity and reliability of the study, pre-testing was conducted with five female staff in leadership positions. This helped estimate how reliable the instrument was when the same subject under the same condition was measured. Moreover, pre-testing also ensured validity based on the conclusion of the respondents. In order for the study to be reliable, the questions were constructed properly to ensure easy understanding. In addition, to ensure validity, the purpose, objectives and design of the research were clearly defined and argued in line with the literature reviewed.

For ethical consideration, the researcher took into account the rights of human subjects and their freedom. Participants' confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary participation was clearly explained to them in the letter of informed consent before the research was conducted. No names of any sort were required from the participants of this study. Ethical approval was sought as per all UoTs' research protocols.

### **1.11 Thesis Chapters**

#### **Chapter one: Introduction**

Chapter One focuses on the background to the study, the research problems, aims and objectives, the research questions and their significance to the study. It also defines



the key words and then clarifies them. A preliminary description of the research methodology is discussed, as well as the structure of the thesis.

### **Chapter two: Literature review**

Chapter Two covers a review of the literature that exists in the field internationally, as well as gaps in the research identified by the study.

### **Chapter Three: Literature review**

Chapter Three focuses on the review of South African literature that has been written on the subject of the study, as well as gaps in the research that are identified by the study.

### **Chapter Four: Theoretical concept/framework**

Chapter Four reviews of theory that has been written on the subject of the study.

### **Chapter Five: Methodology**

Chapter Five presents the research methodology and the reasons for the choice of research design.

### **Chapter Six: Research findings and data analysis**

Chapter Six focuses on the data analysis and the interpretation of the research findings.

### **Chapter Seven: Conclusions and recommendations**

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations. It also suggests possible areas for future studies.

## **1.12 Conclusion**

This chapter described the nature of information and the type of research activities used in the study. Chapter Two reviews existing literature that exists in the field, as well as gaps in the research identified by the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO – WOMEN IN EMPLOYMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

### **2.1 Introduction**

The under-representation of women in leadership positions in the higher education sector has been the focus of numerous studies in recent years (Meek et al 2010; Chiloane-Tsoka 2016; Gabind 2011; Filsinger and Worth 2012; and Jha and Jha 2013). Enough studies have however not been done on the strategies that female academics use to advance in their careers, especially in universities of technology in South Africa. This study seeks to contribute in filling this information gap by investigating the career advancement strategies of women in leadership positions at Universities of Technology in South Africa. The researcher believes that researching the advancement strategies of women in leadership would provide more operative solutions in handling the challenges that women face in advancing to leadership positions in higher education, which could be an encouragement to women who desire to be in similar positions. In this regard, the chapter reviews literature on women in employment from a global perspective in so as to get a broad perspective of the progress that women have made worldwide. This is followed by the challenges women have experienced in pursuing their careers, the status of women in leadership and support towards the advancement of women in their careers.

### **2.2 Historical background of women in employment globally**

For the more than 7000 years of human history, paid work was mainly the arena of men and this is because the workplace was seen as a place that was not suitable for women. Generally, the society assigned different roles to men and women. Women were relegated to home duties, while men were more visible in the public sphere (Jha and Jha; 2013; Chiloan-Tsoka 2010; Bush 2011; McGinn and Newman 2012; Grace

2011; and Eagly 2013). Access to certain levels of education was given to men only, while women were denied access to education and were considered only suitable for the responsibilities of reproduction, family and home care. Years later, there was a growing demand from feminist for equal rights for both women and men. The first country to participate in this process was the United States, followed by European countries. The movement then expanded to Latin America and it has now reached Africa (Madsen 2010; Chiloane-Tsoka 2016; Gabind 2011:34; and Filsinger and Worth 2012:112). It is therefore important to look at the perspectives of feminists on gender-based injustices in society.

### **2.2.1 Role of feminism and women in employment**

This section focuses on the evolution of feminist perspectives on gender-based injustices in society. Feminists focus on the injustices in society which started in the 19th century (Plummer 2012; Wood 2011; and Maciounis, Roper-Huilman and Winter 2011). One of feminism main goals is to liberate women from oppressive practices. Therefore, it seeks to oppose all views and policies that promote patriarchy (Wood 2011:10). Feminist views are important to discuss in this study because they shed more light on the foundation of gender equity. It also provides clarity on practices and situations of injustice that have been neglected, and which are vital for the progress of women in the workplace. For instance, feminists challenge the dominant supremacy of male authority/power and established patriarchal systems.

Feminism contends that men and women have equivalent potential to advance in all spheres of life, but that the potential of women is hindered by external social and institutional forces (Wood 2011:10). It also argues that women have repeatedly been incapable of improving to their full potential or to acquire the rewards of their full contribution in society because they experience oppression as a group (Nguyen 2012). Feminism thus advocates that women are making valuable contributions to all aspects

of the society, and they need to unite in order to advance their rights and prevent discrimination in the work-place and in society at large (Roper-Huilman and Winter 2011; Maciounis and Plummer 2012:406).

Three different feminist viewpoints have been used to explain the status of women. One viewpoint is that of liberal feminists which advocates for institutional reforms in order to improve the status of women (Roper-Huilman and Winter 2011). Liberal feminists believe in equal rights and opportunities for women, and they oppose all forms of prejudice and discrimination that hinder the advancement of women. They also believe in the reproductive freedom of women and they advocate for the availability of child care facilities and maternity leave for working women. They argue that ending gender-based cultural and legal barriers would be beneficial for both men and women (Maciounis and Plumber 2012:408).

Liberal feminists also believe that it is important to improve the individual qualities of women in order to give them the ability to compete with men at the workplace on an equal level (Wood 2011:10). They also believe that education, management skills and progressive policies are vital in ending discrimination and ensuring that there are more women in top management positions.

Another viewpoint is that of socialist feminism which contends that liberal feminist reforms are inadequate. Socialist/Marxist feminism believes that capitalism consolidates patriarchy because it concentrates wealth and power in the hands of men (Maciounis and Plumber 2012:409). Socialist feminists contend that women have been historically excluded from the labour force because of gender roles and class oppression (Bruckmuller, Ryan and Haslam 2014:4). They therefore argue for the need to reform the bourgeois family structure in order to end the domestic exploitation and oppression of women, and for men and women to work together in order to achieve equity. This is contrary to the liberal feminists' view of women working individually.

Lastly, radical feminists disagree with liberal and socialist feminists, and argue that reforms advocated by the latter are not enough to end patriarchy (Maciounis and Plumber 2012:409). Their focus is therefore on the patriarchal forms of power that prevalent in organizations, such as practices and norms that relegate women to positions of subordination. They therefore argue that gender equality can only be achieved by eliminating cultural notions of gender, and by making women aware of their domination.

This section differentiates the various feminist theories/views in order to understand the historical, social and cultural practices which are relevant to this study. These feminist theories are radical, social and liberal. The researcher believes that the feminist movement together with the contribution of other actors, has significantly contributed in exposing and alleviating problems of discrimination that women face around the world. Today, not many people still hold the traditional belief that women are not supposed to work out of the home. According to Jha and Jha (2013:14), women are increasingly questioning traditional beliefs of gender roles and cultural expectations. The feminist movement has not only been beneficial to women in America but across the world. However, there is still much to be done because feminists have not achieved the emancipatory result for which their proponents were hoping. The reasons could be that Liberal, Socialist/Marxist and Radical feminists have different views regarding gender inequality, which has caused them to disagree about the actions that are needed to address the issue. The researcher believes that gender inequality in the workplace would be better address if advocates adopt a unanimous approach to gender equity. A more balanced perspective of women in leadership positions in UoTs is vital to understanding the strategies used by female academics to advance in their careers.

## **2.3 Global perceptions of women in leadership**

Traditionally, leadership is deeply rooted in gender stereotype, as the concept is most often associated with masculinity (Quinlan 2008 and Hyde 2014). According to Quinlan (2008: 21), a great leader is one who has a vision, values, commitment, emotional intelligence, and one who cares for their employees. This implies that leadership is not a position, but a collection of qualities, practices and behaviour. In sum, personal characteristics are important in leadership and they influence the perception that people have of leadership.

In this regard, there is need to understand how perception influences one's career and relationship with others. For instance, misconceptions about a person could result in conflict and tension between individuals, which can affect work performance (Hyde 2014). According to Doherty and Manfredi (2010:141), perception is often subjective and based on one's "attitudes, motives, interests, prejudices, preferences, past experiences and expectations". Hence, the following section discusses the perceptions of women in leadership in general and in the higher education sector in particular.

### **2.3.1 Perceptions of female leadership styles**

Men and women usually portray different organizational leadership styles. Female leadership style is often perceived as caring, softer, relational, nurturing, co-operative and compassionate approach towards those they lead; while men are seen to more commanding and task-oriented towards their subordinates. (Mathur-Helm 2011:365; Schneider 2010:562; Doherty and Manfredi 2010:141). Baumgartner and Schneider (2010:562) state that women's leadership skills are viewed as suitable for team work and collaboration, while men's leadership skills are more independent, competitive and inclined to risk-taking. This implies that women have a more involving leadership style, since they are caring and prefer group work.

Studies conducted by Perterson and Gravette (2000:171), Phakedi (2015:2) and Bell (2004:152) found that women are also perceived differently in the way that they communicate and behave. The authors noted that women in leadership positions are perceived to be hard, arrogant and self-centered. These researchers noted that men and women were raised differently in line with the expectations that society have for them. Men for instance, were raised to be self-reliant and strong, with the expectation that they would financially provide for their families and themselves when they grow up. It is also believed that the voices of women in leadership are disregarded. This is often shown by body language, attitudes and sometimes asking women to pour tea (Perterson and Gravette 2000:171; Phakedi 2015:2 and Bell 2004:152).

Moreover, men do not believe in the abilities of women who occupy leadership positions. It is even more disturbing that other women do not believe in the abilities of women who are in leadership. Consequently, has made those women who have advanced to leadership positions perceive themselves as isolated, over-extended and under constant assessment (Mabokela 2002 and Bell 2004). This has made women to feel more pressured than their male counterparts to prove themselves in order to progress to leadership positions (Karelaia and Guillén, 2014).

On a different note, Bass, Riggio, Matsa and Miller (2013) and Doherty and Manfredi (2010) found that the transformational leadership style which women tend to adopt is one in which followers are motivated through intellectual stimulation, charisma and consideration of the individual. They noted that transformational leaders have a supportive, caring attitude, empathy, warmth, positive circle and they often encourage other people to excel. Grogan and Shakeshaft (2010:6) also believe that the effectiveness of an organization is linked to qualities such as empathy, warmth, a genuineness, concreteness and nurturing traits, which are being recognized as women's strength in leadership. With all these qualities in place it is worth stating that more women are needed in leadership positions. The researcher believes that these



qualities are effective leadership strategies in a changing organizational environment. According to Mathur-Helm (2011:367), the fact that few women are in leadership positions implies that those who have succeeded have probably emulated the autocratic and commanding style of men in order to succeed. On the other hand, those who could not hold leadership positions are those who failed to resemble men's leadership style. The researcher believes that the different leadership styles of men and women should be complementary rather than competitive, and they could instill a balance in an organization. Additionally, the leadership abilities of women should be judged based on their performance and results, rather than on their leadership styles.

## **2.4 Benefit of equity in employment**

There have been different approaches to the conceptualization of gender equality globally. It generally refers to men and women having the same opportunities, for such as the equality of access to education and employment (United Nations Population Fund 2008). Gender Equality refers to "actions that guarantee women equal rights and the same opportunities as men in the public sphere, which implies that men and women are treated on the basis of sameness" (Booth and Bennet 2002). This implies that there should be equal access to opportunities and life changes should neither be dependent on nor constrained by sex. Internationally, gender equality has been accepted by governments and organizations.

Gender inequality remains strongly entrenched in every society, and there have been ongoing debates on the meaning of equality, its challenges, how to achieve it and its benefits to the workplace (Williams, Kilanski and Muller 2014:13). Silander, Haarke and Linderberg (2012) believe that a major challenge of gender equity is that gender views are not regularly incorporated into sectoral or national plans in many countries. Women in all parts of the world lack access to decent work, suffer occupational discrimination and under-representation in political and economic decision-making processes

(Williams, Kilanski and Muller 2014:13). This under-representation of female leaders has led to high demands on women in leadership positions in workplaces globally (Airini et al. 2011; Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011; Harris and Leberman 2011; Vanderbroeck 2010; and Lewis and Simpson 2011).

The issue of gender equity has led to a worldwide synergy of gender scholars to fight against all forms of discrimination against women in all sectors of the society, and increase women's active involvement in leadership positions (Chisikwa 2010; Dychtwald and Larson 2010; Morley 2005 and Onsongo 2009). Recent studies have shown that a lack of equity in employment may be holding companies back, as women more than ever before have now become more valuable contributors to the workforce (Lynn 2016 and Williams 2011). Some of the benefits of equity in the workplace are:

- **Improve financial performance and country wealth**

Having equity in employment will not only provide equal rights and the same opportunities for women as men, but will improve the country's wealth because women will contribute to the economic as a whole (Grogan 2010 and Chiloane-Tsoka 2010). Catalyst (2011) and Lalive (2010) argue that companies that have more women in the board of directors tend to perform better than those with fewer women representation. There is therefore no doubt that it is more profitable for companies to employ women in top executive positions (Barsh and Yee 2011). Women generally have an inclusive and collaborative management style which enables them to harness the expertise of all employees for the good of the organization. (Evans 2011). Evans (2011) contends that involving women in different levels of management creates an environment that brings together the best talents for the good of the organization. In the same light, Catalyst (2011) argues that women are better dealmakers in companies, which implies that there is a very strong relationship between gender diversity and the financial performance of a company. This is as a result of women being able to use their

collaborative and inclusive management style to efficiently harness the expertise of other colleagues (Evans 2011). This implies that more women are needed in companies to improve on their overall performance. It is in this regard that executives are becoming increasingly conscious of the profitability of having women in top leadership positions in organizations (Barsh and Yee 2011).

- **Enhanced strategic planning and decision making**

Arguden (2012) argues that mixed-gender boards involving women are advantageous because they allow for better access to wider talent pools, a mix of leadership skills and improved corporate governance. When women are involved in these roles, they positively influence their male counterparts to be more focused. Companies that have women on the boards also understand their target markets better as they are in tune with their clients. Such companies also eliminate debts faster in times of economic slowdowns and financial crises (Arguden 2012 and Posholi 2013).

- **Developing other employees**

Studies conducted by Folkman (2011) and Catalyst (2011) in the US found that 54 percent of female leaders were rated more highly by their peers and bosses than male leaders for developing other employees, as well as their outstanding leadership capabilities. The development of employee involves different aspects such as career counseling, on-the-job coaching, outside classes, dedicated feedback, and helping employees with the setting of personal goals and professional development. This quality is helpful because developing an employee gives a greater sense of purpose and satisfaction, which would not only provide a company with more skills and talents, but would also lead to greater loyalty on the part of the employees. Folkman (2011) and Catalyst (2011) also found out that women have stretch goals. These are extremely ambitious goals that can inspire people to do great things. This shows that the choice

of having more women in employment will inspire creativity to improve and push employees to rethink what they are capable of.

- **Contributes to economic efficiency**

Gender equality is beneficial and underscores the need to have more women in higher levels of organizations. gender equality is important for any country because it leads to more economic efficiency and the achievement of other important development goals. For example, growth is spurred by gender equality because it results in barriers being minimized and women's skills and talents being more efficiently allocated in order to achieve more productivity (The World Bank 2012). The World Bank report (2012) found that the future of the next generation looks bright because women are increasing having more opportunities and choices, and these are producing better outcomes, policy choices and institutions.

## **2.5 Challenges experienced by women in career advancement**

This section discusses the various challenges women have experienced in pursuing their careers in different parts of the world. Research has revealed that for years, more women tend to underestimate their leadership skills and capabilities than men in similar roles (Divala 2014; Mayer and Surtee 2015; Yinhan, Qi and Kai 2013; Botool and Sajid 2013 and Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012). This is due to the fact that in the past, the roles occupied by women have been in the private domain such as being submissive housewives who take care of children and household chores, whilst men were seen as providers and main decision-makers of the households, and they also dominated the public domain (Mayer and Surtee 2015:9). The dominance of men over all these years has triggered a series of researchers and governments to come up with solutions to help address the inequality and sex discrimination in society (Divala 2014:4 and Nguyen 2012:6).

Recent studies have shown that women are not postponing their careers to care for their children and families (Botool and Sajid 2013; Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012; Bruckmuller, Ryan, Rink and Haslam 2014; Yinhan, Qi and Kai 2013). Women now enter the workplace with similar levels, credentials, expectations and necessary experience to men. However, the challenge now is that they do not rise to leadership positions in the same way as their male counterparts. A 2012 UNESCO Report (2012:17) asserts this view by stating that women perform the same as men and at times even surpass them when it comes to earning university degrees, but lag behind in terms of career progress. Valerio (2009:14) and Halpern (2010:6) believe that leadership positions do favor men more than women because women are often sidelined. Studies have also shown that in the USA, women occupy 51.4% of leadership and professional jobs, although there are still gaps with regard to incentives between men and women (Wechsler 2015 and Grogan 2010). This raises the question of why women still lag behind when it comes to progression to leadership positions.

Women have a very high leadership potential which is however eclipsed by social, economic and political constraints (Jha and Jha 2013:13). In the same light, Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012:2) state that although women have accomplished specialized and administrative decision-making positions at the lower and middle levels of the organizational ladder, it is still challenging for them to get executive positions in universities, as they still lag far behind men in terms of their representation in executive management or top positions. The following section will identify various factors that hinder the progress of women.

### **2.5.1 Factors hindering the career progression of women in employment**

Even though the numbers of males and females in employment are approximately equal, the number of males who move on to top leadership roles is much greater than that of females (Berry and Franks 2010 and McCrady 2012). It is in this regard that this

section intends to examine the factors that hinder the career advancement of women to leadership positions. Scholars have identified different factors that hinder the progress of women, namely:

- **Glass ceiling**

Botool and Sajid (2013:375) argue that the first major barrier to the progress of women is the “glass ceiling”, referring to institutional and societal factors that hamper women’s success beyond a certain point in their careers. This implies that women are blocked from aspiring to leadership positions by real but invisible barriers that serve to preserve male domination at the upper echelons of leadership (Bruckmuller, Ryan, Rink and Haslam 2014). This issue of the glass ceiling has been a problem for women (for many years) who aspired or have had the opportunity to rise to senior management positions (Bruckmuller, Ryan, Rink and Haslam 2014). Yinhan, Qi and Kai (2013) also note that this glass ceiling is not limited to women's career fields, for it is also prevalent in all areas of women’s lives. The implication of the concept of the glass ceiling is that the progress of women in their careers, or the absence thereof, is constrained by contextual factors. It is in this regard that this study looks at the contextual factors that have influenced the career advancement of women in leadership positions in the higher education sector.

- **The lack of perceived positive role models for women**

According to Levine, Lin, Kern, Wright and Carrese (2011), the lack of perceived positive role models in leadership positions is also a key factor that hinders the progress of women in their careers. Women lack potential female role models who combine academic careers with family responsibilities. Role models play an important role with regard to the personal growth, professional identity and career success (Gibson 2004). This is because people are usually motivated by the achievements of

those that they perceive to be similar to themselves. The scarcity of women in positions of leadership may give the impression that they are unfit as role models (Ely, Ibarra and Kolb 2011:10). This might give the erroneous impression that rising to a leadership position is an impossible dream for women. However, despite the obstacles, some women have made it to the top and it is this researcher's view that an understanding of the contextual factors that constrain the actions of career women, would help women to come up with strategies to overcome challenges and advance in their careers. Ely, Ibarra and Kolb (2011:10) further contend that the existence of fewer role models for women makes it difficult for other women to be inspired to rise to top positions at the workplace.

- **Frustration with research**

According to Levine, Lin, Kern, Wright and Carrese (2011:4), frustration with research is one of the obstacles to the progress of women, especially in higher education because women often find it difficult to obtain funding to secure protected time. Furthermore, Ribeiro, Bosch and Becker (2013:24) indicate that some women report that the reward package they receive for an article is not sufficient for them as compared to the amount of time and work involved. Findings by White, Carvalho and Riordan (2011:6) in Australia reveal that women in higher education management find it harder to balance their research commitments and managerial responsibilities, and this challenge is compounded by the family responsibilities of the women. In addition, Berry and Franks (2010:3) and McCrady (2012:9) note that promotion systems in the higher education sector largely rely on the research outputs of staff, and this is a challenge for women because their many other duties, especially domestic responsibilities, leave them with less time to devote to research. This implies that they are less productive in research outputs and can therefore not compete fairly with their male counterparts when it comes to promotion (Baumgartner and Schneider 2010:6, Plietz 2012:12).

Despite these challenges, the higher education sector boasts women who have advanced to leadership positions as a result of their outstanding research records (Morley 2013; Reilly and Quirin 2015). It would thus be interesting to find out the strategies that have enabled such women to advance in their careers.

- **Work-life balance**

Another hindrance to the career advancement of women has to do with work-life balance. Research has shown that the career advancement of women is hampered by men's unwillingness to partake in household and child-care responsibilities (Valerio 2009:23). According to Poor and Brown (2013:14), Combining workplace duties and domestic responsibilities imply that women work double shifts, one at home and the other at their paid job. They therefore struggle to balance these two responsibilities, and are forced to work part-time or take more days off work. This hinders their efforts to work towards promotion, because they end up with fewer hours of employment and fewer years of experience than their male counterparts. Research has shown that even when women have relief from domestic chores, they are still sidelined from promotion to time-consuming and demanding positions, because of the workplace stereotype which still perceives them as having domestic responsibilities (Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011; Chen and Hune 2011; Eagly and Carli 2007). It is therefore undeniable that the career advancement of women continues to be slowed because most of the domestic work still rests on their shoulders.

Moreover, Poor and Brown (2013:14) assert that many women struggle to meet up with early morning meetings because of the time they spend in preparing breakfast and children for school. Some women actually resign from their jobs because they are highly affected by the dilemma that they face. According to Wechsler (2015:13), family responsibilities make women to be less mobile than their male counterparts and this compels them to avoid taking positions that would require them to work longer days



and travel often. As such, “women have little time to socialize with colleagues to build up relations and network plus proving their commitment to the social side of the organization” (Wechsler 2015:13). This is indicative of how family life restrains networking and recognition in the career world. Hence it would be of interest to investigate how women in leadership positions in the higher education sector have been able to overcome these constraints in their rise to the top.

- **Inflexibility in the workplace and workload**

One major factor that hinders women from progressing to higher positions is that of inflexibility in the workplace as most organizational cultures have not changed. Wechsler (2015:13) claims that leadership positions still work better for men than women because centralized critical positions in organizations are mostly occupied by men, and this gives them access to important information concerning the organization. Consequently, some women do not progress because moving into leadership positions brings additional stress since they consider management work to be inflexible and restrictive to them (Morley 2014:8.) Furthermore, the progress of women is slow because domestic and work structures interlock to constrain them. This interlock is not a gridlock because change is possible. However, change cannot occur if there is a lack of flexibility in the work-place (Morley 2014:12). Most work places still have a fixed pattern of doing things and change can only be achieved when work schedules and work cultures are flexible. It is in this regard that this study seeks to uncover the strategies that might be used by women to deal with the factors of institutional culture that constrain their career advancement.

- **Perception and stereotyping with workplace**

Another obstacle to the career advancement of women is stereotypes on gender and leadership, which perceive women as unfit for management positions. Haussmann,

Tyson and Zahidi (2011) noted that this stereotype in the work environment occurs because most jobs were previously held solely by men, and this gives the impression that men are supposed to lead and women should just follow. This contributes in creating the perception, even amongst women themselves, that leadership is not for them, and this discourages them from pursuing leadership roles (Winker and Degele 2011). Even women take up leadership roles are often judged negatively by men and women alike (Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi 2011). Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi (2011) also revealed that women who abide by the traditional “female” or feminine characteristics are considered to be too nice and therefore not capable enough to handle leadership positions. On the other hand, those that show more masculine characteristics are also considered to be hard. Furthermore, a recent study by Bruckmuller, Ryan, Rink and Haslam (2014:10) reveals that because of stereotypes and prejudices against women, men tend to help each other to get the best jobs and positions, while excluding women. In the same light, McDonagh (2010:42) notes that just as women do not get much support from their husband concerning home chores, their male colleagues are also unwilling to support them when they occupy leadership positions. This makes women to opt to work fewer hours or half-days so as not to neglect their domestic responsibilities, which makes them earn less and not advance in their careers in the same way as their male counterparts.

Stereotyping has blocked the progress of women by casting doubts over their leadership abilities, which has compelled them to personally strive to conform to those doubts. Dominici, Fried and Zegar (2009:2) state that another reason may be that leadership positions are less attractive to women than men is because women in administrative offices are under-funded as compared to the amount of work they do. Secondly, women in leadership positions are expected to be available at work at any time and success in such positions often depends on a spouse who can shoulder domestic responsibilities. The same may apply to academic leaders. Some women find it less attractive because they have personal obligations that they cannot delegate to

others. In the same light, Gouws (2012:10) in the Report on the Colloquium on “Overcoming Barriers to Women in Leadership in Higher Education” holds that some women are not interested in senior management positions in higher education because of the inherent challenges of such positions. This researcher contends that for women to advance in their careers, they need to be more assertive about their self-image rather than submitting to the dictates of stereotypes and societal perceptions of their roles. It is in this regard that this study adopts a social-cognitive approach in the study of the career advancement of women in higher education because it argues that people have the capabilities to control the actions that they undertake in order produce any given result (Bandura 1997).

- **Difficulties for women managers in the institutional environment**

Female managers face more challenges than their male counterparts. According to Alvesson and Billing (2009:157), women encounter problems such as communication on the job; lack of support from superiors; having to perform better than men in order to be evaluated as equally good; and working longer hours per week. This causes high levels of stress for women in top positions. Levine, Lin, Kern, Wright and Carrese (2011:4) assert that the institutional environment hinders the progress of women because the work culture is individualistic, not collaborative, and biased in favor of men. De Varies (2012:6) explains that women under-representation is a result of structures in institutions of higher education that have been very formalized and steeped in traditions and rituals that favor males. According to Morley (2013:6), this under-representation is a missed opportunity for women to be involved in shaping the future of higher education.

- **Racism, selection and recruitment**

Another factor that retards women's progress in higher education is racism, selection and recruitment in some organizations. Recent findings by Meera and Deo (2014:8-22) reveal that women in the United States are victims of institutional bias which begins at the recruitment stage and continues throughout the women's careers. The study also reveals that higher education is "*fundamentally connected to the political system and to the political economy*". This leads to a reproduction of discrimination in higher education institutions, whereby women are disadvantaged when it comes to hiring and promotions. The recruitment and promotion practices of an institution are important in advancing the interests of women in higher education. People in higher education management are usually selected from the professional level, and most of the search committees involved in the selection process are dominated by men and unfavorable to women (Eisner 2013:15). There is therefore need for more reforms in the institutional practices of selection and recruitment.

Moreover, the shortage of women academics in influential positions means that most female candidates depend on recommendations from men. This also implies that the interviewing committees would most likely be dominated by men who might judge women more negatively than they would judge male candidates (Eisner 2013:6). McGinn (2012) asserts that the adherence to traditional qualifications and the ways of acquiring them are also an obstacle to the career advancement of women. In this regard, one way of supporting the career advancement of women within the academic environment, may be to redefine qualifications and to recognize "non-traditional ways of acquiring the requisite skills" (McGinn 2012:8). In other words, it could be beneficial for skills and competences acquired through no-formal education to be recognized for promotion purposes by universities. Such skills include those possessed by women which have been acquired through self-study, community work and managerial skills acquired from the experiences of home management.

Another factor that hinders the advancement of women in higher education is the issue of casualization. Research has revealed that a higher percentage of female academics are employed as casual or contract staff than their male counterparts (Baumgartner and Schneider 2010:8, May 2011:5). This is a disadvantage to women in the sense that academics employed on a casual basis have limited career advancement opportunities. This is because casual workers do not have the same benefits and professional development opportunities as permanent staff, which would allow them to build up the required profiles for promotion purposes. In addition, Ryan et al. (2011:14) note that women in 'contractual positions' do not have the same opportunities for career development that are provided those in teaching/ research positions. This means that the employment status of many women already disadvantages them and this has implications for their ability to advance to leadership positions.

- **Culture and tradition**

Culture and tradition have also been identified as factors that hinder the advancement of women in their careers. Historically, the dominance of men over women has been an issue for many societies. According to Chiloane-Tsoka (2016:12), some women have been made by their past experiences to believe that they are only suited for domestic duties such as child-care and cooking. In many societies, especially in Africa, it is still believed that a man is not supposed to undertake domestic responsibilities. Some women therefore suffer from guilt when they pay more attention to their careers rather than to their families. This is because societal norms dictate that a woman's first responsibilities are supposed to be her family. Social mobility is another obstacle to the career advancement of women when married women have to move with their families from place to place because their husbands' jobs (Williams, Kilanski and Muller 2014). This is interruptive to their careers and compromises their own prospects of upward mobility. Cultural and traditional obstacles continue to shape the career progress of women in the sense that more women continue to be visible at the lower levels of

organizations, while few of them are applying for leadership positions (Odhaiambo 2011:9); Ely, Ibarra and Kolb 2011:14). Botool and Sajid (2013:13) also assert that higher education relies largely on research outputs for promotion, and research activities usually require academics to travel for some days away from home. However, the movement of women is still restrained by some traditions and cultures, and this puts women in a disadvantaged position as many women do not have the same level of freedom of movement as men.

According to Corward (2010:3), history is not the only thing that influences women to see men as leaders. Cultural factors have created the impression that executive management positions are not suitable for women, as their main duties are supposed to be about taking care of the home (Corward 2010:4). These gender roles are carried into the workplace where most men still believe that women are supposed to be subordinates and not bosses. This culture significantly hinders the abilities of women to rise to top management positions in organizations, and there is a need to reform these traditional norms in order to give women the same opportunities as men to advance in their careers.

- **Discrimination in organizations**

Another factor affecting women's career advancement is direct and indirect discrimination that is practiced in organizations (Still 2009:2; Wallace and Merchant 2011:2). Barrett and Barrett (2010:3) believe that the under-representation of women at senior levels is a result of the unequal treatment of men and women at the workplace, as well as the outcome of gender choices such as parenting and career roles. The discrimination of women is also found at the level of payment. Johansson and Sliwa (2014:14) reveal that women all over the world still get paid less than men, even when they are doing the same jobs as men. There is also continued gender discrimination in certain fields whereby women are under-represented in engineering, construction,

mining, manufacturing and math-intensive fields (Toole and Meier 2011:12; and Ceci 2010:8). They assert that the reasons for this under-representation is because there is gender discrimination in the interview, hiring and grant manuscript review processes, and this denies women fair access to the fields of engineering, science and technology. This implies that access to equal jobs and opportunities is still an illusion. The report also shows that besides having equal job opportunities, many developing countries are still facing an industrialization process whereby new jobs are often characterised by poor working conditions, low pay, no sense of security and limited opportunities to climb the corporate ladder.

- **Low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence**

Low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence are also seen as one reasons why some women do not apply for workplace leadership positions. Furthermore, most of those who did only applied after being encouraged by someone else. According to Kovalainen and Poutanen (2013:14), in some cases, the lack of confidence to venture into leadership roles makes some women to not apply for promotion posts. For instance, some women perceive academic culture as not suited to them because it is too masculine with too much competition (Österlind and Haake 2010:3). Water (2013:8) argues that one of the major factors influencing the educational and career choices of young women is the media and the fact that media programming is creating wrong role models for some young girls. Blair-Log (2013:10) contends that as far as work in the organization is concerned, one's gender does not necessarily matter. However, one may argue that since gender is acquired socially, it sometimes influences the aspirations and perceived capabilities of women to apply for leadership positions. This means that due to the way women are socialized, the majority still believe that they cannot handle so-called 'male' fields, and some women make these assumptions without having bothered to find out what the roles are about.

Another factor advocated by Winker and Degele (2011:16) to explain why women have low self-esteem is conditioning. Inherently, women are conditioned from an early age to be submissive in their relationships with men, while men are encouraged to be breadwinners and leaders. This means that men are supposed to lead, while women follow. Women have consequently suppressed their true qualities, as well as their adventurous and more active sides so as to avoid venturing into so-called men's roles. This explains why women would prefer not to occupy leadership positions even when they are qualified to occupy those positions. In addition, Hofmeyr and Ndobe (2012:8) argue that another major factor hindering the advancement of most women to leadership positions is poor self-image. Women do not have confidence in their own abilities as a result of discrimination and the lack of mentoring and leadership development programmes. Some of them already consider the mere fact that they are working as an achievement, and as such do not feel any extra motivation to aspire to leadership positions (Davidson and Burke 2011:1). Tom (2013:8) notes that one major constraint to the career progression of women is their choice in deciding not to go for promotions, while men are always ready to apply for higher positions even when they lack the official requirements. He believes that this lack of willingness on the part of women is the result of a lack of self-confidence. The researcher believes that in order to address the issue of the under-representation of women in leadership positions, it would be necessary to start inspiring girls at a young age to strive to become leaders.

- **Insufficient policies and programmes to address gender issues**

The absence of sufficient policies and programmes to address gender issues also constrains the career advancement of women. Globally, there are laws in place to support women at work. However, Davidson and Burke (2011:2) note that organizations and employers around the world do not have the same level of interest and support in developing policies and programmes to enhance the career advancement of women. In this regard, organizations in Canada, Britain and the United



States are more proactive as compared to those in Argentina, South Africa and Turkey with regard to the support of women managers and professionals. Elaqua, Beehr and Hansen (2009:4) argue that the policies and practices of many organizations disadvantage women and hinder their abilities to earn higher wages and advance in their careers. Batool and Sajid (2013:4) also note that since promotion systems depend largely upon the publication record of academics, few women get promoted due to the fact that domestic responsibilities limit their research activities. According to Eurostat data for the year 2010, domestic or family-related responsibilities are very high for women in comparison with men. Statistically, 38% of adult women aged between 25 and 49 years are not promoted and able to publish due to the care burden of children and their household responsibilities, with another 17.3% being due to other family or personal responsibilities (in total 55.3%). The equivalent statistics for men in the same age bracket are 3.1% and 4.3% (in total 7.4%).

In conclusion, the persistence of gender inequality in senior leadership, especially in higher education, is a reality that has attracted the attention of research. It is however worth indicating that despite the obstacles that women face in advancing to leadership positions, some women have succeeded and this researcher believes that more studies need to focus on the experiences and advancement strategies of these women, as this may possibly inspire other women to advance in their own careers.

## **2.6 Support towards the advancement of women**

Little attention has been paid to the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions in higher education as research has focused more on the under-representation of women in management/leadership and their barriers to success (Airini et al. 2011; Chen and Hune 2011). The available literature reveal that the following efforts have been made to support women in their careers:

- **Governmental policies**

Governmental policies and practices have contributed to the advancement of women to positions of leadership. The UN has made significant progress over the years to advance gender equality all over the world. This has been done through agreements and protocols such as the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action and the Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which aim “to advance the goals of equality, development and peace for all women everywhere in the interest of all humanity” (The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 1995:2). The Platform for Action addresses the following critical areas of concern: “*women and poverty; education and training of women; women and health; violence against women; women and armed conflict; women and the economy; women in power and decision-making; institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women; human rights of women; women and the media; women and the environment; and the girl child.*” South Africa is a signatory to most of these agreements, and is committed to adhering to their principles. This implies that the government of South Africa has the responsibility to put in place legislation that guarantees equality for women in all spheres of life.

In the USA, the Equal Employment Opportunities Act was passed in 1972 with the Affirmative Action Plan as one its working mechanisms. This has led to significant progress on the situation of women at the workplace in the USA. Furthermore, in 1996, changes were made to the Employment Equity Act of 1986 by the Canadian Minister of Labour. A new Employment Equity Act and Regulation was announced to reinforce the previous employment equity law by clarifying employers’ responsibilities and also to ensure compliance with the Canadian Human Rights Commissions the authority (Thomas 2002). The Act t focused more on barriers to employment equity, organisational culture and systemic discrimination, including policies and procedures. As for the United Kingdom, an Equal Pay Act was introduced in 1970 and amended in 1984 (Thomas 2002). This however did not end discrimination against women as they

continued to be disadvantaged in terms of total payment packages and other benefits. Due to loopholes in the Equal Pay Act, women in management positions continued to earn only two-third of what their male counterparts earned weekly (Thomas 2002). In the case of New Zealand, an Equal Pay Act was enacted in 1972 with the aim of guaranteeing the pay equity for women. The Human Rights Commission Act was also passed in 1977 with the goal to ensure equal employment opportunities for women. Both of these acts led to the Employment Equity Act of 1990.

Furthermore, there is also a gender mainstreaming strategy which seeks to assess the implications of any planned action for women and men. The aim of the strategy is to make sure that the concerns and experiences of both men and women are incorporated in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that guarantee equal treatment and opportunities to men and women in all political, economic and societal spheres. One of the ultimate goals of gender mainstreaming is to achieve gender equality, and it ensures that the gender issue is always included in policy impact assessments (Farnworth 2010).

In addition, Winker and Degele (2011:12) argue that to overcome the problem of the under-representation of women in executive management positions, there is need to know who are the power brokers of the institution. This is because for gender equality to be completely achieved, there has to be a transformation of the institutional attitudes, legal frameworks and decision-making structure (Kilanski and Muller 2014:12). This would ensure that women are integrated into the decision-making processes that shape the organizations. In the case of higher education, it would also ensure that there is more support for the professional development of women so as to enhance their abilities to advance to leadership positions (Elwer, Harryson, Bolin and Hammarstrom 2013:17).

- **Organizational support**

The organizational support in institutions is different from one country to another. These differences manifest themselves in the establishment of institutional structure, culture and practices aimed at addressing gender inequality. According to Madsen (2008) and Williams (2008), mentoring has played a great role in supporting the advancement of women in leadership positions in some organizations, by helping them to achieve their best potentials. This implies that women need mentors to sensitize them about the organizational culture and processes in institutions. Therefore, institutions that do not encourage mentoring should develop this strategy.

- **Support to overcome personal and psychological barriers**

Researchers have come up with various efforts to overcome personal or psychological, socio-economic and cultural gender barriers (Elwer, Harryson, Bolin and Hammarstrom, 2013:17; Williams, Kilanski and Muller 2014:12). Personal barriers refer to psychological factors which hinders the efforts of women to advance themselves (Elwer, Harryson, Bolin, and Hammarstrom, 2013:17). Elwer et al (2013:17) argue that in order to overcome personal and psychological barriers, women need to be made to believe in their abilities and to know the advancement possibilities that are open to them. They also need to be trained on confidence building, as well as motivational and aspirational development, which are necessary for them to succeed in their careers. Women also need support in dealing with Socio-economic and cultural barriers that hinder their career advancement. In this regard, (Wechsler 2015:9) suggest that women need to be trained on assertiveness, they need to be granted maternity leave, and there is need to eradicate all stereotypes and other attitudes which create an unfavorable environment for the advancement of women. This could be done through the holding of gender-sensitization and gender consciousness-raising campaigns. Women need to also be supported in dealing with the systemic barriers that are inherent in organizations. According to John (2013), this could be done through the

creation of awareness of the barriers that exist, the elimination of all barriers, especially those which are beyond the control of women, the creation of a collaborative environment that is favorable to women, and ensuring that everyone's work gets the visibility and recognition that it deserves. Lastly, it is necessary to formulate and adhere to clearly explained policies for evaluation and promotion.

- **Support towards racism, sexism and ethnicity**

Mavin and Turner (2012:7) suggested that the first step for overcoming racism, sexism and ethnicity for women in leadership includes: Firstly, learning about the culture of the organization in which one works (Atik and Sahin 2012:12). Secondly, building support beyond one's department to embrace the wider campus or organization. Lastly, keeping strong ties with family, church and the community as these provide an outlet for renewal and stress relief (Atik and Sahin 2012:12). Winker and Degele (2011:12) also emphasize the need for women to 'network' with people of other races, sex and ethnicity in order to prepare participants for academic leadership. This implies that women cannot just rise to the top by chance, but have to understand their environment and develop strategies that would enable them to advance in their careers.

In sum, the changes that have taken place are quite helpful but also have their weaknesses. In the USA for example, women now have what is called the family Leave Bill that was passed in 1993 to ensure that companies with 50 or more employees provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to allow a worker to care for a relative in need and other innovative ways to deal with full-time female employees, such as having helpers at home and relatives who can help (Morley 2014:10). The problem with these views is that they focus more on institutional support for women and say little about the personal efforts that women have to make to advance in their careers. People who take leave to care for their family and home are rarely promoted because it is not part of the promotion criteria.

Furthermore, the availability of affordable domestic and childcare services in many countries is also a problem because most kindergartens do not open early for women in leadership to drop off their children and go to work, thereby making it difficult to attend early morning meetings. In addition, Lynn (2016) argues that these supports have brought in some changes that were never there before. This may be true because, unlike in the past decades, it is very common today to find women occupying executive management positions in universities across the world (Lynn 2016; Mayer et al. 2015; Gabriela, Dan and Antonia 2013).

It is however the contention of this researcher that no matter the amount of institutional support available, the decision to strive for career advancement is that of women themselves. It is for this reason that this study adopts the social-cognitive theory because it looks at self-efficacy as a mechanism for career advancement.

## **2.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter, literature has highlighted the background of women in employment globally. The researcher has also looked at the role of feminism in order to give a better understanding of gender- based injustices in society. The chapter further discussed global perceptions of women in leadership, the status of women in leadership positions, the various support towards the advancement of women, the challenges experienced by women in career advancement and the benefit of equity in employment. In the course of examining the challenges that women experience in their career progression, the researcher found that a number of factors influence the progress of women, both nationally and internationally. These factors include: insufficient policies and programmes to address gender issues, stereotyping at the workplace, culture and tradition, inflexible working hours, the glass ceiling, low self-esteem, racism, work-life balance, frustration with research, selection and hiring procedures. The literature affirms that gender inequalities in leadership are closely linked to the disparities in the

treatment of men and women at the workplace. In order to counter these obstacles, the researcher believes that more attention is needed to the advancement strategies of women in leadership because to date, little attention has been given to the career advancement of women.

## **CHAPTER THREE – WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the researcher critically examines the historical overview of women in the workplace in South Africa and higher education in particular; the challenges facing gender equity; the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions; and the various legislative frameworks in South Africa and their relevance to the advancement of women in leadership positions.

### **3.2 Women in the workplace in South Africa**

This section examines the historical overview of women in the workplace in South Africa. The fight for gender equity in South Africa started years before the apartheid era. Historically, women in South Africa had little or no role in the workplace, especially in leadership positions (Mathipa and Chiloane-Tsoka 2001; Celikten 2010 and Grogan and Shakeshaft 2010). The authors noted that the reason for this 'invisibility' of women was because the South African society was conventionally patriarchal. This implies that men held all positions of authority in society; and women were relegated to subordinate roles. The primary duties of women were in the domestic realm in which they were responsible for child-care and the wellbeing of the family. They were therefore not expected to work outside the home because that was seen to be the domain of men. However, in 1994, the government initiated numerous policies and projects with the goal to correct the inequalities of the past shape the country for the future. It was in this regard that the transformation agenda was articulated in documents such as the Education White Paper (1997) and The Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2012). The goal of these policies was to redress the inequalities of the past and transform the higher education system into an agent of social, economic and



political development. A pillar of these policies as Affirmative Action, which refers to a body of policies and procedures designed to redress the effects of past inequalities by protecting marginalized groups, such as ethnic minorities and women from discrimination (Onsongo 2009:2). It is however worth mentioning that in spite of the policies and plans that have been put in place to transform the society and correct past injustices, South Africa still lags behind with regard to equity in the workplace, especially in leadership positions (Gouws, 2012). According to Silander, Haarke and Linderberg (2012:12), gender equity at work remains a major challenge of the transformation agenda.

A recent study conducted by Grant Thornton (2017) on women in business indicates that only 28% of leadership roles in South Africa are occupied by women. Although this number is greater than that of 2016, the percentage of women in leadership has not changed significantly. Ernst and Young Global Limited (2011) assert that the less visibility of South African women in the economy does not only apply to the absence of women in leadership positions, but also in the wage gap that exists between men and women who do the same jobs. This reinforces the perception that career women are less valued than their male counterparts, even when they do they perform the same duties. While numerous studies have underscored the values of female leadership organizations, their full potential is still not being utilized or appreciated in South Africa (Ernst and Young Global Limited 2011).

According to Ernst and Young Global Limited 2011), the lack of appreciation for the value of career women could be attributed to the culture of patriarchy that prevails in Africa in general, and South Africa in particular. In this regard, women will continue to struggle to advance to leadership positions in organizations unless there is a concerted effort to change mindsets on the role that women can play at the workplace, the home and the society at large. This change has to start with how people treat children (boys and girls) both at home and in the community. Also, women who desire leadership

positions should have choices on the way they would want to manage their corporate and private lives and must have the respect and support of society. It is worth stating that changes are gradually taking place in organizations, but in order to reach the required level of transformation, companies need to put in place inclusive leadership development programmes to up-skill and create opportunities for women. Having discussed women in the workplace in South Africa, it is also important to look at women in the higher education sector in South Africa, especially with regard to the status of their representation in academic ranks.

### **3.3 Women in higher education in South Africa**

This section focuses on the statistical representation of women in academic ranks at higher education institutions in South Africa. Historically, women of all races have been under-represented in leadership positions in South African higher education institutions. Nevertheless, some institutions have been making progress, which has seen the gradual rise of a number of women to the top structures of executive management. This progress has however not been good enough as the ratio of men and women at this level is still uneven. The under-representation of women in executive leadership positions in the 23 public institutions in South Africa is still a matter of concern (Speradino 2011:11; Chiloane-Tsoka 2010:4, Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012:1). It could thus be argued that despite the fact that various studies have highlighted the challenges faced by women, and the legislative instruments that have been designed to redress these imbalances in the country, the pace of change remains slow.

Women in South Africa occupy only 28% of senior management positions in businesses, with only 3% of companies having a female CEO while 31% of South African companies have no women in senior management positions (Grant Thornton's research 2017). Globally, even though women make up more than 50% of the world's population, they do not have equal representation to men when it comes to leadership

positions in organizations (Mayer 2015; Davidson and Burke 2011; and Valerio 2009). Vanderbroeck (2010:8) assert that in education and academic circles, women are still less visible in leadership positions, with higher education being the worst affected. The failure of women to progress to decision-making positions and to take leading positions has been disadvantageous to the country's productivity because skills are lost since women form a larger portion of the workforce in most countries (Speradino 2011 and Grogan 2010). Furthermore, recent research has highlighted the fact that women in the higher education sector have a vital role to play in developing an information society and human resource development in South Africa (Awung and Dorasamy 2015:12; Vanderbroeck 2010:8 and Lewis, Simpson 2011:3). The advancement of women in higher education is therefore supposed to be a priority to all higher education institutions, as this would add more value to their productivity.

Despite the many societal, organizational and personal barriers faced by female academics in South Africa, many of them are increasingly aspiring to occupy leadership positions. It would therefore be in an organization's interest to continue to open up career paths for women and to support them in achieving their goals. The researcher believes that there is need for organizations to change their recruitment, retention and promotion strategies so as to support the advancement of women and tap into the pool of the female talent that is available. Gender equality should not only be perceived as having to do with social justice, as it is also a critical source of competitive advantage for the growth of an organization (Speradino 2011 and Grogan 2010). The following section will discuss various solutions that have been offered and some of which have been implemented to address gender equality in South Africa.

### **3.4 Support towards gender equality in South African workplaces**

Gender and management scholars have been concerned about the persistence of gender inequality in leadership positions in South Africa, and in higher education in

particular. It has been highlighted that the progress of women to leadership positions has been very slow (Speradino 2011; Chiloane-Tsoka 2010; and Case, et. al. 2009). This has given rise to discussions on how to address this gender gap (Yukongdi and Rowley 2009; Vinnicombe and Singh 2011; Lewis and Simpson 2011 and Brady 2011:6). Over the last ten years, these concerns have been raised in various ways to increase the representation of women in leadership positions in higher education. Policies have been implemented to create a more gender-friendly space in South African higher education institutions. The main aim of these policies has been to eradicate social, racial, gender and geographical inequalities in South Africa. It is worth mentioning that South Africa is striving to address issues of equality, discrimination and fair labour practices. These efforts can be seen in the various policies governing the country, organizational efforts and women's personal efforts. The explanation for these efforts are as follows:

- **Support from the government**

In 1996, the Bill of Rights was introduced to guarantee equal treatment to all citizens. Furthermore, the Basic Conditions of Employment (BCEA) Act No 75 of 1997 was also introduced to eliminate the marginalisation of women in workplaces. The declaration of the Basic Conditions of Employment by the government (South Africa 1997) was to advance economic development and social justice by regulating the right to fair labour practices to all employees and employers. Affirmative action was also introduced through the Employment Equity Act No 55 (South Africa 1998), in order to ensure that there are fair practices of employment and the promotion for black people, women and people with disabilities at the work-place. In this regard, employers are supposed to put in place five-year employment equity plans that aim to achieve employment equity in their organisations. Equal participation in the labour market has given women opportunities to pursue previously male-dominated professions. It has helped to

empower and assure women, children and people with disabilities their rights and freedoms.

Moreover, the South African Department of Higher Education, together with the Education Department and the advisory Council on Higher Education have organized high-level conferences to address the possible obstacles to gender equity in the higher education sector, such as institutional cultures and the glass ceiling (MacGregor 2012). There have been significant changes in most higher education institutions today as compared to the apartheid era (Badat 2010:2) because women's concerns have come to the forefront in the public and corporate sectors. Nowadays, issues of human rights, equality, empowerment and welfare attract a lot of attention. Policies have been put in place to address the inequalities of the past. This has been with the help of the Gender Policy Framework (GPF), which provides procedures and practices to make sure that women have equal opportunities in all sectors of the South African economy.

- **Organizational support**

At an organizational level, strategies have been put in place, aimed at making women more visible by promoting them to positions of leadership; creating more acceptable cultures for women in mainstream organizations; offering flexible working conditions which take into consideration domestic responsibilities; and involving men in the gender debate by providing gender sensitization training to them (Case, et. al. 2009; Berry and Franks 2010; McCrady 2012; Jha and Jha 2013; Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012).

- **Personal effort**

On a personal level, women have been encouraged to look for mentors, network with other women, plan their careers in advance, further their education and ensure that in their role as mothers, they sensitize their children to gender issues (Vanderbroeck 2010; Lewis, Simpson 2011; Nguyen 2012; Awung and Dorasamy 2015; Boushey and Farrell 2013; Morley 2014; Chiloane-Tsoka 2010; Moorosi 2010; Coward 2010 and

Gouws 2012). However, with the increasing availability of such options for women, the question one may ask is: has enough been done to prepare women beyond simply being encouraged to enter into male-dominated professions in their current state? Fewer women than men have succeeded in rising to top positions in organizations, while more still find it challenging to move to the next level of the organizational ladder (Boushey and Farrell 2013:6; Morley 2014:3; Chiloane-Tsoka 2010:4; Moorosi 2010:3 and Coward 2010:1).

### **3.5 Challenges faced by women in higher education in South Africa**

Today's knowledge society places high demands on the demands on female leaders in the higher education sector (Vanderbroeck 2010:8; Lewis, Simpson 2011:3 and Nguyen 2012:6). Higher education is undergoing drastic changes globally, and this includes the transformation of the professional and managerial positions of women (Coward 2010 and Swam 2011:6). Scholars and policy-makers contend that increasing the representation of women across the various institutions and levels of higher education would help create more inclusive and hospitable climates for both men and women (Bhandare 2008: 266; Alvesson and Billing 2009:236). Similarly, De La Ray (2009) notes that the transformation of the South African higher education sector would make it more responsive to social needs and capacity building. It would also encourage collaboration between institutions and level the higher education field to ensure equity and equality for all. This would require the mobilization of considerable financial, material and human resources from corporate donors (Raufflet 2009:1). Despite the transformation agenda in place, the South African higher education sector still faces many serious transformation challenges. Some of the common challenges are: the glass ceiling; institutional cultures; work-life balance: lack of workplace flexibility; lack of role models and mentors; gender stereotypes in leadership styles; and academic structures (Minister of Higher Education and Training 2013; Hoobler et al. 2011; Shay 2012; Grogan 2010; Valerio 2009:3; Gouws 2012:10; Kele and Pietersen 2015:13; Gabriela, Dan and Antonia 2013 and Evans 2011).

- **Glass ceiling**

According to Hoobler et al. (2011), a glass ceiling is a form of stereotyping that results from perceptions of what is expected of women in the workplace. These beliefs have resulted in women being discriminated against in the workplace and judged as unsuitable for leadership positions, despite being educated and visible (Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012 and Hoobler et al. 2011). Baumgartner and Schneider (2010) contend that in order to break through the glass ceiling, women need goal-setting, self-assertion and self-promotion, which require communication; determination and perseverance to achieve one's goals.

- **Gender stereotypes in leadership styles**

Scholars have made findings about different styles of leadership that are displayed by both females and males and suggest possible combinations of these traits (Evans 2011; Levitt 2010 and Bush 2011). Putting more emphasis on this, Levitt (2010) found that while women are expected on the one hand to display leadership attributes such as the drive to lead, they are criticized on the other hand for being aggressive or abrasive when they display toughness in their actions. According to Evans (2011), for women to be considered competent, they are expected to demonstrate traditionally male leadership behaviours such as assertiveness. These stereotypes disadvantage women in the sense that they are considered incompetent leaders when they display masculine leadership styles, while men are instead glorified when they tone down their dominance and portray more empathic behavior (Eagly and Carli 2007; Gouws 2012; Baumgartner and Schneider 2010). These gender stereotypes are described as 'agentic' for males and 'communal' for women (Eagly and Carli 2007; Gouws 2012; Baumgartner and Schneider 2010). On a different note, Shay (2012) and Valerio (2009) contend that men and women in the higher education sector do not have the same career aspirations, and this is one of the reasons why women do not rise as rapidly as their male counterparts to leadership positions.

- **Lack of confidence and negotiation skills**

Some studies have found that women in the higher education sector in South Africa are faced with a lack of confidence and negotiation skills. In other words, their level of confidence and willingness to take initiative in certain situations is low as compared to men (Laud and Johnson 2012; Eunice, Morrow-Jones and Ballam 2012 and; Kolb 2009). According to Kulik and Olekalns (2012), women do have the same abilities as men to initiate negotiations, and this deprives them of opportunities to improve their terms of employment. They usually do not believe in their abilities to perform well and as a result of this they tend to make fewer demands during negotiations of employment terms, which makes it less likely for them to procure the same economic benefits as a more competitive negotiation style would do. This suggests that for women to be advanced in their career, they need to take actions to remedy these situations by presenting themselves as self-confident and learning how to be more proactive and effective in negotiating for wages and opportunities (Kolb 2009). These skills would help women's abilities to perform and deliver better in their organizations (Bonebright, Cottledge and Lonnquist 2012).

- **Lack of workplace flexibility and spousal attitudes**

Research has found that a lack of workplace flexibility and spousal attitudes hinder women's progress in the workplace (Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012). Some women feel that there is a lack of flexible work opportunities and work-life balance in their organizations because most organizations have not adopted family-friendly practices to support women in their jobs nor do they provide opportunities for women to excel in their dual roles as leaders and mothers (Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012). It is even worse for women who do not have spousal support. Chiloane-Tsoka (2010) points out that female academics in South Africa needs the support of their husbands to be able to manage their dual roles without the support of their husbands. In some cases, women require permission from their spouses to work. Hofmeyr and Mzobe (2012) noted that domestic



responsibilities still lie heavily on women's shoulders and most of them plan their own careers around their husbands'. In order to break through this barrier, there is need for more flexible hours in the workplace and adequate support from spouses. Eagly and Carli (2007) have argued that it is necessary for companies to adopt family-friendly practices in order to support women in their career advancement and retention.

- **Cultural and professional roles**

Despite the fact that women are adding enormous value to the workplace, the balance of power within organizations is still in favour of men. This imbalance is attributed to women's dual responsibilities as wife/mother and career woman. In some cases, the traditional or cultural role is accepted without question and the professional role is secondary (Beeson and Valerio 2012; Eagly and Carli 2007). Consequently, they are often disadvantaged with regard to remuneration and promotion. Studies have shown that women are disadvantaged in their career advancement by the structures, norms and values of organizations. For example, work that involves long hours makes is a challenge for women with family commitments (Airini et al. 2011). Leave policies also become a source of discrimination against women when it comes to selection and promotion, because employers believe that childbirth and maternity leave affect a woman's productivity. Furthermore, when it comes to promotion, research is a major factor that is considered (Chiloane-Tsoka 2010; Valerio 2012 and; Eagly and Carli 2007). Women are therefore disadvantaged because their other responsibilities leave them less time for research. Harris and Leberman (2012), argue that the culture at universities is predominantly masculine, and this in itself can act as a barrier for women who aspire to leadership and management positions. Historically, universities were dominated by a certain class of men, and this has come to shape the norms and practices that prevail in higher education (Chiloane-Tsoka 2010). These practices have become entrenched and difficult to change (Chiloane-Tsoka 2010). However, the positive side is that in terms of this prejudice based on race and culture, there have been changes as a result of legislation, especially with regard to the earning of points

on the BB BEE scorecard. The researcher believes that more has to be done to put an end to this cultural barrier for women.

In sum, one would expect universities to be more balanced in terms of gender equity, given that they are supposed to be at the forefront of higher learning, critical analysis and innovation. This is however not the case as women continue to be under-represented in management positions at higher educational institutions (Wallace and Merchant 2011:2; Kele and Pietersen 2015:13; Gabriela, Dan and Antonia 2013).

However, despite the lesser presence of women in leadership posts in higher education in South Africa, women are increasingly aspiring to top leadership positions in higher education. It is becoming common to find women serving as chancellors, vice-chancellors, deans and directors in South African universities (Speradino 2011:12 and Mayet 2015:9). A study conducted by Chiloane-Tsoka (2016) reveals that in South Africa the participation of women in the work-force has increased from 39.1% to 43.3% between 1995-2002. In 2007, it was reported that 24% of professors and associate professors were women, and this number has hardly changed (Chiloane-Tsoka 2016).

This indicates the level of success that women have achieved in their efforts to break the glass ceiling. However, the questions worth asking are: What experiences moved these women forward, while other women still find challenges in career advancement? How can more women be empowered to follow in their footsteps and more into leadership positions? These are some of the questions that this study will aim to address. It is on this basis that this study aims to investigate the career advancement strategies of those women who have advanced to leadership positions in higher education. The researcher believes that focusing on the advancement strategies of women in leadership would provide more effective solutions in handling the challenges women face to advance to top positions in higher education. Also, it would provide a direct version of women who have navigated through the leadership web successfully

through their own creative ways, support structures inside or outside their organizations. This may possibly inspire women who aspire to be in similar positions.

Having discussed the challenges that female academics face in South, it is important to discuss the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions in the higher education sector.

### **3.5 Advancement strategies of women in leadership positions**

The advancement of women into leadership roles has been positive, but slow. While studies focus on the challenges of women in senior management positions in organizations, it may be argued that insufficient studies have been conducted on the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions in higher education (Cheung and Halpern 2010; Airini et al. 2011 and; Chen and Hune 2011). However, based on the few studies carried out so far, the most common strategies used by women to advance in their careers in the higher education sector are:

- **Personal strategies**

One of the major strategies for the advancement of women who occupy leadership positions in higher education is personal strategies. These strategies are self-motivation, independence and hard work (Speradino 2011 and Grogan 2010). Research has shown that for most women to advance to leadership positions, they have to work twice as hard as their male colleagues to get to the top (Mazibuko 2006; Mathipa and Chiloane-Tsoka 2001).

- **Family support**

Another strategy that has facilitated the advancement of women to leadership positions is support from family. Studies have reported that women's family members have been

a key support in achieving their leadership positions (Cheung and Halpern 2010). According to Cheung and Halpern (2010:9), partners, family and extended family play an important role for some women who have advanced to positions of leadership in higher education by helping with housework and childcare. Some of these supports husbands' approval before they accepted an administrative position or work away from their families, nannies, parents and siblings to looking after their children while they further their education or are at work.

- **Mentor support**

The word mentor has been explained differently by different researchers and authors, so there is need for clarity. According to Carter, Ibarra and Silva (2010), a mentor is an experienced senior colleague who helps junior colleagues to solve tasks, teaches them and support them with advice and acts as a role model to the younger colleagues. Carter, Ibarra and Silva (2010) expand the meaning of a mentor by saying that a mentor is a person who can occupy any higher position, provides emotional support, feedback and advice, helps mentees navigate politics and focus on personal and professional development. Taking this explanation into account, there is need for women to seek mentors that will help them advance in their careers. The importance of mentoring was also confirmed by Moorosi (2010), Blackwood and Brown-Welty (2011) and April, et. al (2011) in the study of women of color and African-American women. They noted that mentors encourage women to be more positive about seeking new positions and can assist women who aspire to be in leadership positions with career planning. Mentors are of particular importance during leadership transitions. Orser, Riding and Stanley (2012) argue that even though mentoring relationship are particularly important for the advancement of women, they have a smaller supply of mentors in that regard. This implies that organizations should come up with mentoring programmes that can help women.

This has prompted some organization to deliberately identify the need for internal and external mentoring programmes for their staffs in their workplaces (Mckensey 2012; Alimo-Metcalfe 2010 and Evan 2011). The authors noted that some organizations have partnered with companies to support the development of women mentors in certain areas that women are lacking or need guidance. Baumgartner and Schneider (2010) strongly recommended that women need to have access to mentors and mentoring programmes in order to advance in their careers, so that women can be promoted, earn high incomes, lessen turn- over, have greater career satisfaction and easier socialization. This idea is very important for the success of women and employers need to know that it is not only women who can mentor other women, for research has shown that men can also function as good mentors for women (Moorosi 2010 and Lee-Gosselin, Briere and Ann 2013). Women have found that mentors provide support to overcome career challenges and the demands of work-life balance (Chiloane-Tsoka 2010; Grogan 2010; and Orser, Riding and Stanley 2012).

- **Networking**

Networking usually involves contact with a variety of colleagues for the purpose of mutual work benefit (Linehand and Scullion 2008). On the contrary, Hopkins, O'Neil and Sullivan (2011) found that networking has not always been perceived positively with women because female networks are viewed as "have-a- chat- clubs". Metz (2009) contends that the size of an organization has an impact on the success of networking, and networking is even more important when an organization is small than when it is large. Furthermore, networking is one of the strategies for women's advancement in leadership. A study conducted by Harris and Leberman (2011) in the United State revealed that mentorship and networking has played a major role for women to advance to leadership positions. He noted that networking may give women access to significant information and opportunities for their career advancement. Research has shown that mentors and networks provide women with opportunities to advance in their

careers through interactions with role models and mentors (April, et. al 2011:9). In this regard, Mckensery (2012) suggested that networking programmes would be a great strategy for the career advancement of women. Networking provides support to women as well as an environment in which they could learn and feel a sense of community. This is important because women generally have poor support structures in the workplace and their connections, which are often only at the surface level, tend to break down easily in the face of adversity (Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011; April, et.al. 2011; Mckensery 2012 and Harris and Leberman 2011).

- **Collegial support**

Studies have shown that collegial support is one of the strategies that some women used for their career advancement (Murniati 2012). Women are sometimes encouraged by their colleagues and other staff to accomplish their professional goals. According to Murniati (2012), some women, especially women with children, often ask their colleagues to cover up for them if they cannot be present or have family commitments at home. For instance, whenever there were emergency events in the department that took place outside regular working hours, women with children who cannot make it were allowed to monitor the situations from home. As good as this may sound, it is worth mentioning that the generous and considerate gestures from these colleagues may give the impression that women are weak and incapable of fulfilling their professional duties. Also, helping women with their responsibilities at work can limit their effort to challenge the socially constructed roles that contribute to gender inequality. This could lead to the preservation of a social structure that disadvantages women, and which might ultimately come back to adversely affect their professional development and advancement in the workplace. According to Ross and Well (2012) the acceptance by women of their own limitations is “the most paralyzing challenge” because this attitude would hinder the efforts of women to break stereotypes and prove that they are able to achieve success.

The aforementioned strategies imply that in order for women to successfully navigate their complex paths to top or leadership positions, women need to have a strong support system from either their families, spouses, mentors, colleagues or network with others. This is because maintaining a balance between two responsibilities is not an easy attempt for women to easily advance to the top. However, since such support has helped women to progress in their careers the researcher will strongly suggest that other women who cannot cope personally with workloads should seek for such. The section below will review the various policies that govern South Africa higher education institutions and workplaces.

### **3.6 Legislative and statutory framework guiding employment in South Africa**

The debate on women and leadership in South Africa has led to the development of policies intended to increase the participation of women in leadership positions in general, and in higher education in particular. A policy is a set of rules that employees must follow. In other words, workplace policies help employees to know what is considered accepted behavior in the company (Sisson 2010:4). The company uses these policies to influence or help regulate organizational actions in certain situations. It also provides guidelines to employees for them to understand what their company expects from them; such as values or norms around the workplace. According to Sisson (2010:14), most organizations make policies to help create uniformity amongst their employees, such as equal rights amongst the employees. There are many laws in South Africa, but the researcher will focus mostly on the policies and legislation that have led to transformation in South African institutions, namely: Basic Conditions of Employment Act, No. 75 of 1997; The Labour Relations Act No. 66 of 1995; the Employment Equity Act No. 55 of 1998; the White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education and; the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997.

### **3.6.1 Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No 75 of 1997)**

The Basic Conditions of Employment Act (No 75 of 1997) is one of the most important laws governing South African higher education institutions, their regulations, provision for quality promotion, transitional arrangements and other issues relating to higher education. The purpose of this act is *“to lay down the minimum conditions of employment to ensure that workers are protected from exploitation by their employers* (Hunter 2012:384). The Basic Conditions of Employment Act No. 75 of 1997 (BCEA) was also introduced to prevent the discrimination of women in workplaces. The aim of the Act (Basic Conditions of Employment Act No 75 of 1997) was to advance economic development and social justice.

According to Hunter (2012:384), the main provisions of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act are: Working hours, meal intervals, and rest periods; Overtime and payment for overtime; Work on Sundays and public holidays; Night work; Annual leave; Sick leave; Maternity leave; Family responsibility leave; Contracts of employment; Payment of wages and salaries; Deductions from wages and salaries; Termination of employment; and Employment of children under the age of 15. The aforementioned selection of the provisions of the Act are the ones that managers need to be aware of (Hunter 2012:384). It should be kept in mind that these are minimum conditions of employment. The Act does not prevent employers from offering conditions of employment and employee benefits that exceed these conditions. These conditions relate to the factors influencing the career progression of women in higher education in terms of working hours, overtime, annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave entitlement, family leave, public holidays, termination of contract and remuneration. It is important to emphasise this section of the Act because studies have shown that despite these policies being in place, women still suffer work overload, insufficient leave and low remuneration in the workplace (Boushey and Farrell 2013; Coward 2010;



Riodan and Louw-Potgieter 2011; Chiloane-Tsoka 2016; Bruckmuller; Ryan, Rink and Haslam 2014; Gabriela, Dan and Antonia 2013; Morley 2014; Johansson and Sliwa 2014 and; Bosch and Becker 2013). The authors identified three main reasons why gender equity is a challenge: Firstly, there is a lack of policies on equal promotion procedures, and there is also poor monitoring of day-to-day work by the authority; Secondly, challenges with family/redistribution policies in parental leave policies and kindergarten; and finally, employment segregation patterns exist whereby women dominate the public sector and lower positions, while men dominate the private sector and higher positions. They pointed out that 70% of the public sector is women, while less than 40% of women were in the private sector.

Furthermore, the fact that the Act stipulates that the employer must provide an environment that is supportive and flexible for employees with family responsibilities implies that there is a need for employers to provide sufficient facilities that would accommodate pregnant women, women with children and a workload that would not jeopardise employees' health and progress (Coward 2010 and Chiloane-Tsoka 2016). According to Dancaster and Cohen (2010:41), providing sufficient family responsibility leave and flexible working hours enhances career progression. Hoobler, Lemmon and Wayne (2011) argue that most women today are, in fact, actively pursuing their careers despite these challenges and *do* have the desire to progress to leadership position within organizations.

As good as this Act may be, there is a need to ensure that the following provisions of the Basic Condition of Employment Act (i.e. Working hours; maternity leave; family responsibility leave; payment of wages and salaries; deductions from wages and salaries and termination of employment) should be monitored more seriously by the headship so that women should not suffer work overload, insufficient leave and how remuneration in the workplace (Boushey and Farrell 2013; Coward 2010). Additionally, the researcher finds the leave bill problematic because it does not provide income for

those 12 weeks that the worker would be on leave and hence may be discouraging for women to take such leave. It would have been a good Act if it were to grant women part of their salary while they are away. The fact that the Act did not mention whether women whose children go to day-care got extra income or go there for free may also not be the solution to this issue. Relying on this Act alone has not women's' career advancement. There is need to find other advancement strategies that could be used to assist women progressing their career. It is on this reason that this study is based.

### **3.6.2 The Labour Relations Act, No 66 of 1995 (LRA)**

The Labour Relations Act No 66 of 1995 of South Africa applies to all employees in South Africa, except those in the National Defence Force, the National Intelligence Agency and the South African Secret Service. The overall purpose of the Labour Relations Act is to protect the rights of employees at the workplace and to prevent employers from abusing or maltreating their staff (Hunter 2012:387).

According to Hunter (2012), the Act is further divided into sections that provide more detailed explanations and guidelines to assist in its application. The following sections of the Labour Relation Act will be discussed: Section 185 of the Labour Relations Act, 66 of 1995 of South Africa makes provisions to prevent every employee from being unfairly dismissed or subjected to unfair labour practices at the workplace. Section 203 of the Labour Relations Act of South Africa (1995:168-169) is worth mentioning in this study because it protects all employees from sexual harassment. The Act provides a sound code of practice which regulates how to handle sexual harassment cases in the workplace (by the National Economic Development and Labor Advisory Council).

This section of the Act is relevant to this study because it addresses the issue of collective bargaining at the workplace and at sectoral level. Research has shown that one of the reasons for women's lack of progress in the workplace and in higher education in particular, is a result of poor bargaining for salary (Chiloane-Tsoka 2016).

This is because women are not good at negotiating their salaries and most work-places still have work cultures of paying women less salaries as compared to men. According to Chiloane-Tsoka (2012), in terms of remuneration, most women are disadvantaged in having less access to benefits provided by the company such as healthcare, pensions and company cars. Also, women in management positions received two-thirds of the average weekly earnings of their male counterparts. This could be discouraging in terms of the career progression of women. This study argued that women may still be faced with challenges within different organizations because little attention has been given to the success stories and mechanism of women who have advanced to leadership positions. The researcher therefore believes that the answer to this could be that more research should focus on the advancement strategies and experiences of those women who hold leadership positions in their career.

### **3.6.3 Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998)**

The main aim of the Employment Equity Act of South Africa 1998 (Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998) is to ensure that black people, women and people with disabilities are not discriminated against in terms of employment and the promotion in the work-place. The Act aims to establish equity at the work-place by promoting equal opportunities, fair treatment/practices in employment and by implementing the affirmative action in order to redress the employment discrimination to which designated groups had been exposed. (Hunter 2012:391). Hunter (2012:391) contends that the Employment Equity Act of South Africa has two main sections. The first deals with equity and discrimination, and stipulates that there should be no discrimination against any employee on the basis of race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, family responsibility, ethic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience/belief, political opinion, culture, language, birth or HIV status. The second section applies to employment practices in all organizations, and it states that there could be no unfair practice in an organization when implementing affirmative

action. Organizations such as the National defence Force, The National Intelligence Agency and the South African Secret Service are excluded from this provision (Hunter 2012:391). This implies that employment decisions in these organizations should be based on the skills, knowledge and experience of employees.

Affirmative action requires all employers who employ more than 50 employees to implement measures that favour designated groups who had been disadvantaged by apartheid laws, such as women, disabled people and black people (The Employment Equity Act of South Africa 1998:6). The organizational analysis clause of the Act ensures that organizations have policies and procedures for the identification of any barriers which might be disadvantageous to people. The clause also requires that managers of organizations should have a five-year Employment Equity plan and penalties are imposed on non-compliant organizations. The Employment Equity plan should outline the measures that the organizations intends to use to rectify inequalities in the organization. The Act also addresses disputes that relate to the employment equity, and appeals are addressed in the Labour Court.

It is important to note that this policy plays a vital role in regulating the management of Higher Education institutions as its implementation holds definite advantages for the people in the institutions. It is therefore necessary to redress the discriminatory impact of apartheid by addressing the imbalances that have been described above.

The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 is significant to this study in the sense that its main purpose is to address equity in the work-place, and this is in line with the objectives of this study. The focus here is to find out how the rules of the Act have been implemented and monitored, and the extent to which the objectives of the Act have been achieved. Studies have revealed that there is still gender discrimination at the workplace in South Africa as a whole and at UoTs in particular (Chiloane-Tsoka 2016; Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012 and the Grant Thornton Report 2012-2017). These scholars

note that it is still common for women to be in supporting roles in the workplace as compared to their male counterparts. The slow progress in the number of women in chief leadership roles and Women's progress have been slow in the past years, as it moves from 7% in 2015 to 9% in 2016 and 10% in 2017. However, the fact that there is progress implies that other women can also progress if they are able to learn from those women who have advanced to leadership positions. It is for this reason that the researcher believes that more emphasis need to be placed on the advancement strategies of women who have advanced to leadership positions.

#### **3.6.4 The White Paper on the Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa**

Due to the challenges faced by higher education during the apartheid period in South Africa, the programme for the transformation of Higher Education (Education White Paper 3, Notice 1196 of 1997) was published on the 24<sup>th</sup> of July 1997 to help steer the higher education system in the intended direction. The White Paper aims to achieve the following:

- Eliminate all forms of unfair discrimination and inequalities in the past by creating access and chances for all those who aim to achieve their potential through higher education.
- The Act also aims to satisfy high-skilled employment needs through well planned and coordinated teaching, learning and research programmes.
- To sustain practices that encourage cultural tolerance, critical thinking and human rights within educational programmes and practices.

This implies that higher education institutions were advised to review their human resource strategies and practices in order to develop and motivate workers who are unable to meet the expectations of the organizational goals or stakeholders. Hence, it is the responsibility of every institution to develop with management strategies that

would achieve these objectives and improve on employee performance, creativity and the work environment at large. This Paper has helped in providing the proper coordination of a higher advancement of knowledge and skills, a quality academic standard of education, as well as making freeing citizens from all forms of discrimination in order to improve the economy of South Africa.

In relation to this study, the White Paper stipulates that the challenges of women are entrenched in sexist ideologies that cut across race and class. It therefore suggests that there is need for an enabling environment to overcome the social constraints that hinder female mobility, such as inadequate or no childcare facilities and maternity benefits, and the unfair distribution of resources and practices. The Paper intended to increase the needs and demands of the new social order of equity in institutions of higher education and the need for accessibility for all citizens without any form of discrimination. This implies that challenges of equity need to be considered at all times. Therefore, that the researcher believes that equity in leadership positions can be achieved if more research focuses on the success stories of women who have advanced to leadership positions.

Apart from having these policies, South Africa is making significant efforts to ensure that gender equality is achieved at all levels. It is also signatory to five international conventions and agreements relating to gender equality, namely; The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women; The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights of Women in Africa; The SADC Gender and Development Protocol; The Beijing Platform for Action; and The UN Millennium Development Goals. The overall goal was to address issues of equality, empowerment and combatting gender-based violence in South Africa.

With so many reports and policies in place, one would expect that there would be more proportionate representation of women at the top of the organizational hierarchy in the

work-place. This is however not the case as there are still few women in leadership positions in both public and private sector organizations (Homeryr and Mzobe 2011; Mayer and Barnard 2015; Ryan et al. 2011and; the U.S Department of Labor 2013). In South Africa for example, there are far fewer women leaders than men in the higher education sector, and this is the result of organizational structures and systems that disadvantage women (Homeryr and Mzobe 2011:1). According to Chiloane-Tsoka (2010), women in South Africa do not advance to the same level as men, especially at senior levels mainly as a result of entrenched patriarchal attitudes, the lingering effects of apartheid and women's child-bearing responsibilities. Other factors that impede the advancement of women to top academic and leadership positions are prejudice at the work-place; a lack of assertiveness and mentorship; socio-cultural perceptions and societal values that continue to oppress women (Chiloane-Tsoka 2010:4-6).

According to Hofmeyr and Ndobe (2012), women do not advance at the same pace as their male counterparts because men and women do not have the same career aspirations with regard to managerial positions. The researcher believes that enough has not been done to address the problem of gender inequality, and this is hindering women from showing their full potential. Statistics on college and university governing boards show that gender inequality and the under-representation of women in leadership positions are still cause for concern, with the number of female board members holding having remained the same at roughly 30 percent for nearly two decades. Preliminary data indicate that men outnumbered women on both public and independent college and university governing boards by more than two to one (Dorius and Firebaugh 2010; McGregor 2010). Chiloane-Tsoka (2016:8) also indicates that in 2007, women made up 41% of managerial positions while men made up 59%. However, in 2008, this figure went down from 41% to 38%, while there was an increase in male managers from 59% to 62% (Chiloane-Tsoka 2016:8). This author further explains that in 2010, statistical evidence in Gauteng revealed that the representation of male leaders in top managerial position was twice that of female leaders. However,

of even more importance are the findings of Hofmeyr and Ndobe (2012:8) that South African boardrooms are dominated by men who occupy 67% of the positions. This implies that women are mostly found at the middle and bottom levels of the organizational ladder, which means that more men are in top and senior management positions as compared to women.

From these statistics, it is clear that women in South Africa have made some progress. This is however not enough when compared to the total number of women in leadership worldwide. There is therefore a serious need for policies that would transform gender practices in South Africa in order to achieve equitable results. Secondly, the researcher believes that the solutions to these challenges could be that more research should focus on the experiences and advancement strategies of those women who have succeeded in advancing to leadership positions in their careers. This is because little attention has been paid to their strategies and coping mechanisms in these leadership positions (Mayet 2015 and Speradino 2011).

The White Paper can therefore be considered instrumental in bringing about transformation in the higher education sector in South Africa so as to achieve equity for women in general and for women in higher education in particular.

### **3.6.5 Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997**

In line with the White Paper, the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997 ensures that there is employment equity in the higher education sector in South Africa. The Act governs and regulates all higher education institutions (such as universities and Technikons) in South Africa. It also provides for the appointment and functions of an independent assessor as well as the registration of private institutions (Republic of South Africa, 1997). The higher education Act aims to achieve the following:



- The establishment of a single co-ordinated higher education system to advance co-operative governance and offer programmes based in higher education;
- To redistribute and change programmes and institutions to improve their response to the human resource, economic and development needs of the nation;
- To abolish past discrimination and address the issues of representatively and equal access;
- To maximise opportunities for learning and the creation of knowledge;
- To endorse the values which bring about an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom;
- To value freedom of religion, belief and opinion;
- To promote respect for democracy, academic freedom, creativity scholarship and research;
- To pursue excellence, promote the realization of the full potential of each employee, broad-mindedness and appreciation of diversity;
- To act in response to the needs of the country and the communities that these institutions serve; and
- To enhance the development of all forms of knowledge and scholarship in keeping with international standards of academic quality (Republic of South Africa, 1997).

It is important to note that the above Act requires every higher education institution to follow. The question one may ask is: Has this Act achieved its purpose? Research has shown that the Act has not been able to control systemic discrimination nor, address the issues of representation, equal access and the realization of the full potential of each employee (Hobber, Lemmon and Wayne 2011; Masoko 2013 and Booysen and Nkomo 2010). However, although there are challenges in place for women to advance in their careers, it is worth stating that fewer women have succeeded in advancing to leadership positions in higher education organizations. Additionally, it would be

interesting to know how more women can be empowered to follow in their footsteps and move to leadership positions. This study thus investigates the career advancement strategies of women in leadership positions at UoTs, so as to inspire women who aspire to be in similar positions.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This chapter aimed to present the background of women in higher education from a South African perspective. The chapter looked at women in the workplace in South Africa, specifically in higher education. It then examined the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions, challenges that women in higher education face in South Africa and it ended with the various legislative frameworks of South African higher education. Acts which enable employees and companies to establish boundaries for what they consider acceptable. Chapter four will look at how social cognitive theory variables connect with women in leadership. The theory provides the foundation to help make meaning and to understand the career advancement of women in leadership positions in higher education in terms of their interests, choices and performances.

## **CHAPTER FOUR – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: SOCIAL COGNITIVE THEORY**

### **4.1 Introduction**

This study adopted Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory to examine the career advancement strategies of women in higher education. In order to help women withstand the challenges that they face in taking up leadership roles. Social Cognitive Theory has increasingly become important in analyzing the career advancement strategies of women in higher education because it helps to provide an understanding of how socialization and social support functions relate to work leadership within organizations. The researcher's argument is that women in higher education leadership as a population has not been widely studied in Africa as a whole and at UoTs in particular, which represents a gap in higher education literature. The researcher therefore intended to focus on the advancement strategies of women in leadership in order to provide more effective solutions in handling the challenges women face in advancing to top positions in higher education. Hence, the researcher adopted Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory as a framework because it enables her to investigate how women in higher education (UoTs) leadership aspire to be leaders, what choices they made and what strategies they used to develop or advance in their careers. In this regard, the chapter begins with an overview of the Social Cognitive Theory and how social cognitive variables connect with women in leadership in terms of self-efficacy, personal goals and outcome expectations within the process of career advancement.

### **4.2 Overview of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory**

In 1941, Dollard and Miller conceptualized a theory of social learning and imitation that opposed behaviorist concepts of associationism in favor of drive reduction principles.

Since the theory's main focus was on education, it ignored the creation of novel responses. In their 1963 publication titled, *Social Learning and Personality Development*, Bandura and Walters broadened the frontiers of social learning theory by introducing the principles of observational learning and vicarious reinforcement. With time, Bandura realized that the key element of self-belief was missing from his Social Learning Theory and other learning theories of the day. In 1986, he published *Social Foundations of Thought and Action: A Social Cognitive Theory* in which he outlined his views of the causality of human agency.

Social Cognitive Theory is deep-rooted in the view of human agency in which individuals are agents who proactively engaged in their own progress and can make things happen by their activities. Bandura developed the theory with the aim of reconciling the two conflicting schools that underpinned studies of human behaviour in the 1970s and 1980s. These conflicting views centred on the question of whether human agency was autonomous or mechanical. Advocates of *autonomous agency* believe that humans are agents of their own actions, while those of *mechanical agency* believe that the environment determines human actions.

In contrast, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory views human agency as interactive in nature, in which agents are: "*neither autonomous agents nor mechanical conveyers of animating environmental forces. Rather, they serve as a reciprocally contributing influence to their own motivation and behavior within a system of reciprocal causation involving personal determinants, action and environmental factors*" (Bandura 1986:12). This implies that the causality of human action is neither the result of independent action on the part of human agents, nor is it a mechanical action in which external factors determine what agents do. Rather, human action is the result of a mutually-influential relationship between environmental factors and the individual choices of human agents. In other words, while the social environment in which a person finds himself/herself may predispose that person to act in one way or other, the person does

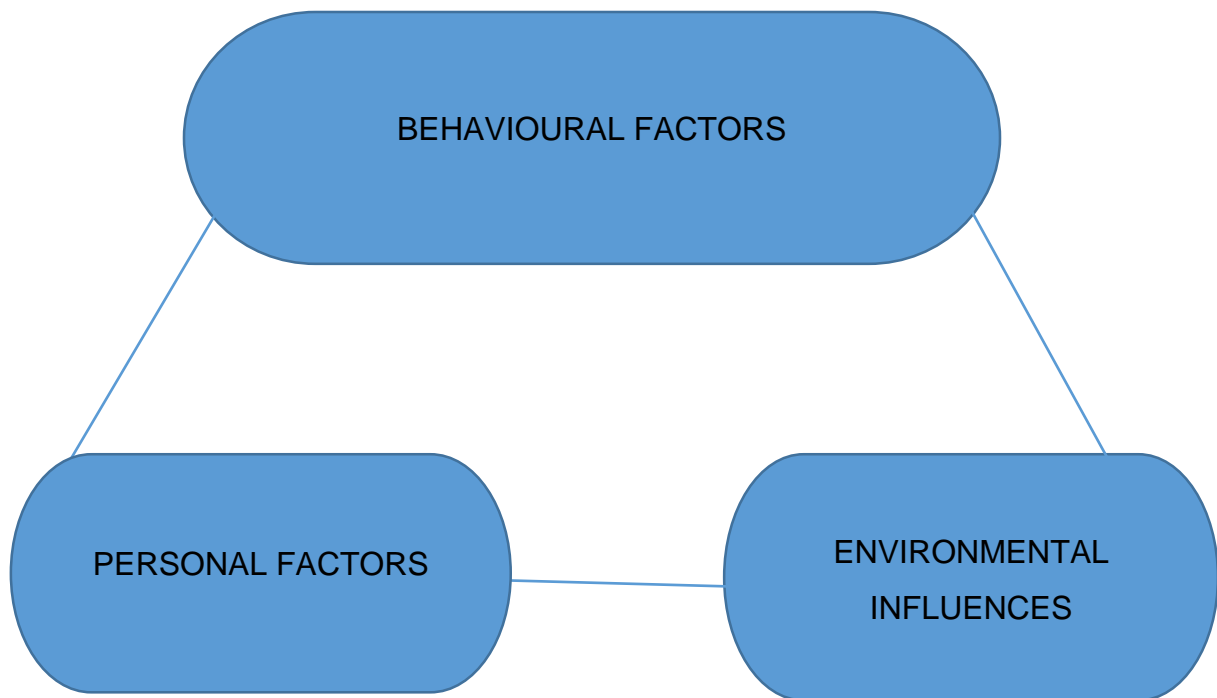
not just act mechanically, but makes an assessment of the available options before making a decision on what action to take.

This is significant to career advancement in the sense that when there are changes in structural or environmental factors to promote the career advancement of people, such changes on their own would not propel individuals to the desired goals if they do not make certain choices to ensure that they reach those goals. It is in this regard that this researcher believes that the career advancement of women to leadership positions would not only require structural changes, but also progressive choices on the part of the women themselves. In his Triadic Reciprocal Model or mutually-influential view of human agency, Bandura argues that there three factors that influence the actions of individuals (Bandura 1986:23) namely behavioral, personal and environmental influences. This Triadic Model is discussed below.

#### **4.2.1 Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Model**

Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Model advocates that a person's behavior both influences and is influenced by personal factor and the environment (Bandura 1986:23 and Devi, Khandelwal and Das 2016:722). This implies that an individual's behavior may be conditioned through the use of consequences. Bandura's aim in developing this model was to analyze human functioning in terms of personal, behavioral and environmental components. The reason for using this model is to motivate self-regulated women to adapt to changes in their social and physical environments; behavioral outcomes; and hidden thoughts and feelings (Zimmerman 1989). Bandura (1986:23) demonstrated his triadic model using the following formula:

**Figure 4.1 Bandura's Triadic Reciprocal Model**



Source: Bandura (1986:24)

The above demonstration indicates that the interdependent factors of the triadic model are behavioral factors, personal factors and environmental factors (Bandura 1986:23). These are explained below:

- **Behavioral influence**

Behavioral influence is a form of self-regulation or self-observation of one's performance and adapting it strategically (Syed 2010). Bandura (1986:23) explained that human behavior could be explained in terms of uni-directional causation in which human behavior is portrayed as either being shaped and controlled by environmental factors or driven by internal dispositions. He further stated that behavioral patterns and environmental events operate as interacting determinants that influence each other bi-directionally. This implies that career pursuits require more than the specialized

knowledge and technical skills of an individual. So women's advancement in their careers partly depends on dealing with their behavior, taking charge of their inner emotional life by regulating their expressive behavior and strategically managing their means of coping. Research has shown that those who believe in their ability to exercise some measure of control over their behavior are more successful in their careers than individuals who believe that they are at the mercy of their emotional states (Bandura 1997 and Furnham and Petrides 2003). Consequently, if women can believe in their competence to understand and use expressive information, they would advance more easily in their careers.

- **Personal influence**

Personal factors condition human behavior in dispositional sources in the form of instincts, drives, traits, wisdom, thought, feelings, beliefs, self-perception, goal, intentions and other motivational forces within the individual (Bandura 1986:722). This means that women need to be conscious of the personal factors within which they operate and contribute, through their actions, to shape the conceptual hierarchies of the field of operation/career. Women's actions in this regard would contribute to shaping perceptions around the notions of culture and tradition. Bandura's (1986) view suggests that individuals have a fair amount of freewill, which they can exercise as they wish in order to achieve certain aims. It is thus this researcher's contention that Bandura's views are valuable in the career advancement of women because they highlight the importance of thought, wisdom, drive and self-perception in making progress.

- **Environmental influence**

An environment refers to the external factors that can affect a person's behaviour (Bandura 1986:722). The concept of environmental influence stipulates that one's

behaviour is influenced by external and physical factors, including incentive, motivation and facilitation (Rogers et al. 2004). Bandura (198:23) distinguishes between two types of environmental structures, the imposed physical and social environments. The Social environment includes family members, friends and colleagues, while the Physical environment is the size of a room, the ambient temperature or the availability of certain food. While environmental factors influence the actions that individuals take, these actions in turn contribute to shaping or modifying the way in which the social environment is structured. Through his notion of Triadic Reciprocal Determinism, Bandura (1986:23) explained how people influence and are influenced by their social environments.

In this regard, the researcher believes that the workplace environment or design needs to take into account how the work environment influences the behavior of people and how human behavior itself influences workplace performance. Joroff et al. (2003) argue that in the relationship between work, the workplace and the tools of work, the workplace becomes an integral part of work itself. It is thus the researcher's argument that for Bandura's Triadic Model to have its full value as a theory on career advancement, there needs to be more detailed studies focusing on the mutually influential causal relationship between the social environment of higher education and the actions of the agents involved.

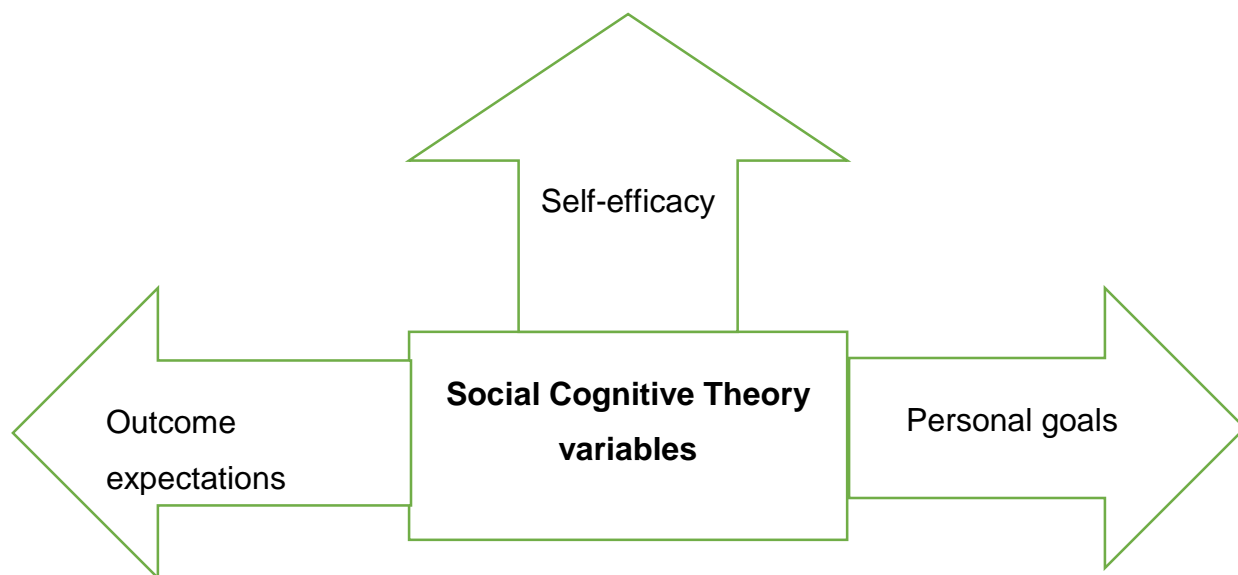
In conclusion, the cornerstone of Bandura's triadic model of reciprocal determinism is that while the social environment usually has an influence on people's behaviors, the cognitive choices that people make also contribute in shaping the social environment. In other words, in as much as structural factors play a part in facilitating or constraining the behaviour of individuals, the cognitive actions taken by people can also be influential in preserving or changing those same structural factors. It is in this regard that this researcher views the career advancement of women as a process in which women and their social environment mutually influence each other. This is significant



for the empowerment of women in different spheres of life in the sense that the actions they take within the context of the social forces they are confronted with can shape their social environment and as such, promote the advancement of other women in similar circumstances. Hence, this researcher believes that the success stories of women who have made it to the top in their careers can serve as positive motivation for other women to strive for advancement.

Generally, Social Cognitive Theory features several variables such as self-efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals through which people help to guide their own career development. Figure 4.2 further demonstrates how Social Cognitive Theory variables can help to understand the career advancement strategies of women in leadership at UoTs.

**Figure 4.2 Social Cognitive Theory variables**



Source: Self-generated by the researcher

This study examined how Social Cognitive Theory variables connect with women in leadership (for example, strategies, supports and barriers) within the process of career

progression or development. Research has found that Social Cognitive Theory has a positive effect on the career advancement of employees in terms of decisions and effectiveness (Nota, Ferrari, Solberg and Soresi 2007:5, Hampton 2005:23 and Patton Bartrum and Creed 2004:64). Lent et al. (2002:25) argued that the cognitive-person variables enable people to exercise agency, that is a person's control within their own career development. It is in this regard that the researcher believes that it would be important to use Social Cognitive Theory in this study because it is an appropriate framework to understand the factors that influence the career advancement of women in leadership positions in higher education in terms of their interests, choices and performance. This study would help to empower other women who are interested in leadership positions to advance to such leadership positions. A critical overview of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory's notions of self-efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals is analysed in order to highlight their relevance to the study.

#### **4.2.2 Self-efficacy**

As previously iterated, the under-representation of women in leadership positions has been a cause for concern. The role of self-efficacy as a facilitator of women in leadership is argued. Self-efficacy refers to the beliefs in one's abilities to organize and execute the course of action that is needed to produce a particular attainment (Bandura 1997:28). Bandura (1986) contends that the behavior of individuals is better predicted from their beliefs than from the actual consequences of their actions. Bandura (1986:390) further argues that having knowledge and skills does not on its own translate into action, because knowledge and action are mediated by self-referent thoughts.

This implies that a person may possess the knowledge and skills required to perform a task, but that person would only perform the action if s/he believes that s/he is capable of performing that action. Self-efficacy therefore underscores the fact that competent

functioning requires both skills and self-beliefs of efficacy to be effective (Bandura 1986: 391). This is because self-efficacy beliefs are important in motivating behavior and reflect an individual's confidence in performing career decision-making tasks, hence increasing human achievement and personal well-being in many ways (Lunenburg 2011).

In contrast, people who do not believe in their capabilities refrain from difficult tasks because they view them as personal threats. They lack aspiration and commitment, and they give up quickly in the face of adversity because they view insufficient performance as a lack of ability, thus easily losing faith in their capabilities. It is in this regard that this study looks at how women in leadership positions in higher education have managed to overcome such challenges to rise to the top.

Bandura's (1977, 1986 and 2001) concept of self-efficacy outlines four sources of efficacy beliefs. The first is *enactive attainment*, which refers to the past experiences of people and how they influence their subsequent belief or disbelief in their abilities. Bandura (1986:399) considers this to be the most powerful contributor to personal self-efficacy because repeated successes or failures tend to strengthen or lower people's beliefs in their abilities to perform competently. Successful experiences are therefore real evidence that individuals have the capabilities to succeed. Mastery experience is usually developed through self-regulating mechanisms, interaction and cognitive behaviour. These experiences endow individuals with the ability to create and implement the appropriate courses of action needed for success.

Secondly, *vicarious experiences* are another means of creating and strengthening efficacy beliefs (Bandura 1986:399). This can be achieved by observing other people who are similar to themselves, as this increases individuals' belief in their own abilities to perform similar tasks. Bandura (1986:399) contends that: "*Seeing or visualizing*

*other similar people perform successfully can raise self-perceptions of efficacy in observers that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities”.*

In contrast, observing the failures of others diminishes the judgement of similar individuals of their own efficacy and adversely affects their level of motivation. The relevance of this to career advancement is that people are usually inspired by the success stories of others to undertake certain actions, with the belief that those actions would bring them similar success. This is significant to the empowerment of career women because this researcher believes that the study of the advancement strategies of women who have made it to the top in their careers is likely to reveal factors that could motivate other women to aspire to executive management positions in their careers.

The third source of efficacy beliefs is *Social persuasion*, which refers to the act of verbally convincing people that they possess certain abilities (Bandura 1986:400). Social persuasion is one of the abilities needed to master particular activities. According to Bandura (1986:400): *“People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given tasks are likely to mobilize greater sustained effort than if they harbour self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when difficulties arise”.*

This highlights the role that verbal persuasion can play in motivating people towards success in their careers. By contrast, individuals who have been made to believe that they lack capabilities tend to avoid challenging activities that could cultivate their potential abilities.

Finally, people’s perceptions of their capabilities can be influenced by physiological and emotional states. In other words, people partly rely on their physical and mental states in assessing their own capabilities (Bandura 1986:401). Stress responses, tension and

moods are factors that can influence individuals' judgments of personal efficacy. In this regard, a positive mood can enhance self-efficacy beliefs while depressing mood can diminish judgments of efficacy. The fear of failure is also a feeling that may convince individuals of their inability to perform a particular task. This variable is significant to self-efficacy in the sense that it highlights the importance of people mastering their moods in order to control the adverse effects of such moods on their actions.

#### **4.2.3 Outcome expectations**

Outcome expectations are the beliefs that individuals have about the likely consequences of their actions. Bandura (1986) asserts that: *"Most human behavior is directed towards goals and outcomes projected into the future. By being represented cognitively in the present, conceived futures can have a causal impact on current behavior"*.

This implies that the outcome of people's actions is influenced by the beliefs that they have about their abilities. They therefore tend to avoid activities and situations where they do not believe in their abilities to succeed, and their levels of effort would be based on the outcome they expect. Bandura (1986) outlined three types of outcome expectations, namely physical (example monetary), social (example, approval), and self-evaluative (example, self-satisfaction) that may raise interests and importantly influence career behavior.

Within the Social Cognitive Theory framework, it is proposed that the anticipated outcomes of career-related activities have an influence on the level of interest that individuals portray in the said activities. Efficacy beliefs also influence the development of interest (Loeb 2016:6). In other words, when individuals believe in their personal efficacy, they tend to view desired outcomes as being more obtainable. The researcher

therefore believes that the relationship between outcome expectations and career interests of women in higher education deserve more attention.

According to the Social Cognitive Theory model, efficacy beliefs and outcome expectations are mutually influential with different strengths (Bakker and Demerouti 2014; Rich 2010 and Halbesleben 2010). When the anticipated outcome of a particular action is highly valued, people would still hesitate to undertake the said action if they do not believe in their capabilities. In the same way, even when people have strong efficacy beliefs regarding a particular action, they are likely not to undertake the action when negative outcomes are anticipated.

It is thus the view of this researcher that human self-beliefs and motivations could be understood using the concepts of self-efficacy and expected outcomes. This is because the two concepts are important in highlighting the influence of individuals' beliefs on their behavior and how these beliefs relate to work leadership.

#### **4.2.4 Personal goals**

According to Bandura (2006:164), "*People set themselves goals and anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions to guide and motivate their efforts*". This implies that the anticipated results of the actions of individuals can serve as motivating or demotivating factors in their actions. In other words, if a woman knows that her actions would result in her rising to a particular position in an organization, she can set goals for herself in order to accomplish what is needed to rise to that particular position. It is therefore important to analyze organizational performance through personal goals and organizational goals (Judge et al. 2001). Organizational performance has to do with determining the values of quantitative and qualitative performance indicators, for instance number of clients, profit or costs (Judge et al. 2001). Personal goals focus on individuals setting meaningful goals and measures of performance for their work. The

focus here is that women should actively engage in the setting of personal goals and take ownership of the final agreed-upon goals and measures in order to advance in their careers. Bandura's (1986) concept of personal goals is now receiving much attention these days. Therefore, there is need for managers and women to make concerted efforts in defining and appraising the goals and measuring performance indicators of their organizations.

In conclusion, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory is a framework that highlights how agents self-regulate their actions to respond appropriately to situational demands such as environmental influences (Pintrich and Schunk 2002). It is therefore relevant to career advancement because it underscores the way people exercise agency that puts them in control of their own career advancement (Lent 2002:25). This is relevant to the higher education context in that through the observation of the environment combined with his or her own thoughts and behaviors, an individual can alter his or her own self-regulatory purposes with the aim of attaining particular goals. It is in this regard that the current study adopts Social Cognitive Theory as an appropriate framework to understand the career advancement of women in leadership positions in higher education in terms of their interests, goals, choices and performances.

### **4.3 Application of the Social Cognitive Theory**

The Social Cognitive Theory has been used by various scholars to demonstrate agency in different areas of human activities (Kelly 2016; Shoffner et al 2015; Iroegbu 2015; Jackson 2012; Chronister and Mcwhirter 2003 and McCormick et al. 2002). In this regard, Baglama and Uzunboylu (2017) have underscored the Social Cognitive Theory notions of self-efficacy and outcome expectations in the career choices that people make. Through a quantitative study of the career decision-making of pre-service special education teachers in North Cyprus, Baglama and Uzunboylu (2017:7) argued that self-efficacy and outcome expectations have a significant influence on the

decisions made by teachers with regard to their career development. They then recommended that interventions that aim at increasing self-efficacy and outcome expectations amongst teacher candidates would go a long way to improving their ability to make decisions for their career development (Baglama and Uzunboylu 2017:8).

In a similar study, Kelly (2016) used Social Cognitive Theory to look at the causal factors underpinning the disproportionate representation of male and female undergraduate physics students in the USA. Her findings revealed that less than 20 percent of physics graduates in the USA are women (Kelly 2016:1). She argued that one of the reasons that female students have lower perceptions of their efficacy in physics than male students, was that they lack many female role models from whom to gain inspiration (Kelly 2016:4).

Also, Shoffner et al. (2015) have applied the Social Cognitive Theory notion of outcome expectations to the study of adolescents pursuing careers in STEM. The study revealed that the expected outcomes that the students imagined for themselves were motivating factors for their interest in STEM or the absence thereof (Shoffner et al. 2015:112). A significant finding of the study was that girls had more negative expectations with regard to a future in STEM. The authors argue that the reason for these negative expectations on the part of the girls could be a result of the fact that adolescence is a period in which girls usually exhibit fears for what the future holds for them (Shoffner et al. 2015:112). He therefore recommended that there should be interventions in schools to guide adolescents to have more positive expectations by helping them to manage the issue of uncertainties about their future (Shoffner et al. 2015:112).

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory has also been used to study the way women perform in their careers. In this regard, Chronister and Mcwhirter (2003) have applied Social Cognitive Theory to study the impact of domestic violence on the career achievements of women. Chronister and Mcwhirter (2003: 419) assert that there is a correlation between domestic violence and the self-efficacy beliefs and outcome



expectations of women who are victims of such situations. According to Chronister and Mcwhirter (2003: 420), this is because an abused woman's self-efficacy belief and outcome expectation for education, or career-related activities are likely to be influenced by the anticipated negative response of her abuser. They then recommend that the Social-Cognitive approach is necessary for the understanding of the situation of abused women and for designing models to empower such women in their careers. Significant in this study is that it highlights the fact that individual will without a facilitating context is not enough to help women advance in their careers. It is in this regard that this researcher believes that the career advancement of women is the result of the mutually-influential relationship between the individual efforts of women and the contexts within which they operate.

In a similar light, Iroegbu (2015) has underscored the influence of Bandura's self-efficacy on workplace performance. Through a review of various studies, he reveals that the level of self-efficacy of individuals has an influence on the way they performed at the work place. He however argues that such an influence is not in isolation, but rather in correlation with other contextual factors (Iroegbu 2015:173). In other words, for self-efficacy to be effective in enhancing the career achievements of individuals, other facilitating factors must also be involved. This highlights Bandura's triadic concept of the Social Cognitive Theory in which individual agents operate in a dialectic relationship with their environment (Bandura 1986:23). It is also significant to this study because the researcher is looking at how contextual factors and the individual efforts of women in higher education have enabled them to advance to leadership positions. With regard to the application of Social Cognitive Theory to leadership studies, McCormick et al. (2002) explored the link between Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory notion of self-efficacy and the performances of people in leadership positions. Through a survey of the leadership capability perception of psychology students in a USA-based university, they assert that the functional behavior of individuals in leadership positions is influenced by their perceived self-efficacy (McCormick et al. 2002:43). This implies

that leaders with more self-confidence in their capabilities tend to perform better in their leadership roles.

The study also revealed that women in leadership positions had less confidence in their abilities to perform than their male counterparts of the same age and educational levels (McCormick et al. 2002:43). This implies that female leaders tend to have lower levels of perceived self-efficacy than their male counterparts. The researchers attribute this difference to the influence of contextual factors in developing self-efficacy for men and women, and argue that it is this difference that makes women to be less likely to take up leadership roles than men (McCormick et al. 2002:44). This study is significant in that it sheds light on the impact of perceived self-efficacy on leadership performance, as well as how the difference thereof could affect the way men and women advance in their careers. This shows the need for professional women to develop their self-confidence if they hope to as advance to leadership positions in their careers.

On her part, Jackson (2012) examined how the careers of black women in leadership positions in the USA have been influenced by their self-efficacy beliefs. Through a survey of black women working in fortune 500 companies in the USA, Jackson (2012:124) revealed that black women in leadership positions have high levels of self-efficacy which enable them to advance in their careers, despite the challenges encountered in their work environment. The study also revealed that through their achievements, these successful women are influencing and impacting their environment (Jackson 2012:124). This is significant in the sense that it shows how the actions of individual agents contribute in shaping the environments within which they work. It is in this regard that this researcher believes that the success stories of women in leadership positions in higher education can create a better environment for other women to be motivated to aspire to leadership positions in their own careers.

In conclusion, Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory has been widely applied to different studies to show how individual and environmental factors combine to influence the actions of people. Therefore, this researcher is confident that it is a reliable tool with which to study the strategies that women in higher education use to advance to leadership positions. The fact that the theory has been widely used would also enable this researcher to compare her findings with those of other studies.

#### **4.4 Criticisms of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory**

Despite the contributions of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, there have been some criticisms about his works. One of the most prominent critics of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory has been Lee, who has criticized Bandura's theory for lacking details in the areas of operational, environmental and biological or hormonal factors. On the idea of the operation, he asserts that it is often challenging to implement Social Cognitive Theory in total because of the complex structure. Thus, one often finds that only self-efficacy is actually proven in practice as it is the most easily aspects of the theory to be implemented (Lee 2010). He questioned Bandura's assertion that social cognitive theory suggests a dynamic interaction between the environment and the individual. He argued that the behavior of many people is much more stable regardless of the situation in which they find themselves, and that simple changes in the environment do not always lead to changes in people's behavior (Lee 2010). Lee (2010) further argues that Social Cognitive Theory places so much emphasis on cognitive abilities and it overlooks biological or hormonal determinants that can shape the way people reason and make decisions regardless of experiences or perception. For his part, Hawkins (1995) argued that self-efficacy is rather a predictor and not a determinant of human behavior. Hawkins (1995:237) explained that studies have applied self-efficacy to the management of various social problems to contend that the theory was useful as a predictor of behavior rather than a cause. Bandura (1995) responded to this criticism by arguing that Hawkins interpreted his views out of context.

He then enlisted a number of self-efficacy studies to show a strong relationship between self-efficacy and human behavior.

Garbharran (2013) has also criticized Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory for being essentially theoretical with no operational model provided for its application. Garbharran (2013:11) argued that in his presentation of the theory, Bandura failed to clearly explain the specific variables that constitute the primary predictors of human behavior, which makes the theory difficult to test empirically as it is likely to be interpreted differently. She however admits that the theory is a useful tool that could be used to predict specific instances of human behaviour (Garbharran 2013:20).

Despite the criticisms of Bandura's theory, this researcher still believes that the theory is an appropriate tool that will enable her to achieve the aim of this study. In spite of their criticisms, Bandura's critics do not discard the utility of his theory as a tool with which to study factors that influence human behaviour and action. Furthermore, Social Cognitive Theory has received wide recognition in the academic community and has been extensively used to study the mutually-influential relationship between the behaviours and actions of individuals and the contexts within which they operate. It is thus this researcher's view that Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory is a reliable framework with which to study the strategies that women in higher education use to advance to leadership positions in their careers.

## **4.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined Albert Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and its relevance to analyzing the career advancement strategies of women in higher education. This focus was inspired by the fact that a vast number of women occupy lower position in higher education in many societies. Their failure to advance to decision-making and leadership roles is disadvantageous to improving economies. The researcher believes

that more women taking up leadership responsibilities does make a difference in society in general and higher education in particular. Literature on this chapter revolved more around Social Cognitive Theory, with specific focus on how self-efficacy, outcome expectations and personal goals can enable women to aspire to leadership positions. This is because to a large extent, efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations and personal goals can determine the actions that people choose to undertake; the level of effort that they spend in pursuit of a goal, and the level of perseverance that they demonstrate in the face of obstacles and failures (Bandura 2001). The next chapter will provide a detail discussion about the methodology and design that will be used to produce data.

## **CHAPTER FIVE – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the research methodology adopted in this study. The study aimed to investigate the career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa. The research approach chosen for the study is qualitative. The subsequent section outlines the research design, target population, sampling method, measuring instrument, recruitment process, data collection method, data analysis, limitations, confidentiality and anonymity, validity and reliability, and ethical considerations. The research design ensured that the data collection, findings, conclusion and recommendations were plausible.

### **5.2 Research design**

Before discussing the research design, it is relevant to define 'research design' and describe the characteristics of good research. According to Mouton (2011:5) and Creswell (2008:3), plans and procedures of how a researcher intends to conduct research are known as research design. Research design can also be defined as a scheme for the gathering, measurement and analyzing of data, based on the research questions of the study (Sekaran and Bougie 2013:95). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:96-97), there are basically two different types of research designs: quantitative and qualitative designs. Sekaran and Bougie (2013:96-97), describe the various designs as per the discussion below:

### **5.2.1 Types of research designs**

There are two major types of research designs namely: quantitative and qualitative designs. The basic difference between these two designs is that quantitative research offers results with statistics and qualitative research uses words to describe occurrences (Sekaran and Bougie 2013:103). In order to understand the career advancement strategies of women in higher education leadership, a case study was used. A case study according to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:103), is an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context. A case study, is considered to be suitable for this study because it allowed the researcher to examine a particular instance in a great deal of depth, rather than looking at multiple instances rapidly (Rule and Case 2011:7). It is in this regard that instead of examining the career advancement strategies of women in all universities, this study focused on all the Universities of Technology in South Africa only. The reason for using UoTs is for the purpose of convenience because it would be challenging to study all the universities in South Africa. Secondly, in terms of section 23(1) of the Higher Education Act of 1997 (Act no. 101 of 1997), Technikon universities were to transform as public higher education institutions by January 2005 and became Universities of Technology. This means that the transformation as Universities of Technology has just been for 14 years as compared to the other traditional Universities in South Africa. Thirdly, all UoTs are formerly merged Technikons with diverse historical backgrounds from the apartheid era. Lastly, UoTs are still under the influence of deeply gendered histories as being a masculine dominated space (Chiloane-Tsoka 2016).

The study was exploratory and a qualitative method was used to gather information from women leaders about their experiences in leadership positions, as well as their career advancement strategies. Qualitative research allows for the researcher to explore people's perceptions and experiences as these may be difficult to measure (Marshall and Rossman, 2011:23). Howitt (2010) notes that "qualitative research generates extensive data that is also rich and it provides complex textual descriptions

of how people experience a given research issue”. The qualitative method used to collect data was semi-structured interviews, either telephonic or face-to-face interviews. A thematic method was used to analyze data and themes that emerged were organized and coded accordingly.

### **5.3 Population and target population**

According to Gerard (2013:76), the term ‘population’ in social science refers to the units of interest to the researcher. A population can also be defined as the complete set of group members (Saunders and Lewis 2012:132). The population of this study were all women at UoTs. Furthermore, the term ‘target population’ refers to the entire number of respondents that meet the chosen set of criteria. In this study, the targeted population consisted of all women in executive positions (vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors, registrars and deputy registrars, directors and deans and deans) at all the UoTs in South Africa. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:243), a target population is necessary because it is not easy to collect data from the entire population. This helps to reduce fatigue and errors.

### **5.4 Sampling method**

The process used to select the participants of a study is known as the sampling method. The sampling technique used in this study is the non-probability sampling technique. Non-probability sampling focuses on the units that are investigated and judgement is based on the researcher (Sekaran and Bougie 2013:254). Since there are limited women in executive management positions (vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors, registrars and deputy registrars, directors and deans) at the UoTs in South Africa (34%), it was reasonable to include the entire population. A purposive procedure was used to select women in leadership positions at these Universities of Technology in South Africa. Purposive sampling is a technique where “she or he is



using their judgement to actively choose those who will be best able to help answer the research question and meet the objectives” (Saunders and Lewis 2012:138). Purposive sampling is therefore preferable for this study because participants were subjectively selected by the researcher as they were considered to be individuals who had the knowledge, expertise, information and experience to contribute to the success of the study. The researcher was convinced that they have rich and valuable information due to their experience in leadership responsibilities and the fact that they are women and understand what it means to work in gendered surroundings, in which they have managed to withstand their leadership roles. Table 5.1 below demonstrates how samples were selected.

**Table 5.1 Total number of female staff in executive management at UoTs**

Names of Universities	Executive management (including deans)		Total number of Sample drawn (Female).
	Male	Female	
Durban University of Technology.	17	5	5
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	10	7	7
Central University of Technology	14	6	6
Mangosuthu University of Technology	11	3	3
Tshwane University of Technology	40	14	14
Vaal University of Technology	9	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>37</b>

Source: Self-generated by the researcher

Table 5.1 shows that the total number of male staff occupying executive management positions at all the UoTs is 108, while females is 37. This shows that women constitute

just 34% of executive management positions in those universities. All 37 female staff were sampled. It was reasonable to use these universities (UoTs) because research of this nature has not been conducted at these universities. This number (sample size) was obtained from the institutional website lists of women in executive management and statistics from the human resource offices of these UoTs (2016-2017). There were four aspects were considered before using this sample size, namely precision, confidence, variability in the population and cost consideration (Sekaran and Bougie 2013:262). It is the researcher's view that this sample size increases the possibility of producing more reliable results.

## **5.5 Measuring instrument**

The various methods through which a researcher obtains data from respondents for the research work is refer to as measuring instrument (Gray 2009; and Gerard 2013). The measuring instrument used in this study was an interview. The reason for using interviews was to solicit information from participants through verbal interaction. For instance, the researcher posed questions to the participants and recorded the answers. Verbal interaction or personal contact between the respondents and researcher enables the researcher to explain confusing and ambiguous questions in detail (Gerard 2013). Besides, it produces high response rates. A tape recorder was the only material used during the interview. The interview questions had just one type of scaling (nominal scale). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013), a nominal scale describes characteristics that have no numerical value. It is sometimes referred to as a categorical scale. The questions were divided into 6 sections, which measured various themes as illustrated below:

Section A – Biographical information;

Section B – Challenges faced by women at UoTs;

Section C – Perception of women and leadership aspirations;

Section D – Strategies used by women to advance in their careers;

Section E – Organizational factors that hinder and /or promote the advancement of women at UoTs;

Section F – Upward mobility of women in higher education.

## **5.6 Recruitment process**

The researcher started by writing a letter to all the UoTs' research offices in South Africa requesting permission to conduct the research at their institutions. For the committee to make an informed decision, a copy of the research proposal, proof of ethical clearance, a copy of the research questions, a letter of information and informed consent, Minutes from the Faculty Research Committee and a covering letter from the supervisor and the researcher were provided. The researcher received the letter of permission after one month via email. After permission was granted by these universities, the researcher personally phoned, emailed and approached the participants in their various offices requesting an appointment to be interviewed. A letter was sent to them prior to the interview, explaining the purpose of the study. It also included the researcher's details, letter of informed consent to participate, letter of permission and ethical consideration. The respondents who were willing to participate were interviewed based on their appointment schedule.

## **5.7 Data collection method**

A survey was used for data collection via interviews. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:102), "a survey is a system for collecting information from or about people to describe, compare or explain their knowledge, attitudes and behavior". A survey was used because the researcher wanted a comprehensive and detailed view, as well as factual information from the population sampled. According to Denscombe (2013:13-48), there are four main advantages to be gained from the use of surveys in social science research. Surveys focus on empirical data that are based on real-world

observations. In other words, surveys are associated with getting information “straight from the horse’s mouth” (Denscombe 2013:13-48). A survey can collect both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data is used for a particular method such as self-completion questionnaires, which can generate large volumes of quantitative data that can be subjected to statistical analysis. Additionally, the good thing about the survey is that it can also produce qualitative data (Denscombe 2013:13-48). Another advantage of using a survey is that it has wide and inclusive coverage, especially for small-scale interview surveys. This is because the sampling techniques are used based on the researcher’s choice and allows them to build up a picture based on data that includes the full range of relevant items or people (Denscombe 2013:13-48). Lastly, survey research is sometimes an efficient and relatively inexpensive means of collecting data. For instance, the only cost involved in a small-scale survey can often be the researcher’s time. While a large-scale survey can produce a mountain of data in a short time at a relatively low cost. According to Denscombe (2014:344) and May (2013:102), there are different types of surveys, namely:

- **Telephone surveys:** This method is very popular and about 95% of the population can be reached by telephone (Neuman 2014:345). Neuman (2014) defines telephone surveys or interviews as a process whereby an interviewer calls a respondent (usually at home), asks questions and records answers.
- **Mail or self-administered surveys:** According to May (2013:102), mail or self-completion questionnaires are intended for the respondent to fill out themselves, with a covering letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaires and their confidentiality and anonymity. They are administered by giving or mailing questionnaires directly to respondents (Neuman 2014:345).
- **Face to face surveys:** This type of survey involves direct contact between the researcher and the participants with various forms of questionnaires or interviews (Denscombe 2013:16).

- **Observational surveys:** According to Denscombe (2013:16), observational surveys are used to make detailed, factual records of specific behaviours, events and settings. This generally involves a systematic behaviour schedule to gather the data.
- **Web survey:** This type of survey is normally done using the internet or email. It is done by the presentation of a page of paper, but on a computer screen (Neuman 2014:347).
- **Survey of documents:** This type of survey is to access documents such as historical documents, newspapers, company reports, committee minutes, as well as photographs and films. Authorization to view the documents is needed because some of the documents, such as health records or commercially and politically sensitive information, might be restricted for ethical reasons (Denscombe 2013:18).

In this study, the data collection method used by the researcher was interviews, specifically telephone and face-to-face interviews. An interview is a purposeful conversation that is directed by someone in order to get information from the other. it is usually between two people, although it may sometimes involve more people (Bogdan and Biklen 2003:45). Telephone interviews were used in four of the UoTs (CPUT, TUT, VUT and CUT) that were far away and costly for the researcher to travel to, while face-to-face interviews were used in the remaining two universities (DUT and MUT) because the researcher was based in this province and it was not too costly to carry out. With these methods, the researcher asked the participants questions and recorded the answers. Face to face and telephonic interviews were conducted, which presented the opportunity to learn as much as possible about the interviewees' perceptions of themselves, the challenges that they faced and the advancement strategies used to advance in rising to positions of leadership, thus providing rich data. The interviews also provided a platform for conversation and interaction between the interviewer and interviewee. A total of 25 out of 37 interviews were conducted with

women in executive management in at all the Universities of Technology in South Africa. The interview sessions lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. A digital recorder was used to record all interviews, which were transcribed to facilitate data analysis. The reason for choosing this option is that the women in executive positions usually have very busy schedules. The questions were structured based on achieving study objectives. All questions were in English and were expected to be answered in English since the medium of communication is English. The questions were clear and easy to answer. The place and time of the interview were determined by the participants since they usually have very busy schedules.

## **5.8 Data analysis**

According to Hatch (2002), data analysis is a systematic approach for examining, organizing and categorizing data in search of meaning. Data analysis is manipulating data so that the research question can be answered, usually by identifying important patterns. In other words, it interprets and draws conclusions from the mass of collected data (Bellamy 2011). The data in this study was analyzed using the thematic method. Thematic method identifies themes and patterns of meaning across a data set in relation to research questions (Braun and Clarke (2013:24). Ideas were then organized into categories such that ideas in one category referred to similar themes. In this regard, the researcher started by reading interview notes and listening to the audio tapes, then data was sorted into different categories. The different types of responses that were recorded were noted down on separate sheets of paper. After noting them down, the researcher then separated the data into groups or themes that shared similar characteristics. It started with the larger categories and then proceeded to smaller ones. For instance, the themes that emerged were (a) Challenges faced by women at UoTs; (b) Perceptions of women and leadership aspirations; (c) Strategies used by women to advance in their careers; (d) organizational factor that hinder and/or promote

the advancement of women in at UoTs; and (e) the upward mobility of women in higher education.

The themes that emerged from the challenges faced by women at UoTs were: Racism and socialization; Maternity leave, age and family attachment; stereotypes against women being leaders; lack of confidence; and unwillingness to take leadership roles. The themes that emerged from the strategies used by women to advance in their careers were: timeframe and education; planning ahead; family support; and institutional support. Finally, the interpretations and explanations were inductive, whereby the analysis was shaped by the researcher's standpoint and disciplinary knowledge (Braun and Clarke 2013:174).

## **5.9 Delimitations**

According to Simon (2011:9), delimitation refer to the characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of a study and are within the researcher's control. Participants in this study are delimited to female staff occupying executive management positions at UoTs in South Africa. Mid-management female staff and male staff are excluded from the study. Also, the study is delimited to examining the experiences and advancement strategies of women in leadership positions only. Finally, the study sampled 37 female executive management staff with the assumption that the results would facilitate the upward mobility of other women in higher education.

## **5.10 Limitations**

Limitations are shortcomings in a study that are out of the researcher's control (Simon 2011:10). The limitation of this study is that the population studied is female staff only. Male staff viewpoints were not included, which could be examined in a broader study of the same topic. Secondly, the fact that the study was limited to Universities of

Technology in South Africa implies that the results can only describe the career advancement strategies of female staff at UoTs and not at other higher education institutions. Lastly, the results of the findings are limited to the period in which the study was conducted.

### **5.11 Confidentiality and anonymity**

Confidentiality refers to how the researcher holds the data in confidence and keeps it from public consumption (Henn, Weinstein and Foard 2009:94). The transcripts are kept in a confined place, to be destroyed after the period of 5 years. Anonymity means that the project does not collect identifying information of individual subjects (Henn, Weinstein and Foard 2009). In this study, participants who agreed to be interviewed were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the research. No names were required during the interviews or mentioned when analysing the data. No identification of any sort was asked and no identity of any respondents were known. The information received during the study was only used for research purposes and cannot be released for any employment-related performance evaluation, promotion or disciplinary purpose. The reports were kept in the department. Confidentiality and anonymity are very important in research for three main reasons: to improve the quality and honesty of responses, especially on sensitive issues; to encourage participants in the study and to improve the representativeness of the sample; and to protect a person's privacy (De Vaus 2014:59).

### **5.12 Validity**

Validity and reliability are elements that determine the quality of the measurement instrument. According to Treiman (2009: 243), an indicator is said to be valid if it adequately measures the underlying concept. According to De Vaus (2014:51), the three basic ways to assess validity are:



- **Criterion validity:** This approach compares how people answer a new measurement of a concept with existing, well-accepted measures of the concept. In other words, it compares the performance of a measure against a pre-determined set of criteria (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner 2013: 80). If the answers on the new and established measures are highly correlated, then it is usually assumed that the new measure possesses criterion validity (Gray 2009:157).
- **Content validity:** This approach emphasizes the extent to which indicators measure the different aspects of the concept. Content validity refers to the extent to which the items on a test are fairly representative of the entire domain the test seeks to measure (Nauman 2014).
- **Construct validity:** According to De Vaus (2014:51), this approach evaluates a measure by how well the measure conforms to theoretical expectations. Wagner, Kawulich and Garner (2013: 80) also note that construct validity refers to the extent to which the operationalization of the research constructs taps into the actual theoretical constructs the researcher is trying to measure.

The validity of the study was tested using content validity. This method was used because it assisted in testing the usefulness of a research model. It measured what the researcher thinks it should measure via designed questions. Content validity was measured through interview questions. For example, the purpose, objectives and design of the research was clearly defined and argued to the literature reviewed.

### 5.13 Reliability

Reliability is defined as the degree to which an instrument measures a concept the same way each time it is used, under the same conditions with the same respondent (Wagner, Kawulich and Garner 2013:80). Reliability measures the dependability or trustworthiness of an assessment (Bhattacharyya 2010: 318). According to Neuman

(2011), reliability refers to the consistency with which measures are used. Neuman (2014:213-14) states that in order to achieve reliability, there are four things to consider namely:

- A clear conceptualized construct: reliability increases when each measure indicates one and only one concept;
- The use of a precise level of measurement: an increase in the level of measurement is more likely to be reliable than a less precise measurement because the latter picks up less detailed information;
- Multiple indicators: another way to increase reliability is to use multiple indicators because two or more indicators of the same construct are better than one; and
- Pilot test: reliability can be improved by first using a pilot version of a measurement before applying the final version.

To confirm the accuracy of the instrument and to ensure the reliability of the study, the above methods of testing reliability were taken into consideration. For instance, pre-testing was conducted with 5 female staff in leadership positions at DUT. The aim was to estimate how reliably the instrument would measure the same subject under the same conditions. In other words, it was to determine if there was consistency. Also, in order for the study to be reliable, the questions were constructed properly to ensure easy understanding. Lastly, the fact that the interviews were carefully recorded, transcribed and analyzed implies that the study is reliable.

## **5.14 Ethics in research**

Ethics in research refers to the expected societal norms of behaviour while conducting research (Sekaran and Bougie 2013:13). According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013:13), ethical conduct applies to the organization and the members that sponsor the research; the researchers undertaking the research; and the respondents who provide them with the essential data. According to De Vaus (2014:56), there are five professional codes

of ethics to be considered towards survey participants, namely: voluntary participation; Informed consent; no harm; anonymity and confidentiality; and privacy.

In this study, the aforementioned professional codes of ethics were considered. For instance, participants' rights and freedom were taken into account. Their confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and voluntary participation were clearly explained to them in the letter of informed consent before the research was conducted. As such, no name of any sort was required on the interview questions. No harm was incurred.

Additionally, three sets of ethical considerations in research were taken into account. For instance, technical considerations such as sample design and questionnaire construct was done. Secondly, practical considerations such as budgets, deadlines and the purpose of the research were also considered. Lastly, ethical approval was sought as per UoTs' research protocol.

## **5.15 Conclusion**

This chapter described the research methodology used in the research to achieve the final result. The work of the following writers: Neuman (2014); Sekaran and Bougie (2013); May (2013), Daniel (2012); and Denscombe (2014) gave the researcher a better understanding on how to formulate and conduct research. The study used a qualitative approach and samples were obtained from women in leadership positions at all the Universities of Technology in South Africa using a non-probability sampling technique. Data was collected using the interview method (telephone and face-to-face semi structured interviews). The interview was used to enable the respondents to freely express themselves in their own words. With these methods, the researcher asked the participants questions and recorded the answers. Data was analyzed using the thematic method. The next chapter (Chapter 6) presents the findings of the analysis.

## **CHAPTER SIX – RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the findings obtained from the interviews of this study, which aimed at finding out the career advancement strategies of women in leadership positions at Universities of Technology in South Africa. This is because women in higher education leadership as a population have not been extensively studied as a whole and at UoTs in particular, which represents a gap in higher education literature (Speradino 2011; Mayet 2015; Cheung and Halper 2010). The researcher believes that focusing on the advancement strategies of women in leadership would provide more effective opportunities in handling the challenges women face in advancing to top positions in higher education. Moreover, the researcher was particularly interested in the first-hand accounts of women at UoTs of how they navigated the leadership web successfully. In trying to identify these advancement strategies, telephonic and face-to-face interviews were used to collect data. The section that follows analyses the recording of the respondents per variable per section. In other words, it discusses the results in relation to each research question and then further analyzes according to the thematic categories that emerged in the study. The study had six sections and each section thematic categories were identified and explained.

### **6.2 Section A: Biographical data**

This section summarizes the biographical characteristics of the respondents. The questions asked were as follows:

### **6.2.1 What is your highest academic qualification?**

The purpose of this question was to find out whether participants have the necessary qualification (postgraduate qualification) to occupy the position they were occupying. The responses show that a majority (72%) of the participants had a PhD and 28% have a Master's degree. This shows that the participants qualified to hold the positions they had at the university because they possessed the necessary academic qualifications. This finding confirms studies by Ribeiro, Bosch and Beckers (2013:14) and Awung and Dorasamy (2015) which indicated that the progress of women in higher education required the right qualification. It was reported that the reward package received for an article was not sufficient to motivate them to advance in their careers. Clearly, participants' qualifications and experience contributed to their advancement to leadership positions. This is particularly relevant in the sense that without the appropriate qualifications and experience in the workplace, it would be challenging for women to actually handle leadership positions effectively. It takes the right qualifications and experience to actually know what is intended to be done. Knowing what is required would therefore help women, which implies that there is need for women to further their education so that they can qualify to hold or apply for leadership positions.

### **6.2.2 How long have you been working in higher education?**

The purpose of this question was to find out if the duration of service of the women in leadership positions may be one of the reasons that may have influenced their progress to higher positions. The responses showed that these female employees had worked in these universities for a period of between 20 to 35 years. This implies that the duration of work plays a greater role in the rise to positions of leadership in higher education. This advancement possibly came after they had gained experience, completed additional training, earned a degree or received certification. It is in this light

that Nguyen (2012) and Blouie (2013:6) assert that career progression usually entails additional education and more experience.

### **6.3 Section B: Challenges faced by women at UoTs**

This section examines the challenges that participants of the study faced in rising to positions of leadership in higher education. In trying to find out the causes of the lack of progression of women to leadership positions at the UoTs from the data collected, the following questions were asked:

#### **6.3.1 What is your opinion about women under-representation in leadership position?**

The first question focused on opinions on women under-representation in leadership positions. The responses to the questions were as follows: Unequal treatment in the workplace: Lack of motivation; work and family attachment; and lack of policy support for women on contracting.

- **Unequal treatment in the workplace**

Participants responded that women's lack of progress to leadership positions was because men did not take women serious at the work-place. They claimed that fewer women are in higher positions because they are victims of unequal treatment and discrimination in the workplace. Participants felt that discrimination was hidden in the organizational structures or implied in the attitudes of those in power. One interviewee stated that:

*"women are not treated equally in various institutions and I think the reason is because the interviewers on the panel for appointment are*

*mainly men.... they are biased, they have a negative attitude towards female heads. “*

Similarly, another participant explained the unequal treatment of women as follows:

*“.... The fact that fewer women are in leadership positions is due to the proportion of men to women. It just happens that there are more men in top positions and they decide who receives a promotion. So when they determine who is eligible for a certain position, they are more likely to choose men.”*

These responses confirm Wechsler's (2015:13) claim that leadership positions still work better for men than women because centralized critical positions in organizations are mostly occupied by men, and this gives them access to valuable information concerning job openings, pending projects, and managerial decisions, which are often shared through the “old boys network”. This implies that access to equal jobs is still an illusion and that gender bias and favouritism still exist when it comes to the promotion of women. Despite the unequal treatment of women in the workplace, the number of women pursuing leadership and managerial positions has increased in comparison to the past (Grant Thornton Report 2012; Ademiluyi and Adedamola 2010). This could imply that women have developed strategies to overcome this barrier.

- **Lack of motivation**

Participants in this study believed that the lack of motivation was a reason why women were less represented in leadership positions. This lack of motivation is because some cultures still view women's main role in the society as homemakers and looking after their family. They noted that some women believe that they should not be too involved in leadership roles because their husbands and children are supposed to be their primary concern. They believe that a leadership role takes up a lot of their time. One participant stated that:

*"Cultural background has influenced women in a negative way, and it has affected our motivation to accept or apply for certain positions. We grew up in families where women were not leaders. So this affects us. We feel we should be led. Women are naturally not bold. Women feel inferior naturally and believe that men should be leaders."*

The above responses show that women lack motivation to rise to leadership positions because it is embedded in the way they were socialized. This thinking appears to be common amongst most studies regarding women's under-representation in leadership positions (Odhaiambo 2011; Ely, Ibarra and Kolb 2011; Botool and Sajid 2013; Chiloane-Tsoka 2016; Gabind 2011; Williams, Kilanski and Muller 2014). Their findings show that cultural and traditional obstacles continue to shape the career progress of women in the sense that more women continue to be visible at the lower levels of organizations, while few of them are applying for leadership positions. This is because ccultural factors have created the impression that women are not suitable for executive management positions, as their main duties are supposed to be about taking care of the home (Botool and Sajid 2013 and Chiloane-Tsoka 2016). Coward (2010:4) asserts that these gender roles are carried into the workplace where most men still believe that a woman is supposed to be a sub-ordinate and not the boss. The researcher believes that men and women are equally capable of handling leadership positions if they are fully committed. Therefore, there is a need for women to understand their culture and design strategies that would allow them to progress in their careers.

- **Work and family attachment**

Another reason for the lack of progress of women to leadership positions was the work-family attachment. A majority of the respondents reported that the fear of not being able to cope with work and family responsibilities was a reason for women under-representation. One participant said the following about work and family attachment:



*"Most women do not want to apply for the posts perhaps because they will be posted somewhere far away from their family. This is the main reason why some women who are now qualified to be in leadership still do not want to lead. They sometimes inform me that they are not willing to take the posts because they already have too much work as wife, mother and career woman."*

This implies that work and family attachment contribute in the persistent under-representation of some women in leadership positions. The prioritization of family roles at the expense of their career development by women is not new. For instance, Poor and Brown (2013:14) assert that many women struggle to meet up with early morning meetings because of the time they spend in preparing breakfast and children for school. Some women actually resign from their jobs because they are highly affected by the dilemma that they face. Wechsler (2015:13) also asserts that family responsibilities make women to be less mobile than their male counterparts and this compels them to avoid taking positions that would require them to work longer days and travel often. Therefore, there is a need for women to exercise their freedom of movement as men do.

- **Lack of policy support for women on contract**

The finding revealed that insufficient policies to support women on contract could be the causes for women's under-representation in leadership positions. One participant said the following:

*"With regard to policies being in place to support women, I can say that some women are not aware of them, especially those on contract. And even if they know, not all the policies favor women who are on contract"*

*(e.g. leaves and benefits) .... So this woman cannot do well with this hindrance”.*

This implies that the Employment Equity Act (No 55 of 1998) which stipulates that *“employment practices and procedures and any barriers which might be disadvantageous to people such as women, disabled people and black people has not been achieved”*. This could be the reason why Davidson and Burke (2011) note that organizations and employers around the world do not have the same level of interest and support in developing policies and programmes to enhance the career advancement of women. Therefore, there is a need to come up with policies that ensure equal opportunities for all staff, such as policies on study and sabbatical leave. This would assist women who aspire to advance in their careers.

On a contrary, the study also found that some participants were not in favor of policies whose sole purpose is to increase the number of women in a position. For instance, one participant explained that:

*“I did not like the fact that some policies are designed to increase women’s participation in leadership positions because it shows that they do not take women’s leadership qualities into consideration. I sometimes see that some executive appointment policies are designed to include a woman. I see that they are not genuine. They seem forced”.*

This shows that women want to be promoted based on merit and not favors, just like their male counterparts. This is significant because it would go a long way in changing the way women perceive themselves, as well as give them confidence in their own capacity to be effective leaders. It also confirms the UNESCO Reports (2012) assertion that women perform the same as men and at times even surpass them when it comes to earning university degrees, but lag behind in terms of career progress. The

researcher believes that having a qualified leader is more important than increasing the number of women in leadership positions.

### **6.3.2 What challenges have you faced in rising to the position of leadership at your university?**

The second question was about participants' challenges faced in rising to positions of leadership at their universities. This question was investigated because research has shown that it is challenging for women to advance to leadership positions in higher education (Airini et al. 2011; Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011 and Hune 2011). The researcher wanted to find out if it is also the case for women at UoTs. The most common challenges that women face in rising to positions of leadership at their universities are: racism and socialization, maternity leave, age and family commitments, gender stereotypes at work and lack of confidence and unwillingness to lead.

#### **• Socialization and racism**

The majority of respondents explained that racism and socialization were their biggest challenges. They noted that they were being undermined by both men and women when they first applied for positions of leadership. One participant said the following about socialization:

*"I think men don't take women seriously and as a result of that, women are given supportive roles. You find that most women are just given supportive roles in organizations, instead of being given leadership roles. If you are not taken seriously, its either you get discouraged and you stop trying. Or that takes the worst out of you in a sense that you find yourself having to fight all the time. You cross a line of being assertive and find yourself being aggressive because you know you can make a difference but because you are not taken seriously, you are not given the*

*opportunity. So, it can work in both ways that you give up and settle with whatever, or because you have told yourself that you want to get there, you change your personality because you feel “I deserve this,” then you become aggressive. Being aggressive is something that men can use against you because there are these stereotypes that men have against women. Men can be aggressive and that would be regarded as being OK. It becomes problematic when it is a woman who is aggressive and then men would start complaining. I think for me that is a major challenge faced by women”.*

This view is in line with Alvesson and Billing's (2009) assertion that leadership positions are more demanding for women than men. Women encounter problems such as communication on the job, lack of support from superiors, performing better than men in order to be evaluated as equally good and working longer hours per week. This causes high levels of stress for women in top positions. The researcher believes that women have limited individual choices about their career progression because they are socialised into a society of patriarchy. Therefore, there is need for women to believe in their abilities and design strategies that would enable them to advance in their careers, without trying to be like men.

In addition, it was discovered that racism also hindered the career advancement of these women in rising to positions of leadership at their universities. Participants explained that this was evident in the way they were treated, based on their race. The following was said about racism:

*“I was being undermined by other races when I applied for this position because I am a black woman. I was rejected twice when I first applied to become a leader. So its racism”.*

This could be the reason why Meera and Deo (2014) noted that women in the United States are victims of institutional bias which begins at the recruitment stage and

continues throughout the women's careers. The study also reveals that higher education is "*fundamentally connected to the political system and to the political economy*". This may imply that access to equal job opportunities is not fully achieved at UoTs. Thus the need for management to look into this problem.

- **Maternity leave**

Another challenge that came up was the issue of maternity leave. Some women stated that while women were on maternity leave, their fellow male colleagues were progressing. As a result, when it comes to promotion, these men always get promoted because they have been on duty and were publishing (Wechsler 2015 and Valerio 2009). So, those breaks in between delay their progress as women. The following was said about maternity leave:

*"Women's under-representation in leadership positions is due to the fact that every time there is a call for a position, you find that women are not ready, especially in higher education, because this publishing of articles is really leaping. In most cases, women publish less than men because of other responsibilities that they have, that men don't have. Women have to take these leaves, like maternity leaves: Men are progressing whilst you are on maternity leave. As a result, when it comes to promotion, the promotion criteria will always favor men because they are ahead of the majority of women, as the majority of women are married and have kids. So, those breaks in between, delay the progress of women."*

This is indicative of how family life restrains networking and recognition in the career world of women who are on maternity leave. However, despite these challenges, the higher education sector boasts women who have advanced to leadership positions as a result of their outstanding research records (Morley 2013; Reilly and Quirin 2015).

- **Age and family commitment**

Furthermore, age and family commitment were some of the factors that delay women in advancing to positions of leadership. The study revealed that women were not given the chance to lead because being young means that they will one day get married, have children and that will distract them from their jobs. One participant said the following about age:

*“The issue is ...the first challenge is access to leadership positions. Because in these positions, every time you think of a position that is vacant, you think of a male who can occupy it. If you apply for it, already you are at a disadvantage as a woman because they don’t think you qualify or you will do the job. If you are young, they think you are young...you will get married, you are going to get children and they will take you away from the job and you won’t do it properly. If you are old, they think you are going to bring your own challenges, your baggage into the job. They think you are going to tell them that you have to go, you have family problems or your children are sick”.*

This finding is not new as Brown (1997) has revealed that organizations sometimes discriminate against women because of age, because women in higher education often start their profession late in life, only to find that they cannot be appointed to positions which have an upper age limit of 35. It is surprising that the age factor is still a hindrance to women’s advancement in today’s society. Therefore, it would be important for management to look into this issue.

Also, family attachment was found to be a challenge to these women in applying for leadership positions at the UoTs, because they felt that they were not ready to take up leadership posts away from their spouses and children. They noted that when it came

to choosing between career advancement in places away from the family and staying with one's family, most women seemed to desire the former. One respondent said the following about family attachment:

*"I do not want to apply for leadership posts because I don't want to be posted somewhere far away from my family. I questioned myself how I was not going to cope with my family because I wanted my children and husband to be with me ... So I asked other women who were in leadership position and they said to me, h-"m-m-m, based on my experience a husband should never be left alone but you have to think of your career and the future of you children and decide which one comes first" .... Then you start to ask yourself and say, "Do I want power at the expense of my family?" ... however, I got a post away from my family and it was an advantage to my career, but a disadvantage to my family. This is because when you are away for a long time, your husband at times starts going out with other women. Automatically you get frustrated."*

This underscores the way work and family attachment contribute in the persistent under-representation of women in leadership positions. Poor and Brown (2013:14) assert that many women struggle to meet up with early morning meetings because of the time they spend in preparing breakfast and children for school. Some women actually resign from their jobs because they are highly affected by the dilemma that they face. Wechsler (2015:13) also assert that, family responsibilities make women to be less mobile than their male counterparts and this compels them to avoid taking positions that would require them to work longer days and travel often. Therefore, there is a need for women to exercise their freedom of movement as men do.

- **Gender stereotypes at work**

Stereotypes against women being leaders was one of the factors that women faced in advancing in their careers. One participant said the following about negative stereotypes at the workplace:

*“.... Men do not want to be led by a woman. According to them, you don’t belong in management and I think even belonging in a higher education institution also is difficult to accept.”*

- **Follow up question: So they don’t take instructions or...?**

Participant responded:

*“They don’t! But the good thing though is, when the university got good policies that allow you to do.... because I think that from my previous job, I have quite a lot of successes not because the team wanted to work with me, but because the policies were working with me and therefore if you do not do your work, the policies would put you in a right position.....*

- **Follow up comment: Were they attacking you in person....**

Participant responded as follow:

*“They are attacking the position and they want you to get out of the position. It’s not a personal thing, although they do it personally. Because also the way they do it, it feels personal but you need to be very careful, it’s not personal. Because if you personalize, you won’t lead them. You won’t lead them because if it is a 10 minutes’ challenge, after 10 minutes you are still their leader. So, it’s an interesting journey; you have to grow with it, you need to understand it and then you need to position yourself. And in that manner it allows you to be authentic and truthful. Because*



*also when you are in a moment of challenge, you do what is right. You are not vindictive. You do what is right and then you distance yourself and you become human, so you don't lose yourself. So one thing that I have learned is that. So that's why I think my belief is helping me a lot because I pray for things and if I am going to have a challenge, I tell God that this is huge and the way I am going to face it should not destroy the person in me".*

This finding shows that some men still believe that women cannot operate in the so-called 'male zones'. Worse still, they make these assumptions without even bothering to find out whether these women are capable or not. This finding confirms McDonagh's (2010:42) assertion that the issue of stereotyping at the workplace still exists and does impede women career advancement. The researcher believes that this could be due to the way men were socialized. However, with the right policies and state of mind, women can still progress in their careers instead of focusing on the negativity that they get from other employees.

- **Lack of confidence and unwillingness to lead**

Lack of confidence and unwillingness to take leadership roles came up as challenges that women faced in rising to positions of leadership at their universities. The majority of the women mentioned that they were being "pushed" into leadership by others. In other words, women tend to find it difficult to make independent decisions related to their own advancement. One participant stated that:

*"women are not courageous enough to accept big roles. This is because our social background has influences. We grew up in families where women were not leaders. So this affects us. We feel we should be led. Women are naturally not bold. Women feel inferior naturally and believe that men should be leaders".*

It is not surprising that some women still find it difficult to plan a career that includes leadership. This lack of confidence and unwillingness to take up leadership positions shows that women view themselves as their own worst enemy in so far as promotional visions are concerned. They place limitations on their own abilities, as was pointed out by some participants who said: "*the post is challenging and has so many problems*". According to Kovalainen and Poutanen (2013:14), the lack of confidence to venture into leadership roles makes some women to not apply for promotion posts. For instance, some women perceive academic culture as not suited to them because it is too masculine with too much competition (Österlind and Haake 2010:3). It should be noted that even though some of these women went through these challenges or are still experiencing some of these challenges, they still advanced in their careers.

### **6.3.3 How do you motivate yourself?**

The third question under this section was to find out how women in leadership positions at UoTs motivated themselves to advance in their careers. As seen in the previous question and similar studies of this nature, it is clear that it is a challenge for women to develop and promote themselves into leadership positions (Berry and Franks 2010; McCrady 2012 and Botool and Sajid 2013). Thus, the researcher believes that since fewer women have successfully attained leadership positions, it would be good to find out how they motivated themselves to be leaders. So that they can encourage other women who are interested in leadership positions to become leaders or advance in their careers. It will also help women learn how to overcome their fears, move out of their comfort zone, and think of what is possible. Based on the responses provided by the participants of this study, the three most common factors that motivated these women were: Self-motivation, family support and mentor support.

- **Self-motivation**

Self-motivation and hard work was seen as one of the reasons that influences the career progression of women in leadership positions at UoTs. The women interviewed appeared exceptionally self-motivated despite often faced unfriendly male-dominated cultures and environments. Participants in this study explained the following regarding self-motivation:

*“I told myself I must complete my PhD studies to become an expert in my area and profession. So, the completion of my Doctoral thesis possibly made me a Dean”.*

Similarly, another participant narrated her motivation to leadership as follows:

*I know what I want. I don't easily get discouraged. I believe in myself. I told myself from a very young age that if God has given me this idea that go this way, then it means I can succeed at the end of the day. So, I don't easily get discouraged. I observe these practices, but then I say to myself, I am going to do this, whatever it takes. So I had to apply for sabbatical. It was turned down. Then I said to myself, but I have to be away for a year. So I applied for unpaid study leave and I encouraged the university to get somebody else to replace me for that year and pay that person and not pay me, because I told myself that by end of that year I must have my PhD. And that is exactly how it happened. I went for unpaid study leave in order to finalize my PhD. I just knew that this is what I needed in order to get to the top. So, I sacrifice when I know I want something. I don't expect handouts from my employer. If I know I want it, I will pay for it on my own. I will even go to an extent of getting a loan. I have gone through many developmental courses and programs on my own because I knew that I want to be at the top. So, that is how I motivate myself and that is how I get what I need.*

The response from the participants show that women's individual abilities and efforts in gaining high-level qualifications such as PhDs made it possible for some of them to advance in their careers. Also, they worked double as compared to their male colleagues to be successful. Studies have also shown that these women always tried to be the best in their positions by working hard and working smart (Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011; Cheung and Halpern 2010).

- **Family support**

Support from the family was the second factor that motivated women's career advancement in UoTs. Most of the women mentioned the importance of family support in achieving their top positions. They indicated that they had great support from extended family who assisted them with household chores and childcare. Married women also acknowledged that their husbands assisted with some of the household chores and were willing to move to a new location for the advancement of their careers. One participant made the following remarks relating to family support:

*I will always say I owe my little education to my father. I grew up in a very big extended family. My father was the first eldest child in a family that was highly disadvantaged. So when he started working, he had to bring up all his siblings and pay for their education and everything. And because he came from the rural areas and his first job was with a bank. So banks were in town. So he brought everyone from the rural areas and lived with us and my family in a town. So, because there was so many of us, he kept on pushing us. I think he wanted us to succeed, but also wanted the load off his back, because you can imagine the load of taking care of 20 people. So he pushed me, he just pushed me and always said to me that you can do it. My father, from primary school he would always be there for reports, high school for school meetings, and university for everything. When I was doing my research, he would always drive me*

*around. He was my male researcher or research assistant. He would always administer questionnaires with me; It was his passion and also the financial support; There was a lot of financial and emotional support. And also that he would always say "I know you can do it." I remember when I went to register for my PhD, I didn't want to because I was tired but my father said to me, when I die, no man is going to drive you around, so you better do it while I am still alive. So, when I was studying, he would always send people to give me fruits. So I had amazing support from home. But also when you are in an environment like higher education, you see all these people graduate and you go like "wow!" Also it was the recognition of my supervisor. When I was doing my masters I was identified as a capable student and I was given a lecturer assistant post early in my life. But also being told at home that you can do it, you are capable...I was getting all the support. And also I had a passion."*

This finding is not new because studies have reported that women's family members have been a key support in achieving their leadership positions (Cheung and Halpern 2010). According to Cheung and Halpern (2010:9), partners, family and extended family play an important role for some women who have advanced to positions of leadership in higher education by helping with housework and childcare. Some of this support are: husbands' approval before they accepted an administrative position or work away from their families and nannies, parents and siblings to looking after their children while they further their education or are at work. This implies that women need to seek support from family members and partners in order to excel in their careers. Also, parents need to show support and guidance of their children's education, especially women at all stages in order to help shape their thinking and aspiration to leadership roles.

- **Mentor support**

Another factor that motivated women in their careers was mentor support. This study found that mentor support played a significant role for these women to take up leadership roles. They explained that having a mentor greatly helped them to access important information and opportunities for career advancement. The women explained that at one point in their careers when they were pursuing their PhDs, they were discouraged and almost gave up, but with advice from their mentors, some had to apply for sabbatical leave and unpaid leave. The following was also said by one participant regarding mentor support:

*“With me, it was different because I got a supervisor from my masters to my PhD who actually believed in women and that women are very good leaders. So, she became my mentor. She was not only my academic leader, but she became my mentor in terms of the problems that I had and what is it I can do about them and how can she help me to go through problems. So I was mentored by a woman who worked in a university all her life...who believed that I can make an initiative of whatever challenge. I was very lucky and the lucky part was that she was not South African. She was not one of the women that when they get positions they exclude others...they become the Queen Bees. So, she was not South African and she was very advanced in terms of scholarship of women in leadership in academia, as well as in organizations”.*

Similarly, the following was said by another participant regarding mentor support:

*“when I had my master’s degree which was way back before my first child was born, it’s been 24 years now almost, my supervisor said to me as soon as I handed in my thesis, he said to me, you know what, you need to plan for your professorship. And you know I was so tired with writing my dissertation and lots of processes and field work for over two years. So if there is anybody in my life, there is a French man who instilled*

*in my mind way back, that you've got to be thinking about..., you know once you complete with this stage, in three years, five years, twenty years, what should now be the next level. But besides research, he said, no, let's just plan for professorship. At that time, I was a lecturer when he said you have to plan for professorship, then I said he's crazy. When I look at how professors nowadays.... of course research in Universities of Technology is different from research-intensive universities. There doesn't seem to exist that appetite...you know, you plan and you have this urge of really wanting to walk this path and not just walk this path but ...oh another thing that I have seen in this office because I do professorial promotions, by having a PhD doesn't necessary means walk by foot into the professorial position. You've got to work. You've got to publish. You've got to bring in money, you've got to bring all these other things that people don't realize are essential."*

The finding revealed that mentors provided motivation and support to overcome career challenges. This implies that women's lack of progress to leadership positions could not be limited to the lack of efforts to further their education, but also due to a lack of proper guidance. According to Blackwood and Brown-Welty (2011) and April, et.al (2011), mentoring played a very important role in women's career advancement. They noted that mentors encourage women to be more positive about seeking new positions and can assist women who aspire to be in leadership positions with career planning.

#### **6.4 Section C: Perceptions of women and leadership aspirations**

The aim of this section was to analyze how women's perceptions of themselves and their roles shaped their leadership aspirations. The following questions were asked under this section:

#### 6.4.1 What inspired you to become a leader?

To begin with the first question, participants noted that what inspired them to become leaders were their role models, monotony of lecturing, reading management books, nurturing qualities and psychometric tests. The themes are discussed in detail.

- **Role models**

Many participants noted that their role models (parents) motivated them to become leaders. One of the participants claimed that:

*“My father was a principal in a school and later became an educational specialist. I admired what I saw him doing all the time. And my mom was also a professional nurse. I saw her leaving home and going to another hospital to develop herself further. I was already at university when my mom went for a post-basic course, and I could see the benefits when she came back. I grew up in a family of leaders and I just decided that I liked what I saw in these people and I wanted to be like them as well. So, and for some reason, I had in me to always be at the forefront of things even at school. Like if questions are asked in class, I would venture and answer. If a volunteer is asked for, I would volunteer and do something. Even within a group of friends, I was always influential. So, that was the foundation for me aspiring for leadership. I just told myself that for an example, PhD or having a PhD was not a requirement because I have applied for a lecturer post or position, but I always had it in me that these ones in red gowns, when am I changing mine from black to red? ...that’s what really drove me.... trying new things. It gives you that satisfaction, that satisfaction that you belong to that level”.*

Likewise, another participant reported that:

*“My parents were very supportive, especially my father. He thinks education is really very important: He is my role model for my career. My*



*father was always saying in front of everybody that he wished all [his children] were girls. This may be the reason I felt encouraged. My father was very, very supportive. I still remember him saying, "A woman's education is empowerment". My sister was the first child of the family and my father did all he could to educate her even though [the tribe] did not like girls to be educated. She was the first girl [of the tribe] to be educated."*

This implies that a role model does not only come from the workplace or elsewhere to motivate someone to advance in their careers. Parents also have a significant role to play in their children's lives so that they can look up to them just like this participant did. This view is contrary to what most research has suggested (Arini 2011; Harris and Leberman 2011; and April, et. al 2011). They noted that what facilitates the advancement of women into leadership in higher education was having senior leaders who promote women into leadership roles. They noted that mentors encourage women to be more positive about seeking new positions and can assist women who aspire to be in leadership positions.

- **Monotony of lecturing**

On a different note, some of the participants explained that they started as lecturers but then got bored because challenges were very little and they wanted to move to the next level. They said:

*"I wanted to learn new things and take up leadership or a senior position....so I always wanted to take a step further. That was my motivation..... I motivated myself to do that. And walking an extra mile to do more than what is expected of me".*

A similar response from for the same question was that:

*I started as a lecturer, but then I got bored or rather the challenges were very little and then I really wanted to move to the next step because I wanted to learn new things and take up leadership or senior positions....so I always wanted to take the step further. That was my motivation. To try and move up to the next rank and that was my motivation... I motivated myself to do that. And walking an extra mile to do more than what is expected of me”.*

The finding of this study is contrary to what other researchers have argued about women's willingness to apply for leadership positions in higher education (Tom 2013). Research has revealed that women lack confidence in their abilities and this discourages them from applying for leadership positions, unlike men who are always ready to apply for higher positions even when they lack the official requirements (Tom 2013). It is however the contention of the researcher that the decision to strive for career advancement is that of women themselves, and if women are committed to their own advancement just like this participant, more women would be represented in leadership positions.

#### • **Motivated by books**

Respondents explained that they read a lot about management and aspiring leaders' books and how they dealt with downfalls. Most of the work they read was on aspiring leaders and motivational speakers. They focused on those kinds of reading because they wanted to be successful in leadership. One respondent explained that:

*“I have always loved reading. I have lots of books at home. In my family, we always get a book for a birthday. We were always reading and we always knew this and that. So I know a lot of information and I love education, so I don't think it's an accident that I am a leader in higher education”.*

Similarly, another participant narrated her motivation for books as follows:

*“The other thing that helps me is to read. I read a lot about management and aspiring leaders and how they deal with downfalls. That also assists, reading about leadership. And I don’t read about leadership from the academic point of view. Most of the work I read, you find that they are aspiring leaders and motivational speakers. The good thing about their books is that they are broad. They look at a human being in full. Whereas if you look at the academic reading, it’s more about teaching you how to say those things that people do not want to hear. You want to learn those, but you need to keep the human in it and therefore the motivational writers tend to focus on how to keep people on board and keep people on your side so as to win them, make them buy into your ideas. So, I focus on those kinds of reading because you cannot be successful in leadership if people are opposing what you aspire to achieve. So to win, you really need to work hard to win them.”*

This indicates that developing a culture of reading is a great strategy for career advancement for women because reading can expose people to experiences other than the ones that they have experienced in real time, and these other experiences could have an influence on their career actions. Hence, there is need for women to read more leadership books that would guide and provide them with different strategies on how to rise or handle leadership positions.

- **Nurturing qualities and psychometric tests**

According to Luthra and Dahiya (2015), effective leadership requires qualities such experience, communication skills and the ability to inspire others. Some participants in this study have similar opinions that leadership is something that grows within a person and sometimes a person could be born with leadership qualities. One participant explained that:

*“For me, nurturing other people has always been something I grew up with, even as a child and taking care of others. It has disadvantages because sometimes as I was growing up, I used to take care of others more than I took care of myself. However, what fulfils me in life is to see somebody I met at a particular position, growing to the next. To me that’s what I like. But what motivates me more to be a leader is the influence I can have, the qualities I think I have, I can share them to a bigger audience. Whereas when you focus on a smaller space like a professor you focus on your agenda and your teaching. You only influence those kids and some of them will take them and some won’t. But with a leadership position, you influence more people and they take it and replicate. And that is what aspires me more to be a leader, especially in this time that I am living in; the time of challenges. The time of depression, the time of mistrust, the time where you might find yourself becoming self-reliant, where people cannot be dependable. Therefore, you need to have an influence on a bigger audience and be able to say that, you know, when I influence this HoD, I know the people under her will be receiving. So that’s what aspired me”.*

This implies that the personal traits of women are also influential factors in their career actions. It is in this regard that Grogan and Shakeshaft’s (2010) assert that the effectiveness of an organization is linked to qualities such as empathy, warmth, genuineness, concreteness and nurturing traits, which are recognized as women’s strength in leadership. Women therefore need to understand how their personal character as women could influence their behaviours, so that they are able to use those personal factors to good effect.

On a different note, one participant explained her personal story of how she became a leader with the help of a psychometric test:

*“I went for psychometric tests on my own to find out if I am a leader because I don’t want to waste people’s time. I had quite high leadership qualities and that to me was impressive and interesting. And on the business side, I am a very good academic. If you can look at my academic role, I have done my part. But the interesting thing when I did the psychometric test, I could see a business person leading big business. Then with that asset I thought it can come in education because education is business and needs a business mindset and that is how I lead. I always tell my staff members, are you an asset in this institution or a liability? Then I do unpack in numbers; this is how you are an asset and this is how you are a liability. But if you see yourself as a liability, make a career plan to become an asset. These are your strengths these are your weaknesses. This is how you can become an asset. Because if you look at the economy and you look at the debates today, all institutions want to keep people who bring new ideas, bring money and contribute: be an asset. They don’t want liabilities. So, all of us are challenged in such a manner that we need to make ourselves assets. So that is where my human development comes in, where I expose people. So, I was fortunate in that manner that I am a forward thinker, So I decided that if I want to be in leadership, let me check if I am a leader”.*

The answer to this question is in line with Bandura’s (1986:390) assertion that having knowledge and skills does not on its own translate into action, because self-referent thought is what mediates the relationship between knowledge and action. The response to this finding shows that women possess the knowledge and skills required for a task to be performed, but lack the belief that they are capable of performing that

action. Self-efficacy therefore emphasizes the fact that competent functioning requires both skills and self-beliefs of efficacy in order to be effective (Bandura 1986).

#### **6.4.2 When and how did you become a leader?**

This question was posed to find out whether the timeline for the participant to rise or to be involved in leadership was the same for all the participants. This would shed light on the different factors that could influence the rise of women to leadership in different contexts. The following responses were provided:

*“The first time that I became a leader, it was at a university as head of department at the old Edgewood College of Education at the time...this is 1995. I think it may have been and after my first pregnancy I think. And then, it's been leadership at departmental level.... then I have been a director of a center...Gender Studies. Director of Research Institute...Dean”.*

Another participant said the following:

*“When I finished my PhD in 2003, I got nominated for the position of HOD. But just when I was getting ready, the guy who had been appointed Dean approached me saying he liked the way I worked and my work ethics and he said he would like me to work with him and that was how I was set up for leadership. And also the fact that I got my PhD in my early 30s, it was a big thing for a young black woman to attain that and be deputy dean and want to control old men that had been at the university for 30 plus years without their PhDs...it was hostile. I was able to maintain that because getting my PhD actually said to me that I was not stupid. I just said to myself that I had the skills, I could do this, I was not there by*

*default, I didn't have to bribe anyone or sleep with anyone. But of course I applied like everyone, there was no corruption."*

The above responses imply that the career advancement of women takes different timelines and is influenced by different factors. This implies that even if women have the same aspirations and put in the same efforts, their career advancements may not follow the same pace because the different environments in which they find themselves would facilitate or constrain their advancement in different ways. It is in this regard that this researcher argues with Bandura (1986) that environmental factors are instrumental in shaping human action.

## **6.5 Section D: Strategies used by women to advance in their careers**

In this section, the researcher's aim was to investigate the advancement strategies used by women to advance to leadership positions. The following question was asked:

### **6.5.1 What strategies did you use to advance in your career?**

In trying to identify the advancement strategies of women in leadership from the data collected, the following themes emerged: Personal goals, broaden access to education, planning ahead, family support and Institutional support. The themes are discussed in detail below:

- **Personal goals and education**

Some participants of noted that personal goals and education were the strategies that they used to advance in their careers. It was reported that they always had targets with clear timeframes for things to achieve, since they had always aspired to be deans and vice-chancellors. Comments from two of the women were:

*“I tell myself, ok, now I am doing my PhD, I have to be done by this time. I do give myself quite a lot of pressure. I did my PhD in two and a half years because I did not want to be 40 without a PhD. And all my studies were part-time. When I start something I say at that time, this is what I need to achieve. Like in this position, I know exactly what I need to achieve in the next 5 years. And I am not looking for another 5 years, I am looking at that in 5 years. So, I do strategize, I do plan and this is how I am going to start my first year and this is how I...so strategy is very important. You need to have a dream in every position I think and then you put your dream down and then you check if it is realistic. I also make sure each year, I achieve something tangible, something measurable towards that strategy. ...*

Similarly, another female leader said the following about her style:

*“I told myself I am going to get to the position of leadership. I meet all the requirements. I do not want favors because I am a woman. I tell myself that I have to compete with these men on an equal footing. So, that is why I made the sacrifice that I was going to get unpaid leave to get my PhD. To get along in higher education, you must have your PhD, Otherwise, you are not going to be recognized if you do not have your PhD. People will not even look at you. The moment you are called Dr. so and so, you are taken seriously. That is my major strategy. Unfortunately, that is where most women fail because of the many responsibilities that we get. Because if you are a house-wife, it is not that easy to do these things especially if you don't know how to balance your work- life. But also you have to read...you have to prepare for meetings...you work beyond 4h30” ....*

The finding is in line with Cheung and Halpern's (2010) and Blackwood and Brown-Welty's (2011) claims that self-motivation is one of the major strategies for the



advancement of women in leadership position in higher education. They noted that when women are self-motivated, independent and hardworking, it becomes easier for them to rise to leadership positions in their careers. This implies that women's beliefs about their abilities have an influence on the outcome of their careers. They therefore tend to avoid activities and situations where they believe they are likely to fail, and adjust their level of efforts based on the outcome they expect. This confirms the assertion of Bandura (1986) that: *"Most human behavior is directed toward goals and outcomes projected into the future. By being represented cognitively in the present, conceived futures can have causal impact on current behavior"*.

- **Planning ahead**

This study found that one of the strategies most participants used to advance in their careers was to plan ahead. The following are the participants' remarks relating to planning ahead:

*"I plan ahead; By the time I got to this university, the first week I had meetings with my staff because I knew exactly what I wanted to talk to them about. So I came here, I did my trend analysis of what was going on. I did not wait for people to tell me what is going on. That is another very important thing. You need to be very proactive. I collected all the data, I collected their statistics per department so that I could see and I presented to them what they had been doing, which maybe they were waiting for me to find out from them. Then we already planned for 2018. Then I said ok, according to this, this does not look good. Our face is ugly, let us improve it. This is what we are going to do and this is how we are attacking it at the beginning of the year. We are so ready that we are frustrating our ICT department. That is who I am. I do not sleep, I come, I push, I push, I push. I do not wait for people to teach me what it is about. I go to meetings, I get to the strategy side of things, but I also need to know the operational side. So, together I did my analysis with everybody"*.

Similarly, another interviewee articulated that:

*“I am an early bird .... I take work home...I have to prepare...for you to be on top of your game...you have to publish...you need to go to conferences so that you know what is happening in your discipline.... You just can’t take anything for granted...you have to continuously capacitate yourself. The truth about me is that I am scared of failure. So, I plan ahead. Thinking ahead is very important. Dreaming is important. But a dream with no actions is useless. So, you dream, you plan, you start working on things”.*

This shows that most women were motivated to achieve educational excellence and occupy positions of influence by their needs for self-actualization and desire to improve themselves. The finding confirms Bandura’s (1986:401) view that fear of failure is also a feeling that may convince individuals of their inability to perform a particular task. On a different note, the study conflicts with McCormick et al.’s (2002:43) findings that revealed that women in leadership positions had less confidence in their abilities to perform than their male counterparts of the same age and educational levels. They believe that female leaders tend to have lower levels of perceived self-efficacy than their male counterparts, which is contrary to what this study found out.

#### • **Family support**

Some participants’ career advancement strategy was that they had family at home to assist them with child care: The following emerged from respondents regarding family support:

*“Fortunately for me, I have a support system at home. My mom would look after my kids if I had to go somewhere. Even when I went to study, she took care of my kids. That is why I am saying, a support system is needed if you are going to get there. You must have a strong support system, So I did have a strong support system because my mom did not*

*mind looking after my kids. When I am at home I am able to still open my laptop and work because I am free”.*

This is contrary to Levine et. al. (2011) findings that revealed that women who have succeeded in making it to the same leadership positions as men are mostly women who do not have children and thus devote all of their time to their work. They believe that only a few women with families or children can successfully manage both work and family because they get easily distracted by their children or families and are most often caught between their jobs and families. This was not the case for the participants of this study, most of whom had children but had their families to support them by looking after those children while they furthered their careers. Moreover, this study also confirms the assertion by Cheung and Halpern (2010) that women’s family members have been a key support factor in enabling these women to rise to leadership positions.

#### • **Institutional support**

Institutional support was another strategy that some participants used to advance to leadership positions in their institutions. They indicated that they joined unions as a strategy to advance in their careers. The following was said about institutional support:

*“What I did was I offered myself to the union. Because in every selection committee within the university, there should be representation from the unions. So what the union did is they sent me to this position that was advertised when they actually were supporting women at that time. Unions themselves sometimes supported me. But there were situations where they supported women, then they would send me to go for that interview and make sure that...because that department is full of white people or full of men...we would want to see a woman in that position.”*

This finding is similar to what other studies have revealed. In this regard, Harris and Leberman (2011) have revealed that networking is instrumental in helping women to advance to leadership positions, because it gives them access to significant

information and opportunities for their career advancement. Networking would thus serve as a strategy to support women and provide an environment where women could learn and feel a sense of community. This is important because women generally have poor support structures in the workplace and their connections, which are often only at the surface level, tend to break down easily in the face of adversity (Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011; April. et. al. 2011; Mckensery 2012 and Harris and Leberman 2011). In the case of this study, women were portrayed as strategic thinkers based on the decisions that they made in order to advance in their careers.

## **6.6 Section E: Organizational factors that hinder and /or promote the advancement of women at UoTs**

This section analyzed the organizational factors that hinder and/or promote the advancement of women to leadership positions. The reason for this question was be that it is assumed that organizations often play a very important role in deciding who can occupy top leadership positions. Thus it was important to investigate whether or not there was such support from the participants' organizations. The following questions were asked:

### **6.6.1 What support system does the university have in advancing gender issues?**

The responses to this question were as follows: A majority of the participants responded that their gender forum was one of the support systems that their universities had in advancing gender issues. However, they felt like their gender forums needed to have more conscious programme plans with targets, timelines, accountability, monitoring and evaluation. It was also noted that their gender forums were more focused on having parties. One of the respondents said the following:

*“To be honest with you, I wish our gender forum have more conscious program plans with targets, timelines, accountability, monitoring and evaluation. And we need to say, this is what we want, this is what we want to get, we want to get there. This is what we will have to do and these are targets to achieve and we need to start monitoring and evaluating ourselves to check how we are doing. It could be existing now though.... but you know, because I have not been attending .... So it could be happening somewhere or in another way. I don’t know if it was a gender forum but I have seen them throwing parties.”*

Another interviewee noted that:

*“There is a gender forum that was created by women and then all universities have an institutional forum that advises council on issues of appointment. And there is also a gender committee in Senate. I think at all levels there are forums, gender committees and employment equity committees. So these are committees that are available where you can make input about what you see as gender discrimination in the university.”*

In this study, gender forums were the only support systems that the women could think of as a factor that is in place to advance gender issues. The question one may ask is: Is this the only system the UoTs have to advance gender issues? Also, the fact that the women complained of gender forums not having conscious plans, accountability to all women and addressing the issues of women as required is a problem which needs to be addressed. This means that institutional support systems are not achieving the desired objectives. Literature has provided several organizational strategies that have been proposed to support women in their careers, such as making women more visible by promoting them to positions of leadership; creating a more acceptable culture for women in mainstream organizations; offering flexible working conditions;

acknowledging domestic responsibilities; and ensuring that men are part of the gender debate by providing gender sensitization training to them (Berry and Franks 2010; McCrady 2012; Jha and Jha 2013; Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012). The Gender forum is not one of the strategies and this could be why more attention on accountability and monitoring is a problem as the women of this study noted. So there is a need for management to look into these issues.

#### **6.6.2 How has your organization helped you to advance in your career?**

This question sought to find out how participants' organizations had helped them personally to advance in their careers. Respondents revealed that they had financial support and Staff development programs. The responses are discussed in detail below:

- **Financial support**

Most of the participants acknowledged that their universities gave them financial support for sabbatical leave to further their studies so that they could apply for leadership positions. Secondly, they were also funded to attend conferences both locally and internationally. One participant said the following regarding staff development programmes:

*“They gave me financial support. I got Sabbatical for a year to do my PhD. I was given money as well when I was doing my Masters. I was given time away when I was doing my Masters. If want to go to conferences to network, they would do that for me. I would go to conferences internationally and locally to present papers: They do a lot in terms of capacity development because they get money from government to do it.”*

- **Staff development programs**

Participants noted that their institutions had staff development programs to help staff advance in their careers. The following response was given by one participant:

*“As I said, they are serious with staff development and every year in your planning for next year they ask you for the kind of development you would like and then you stipulate there. So that is good because it addresses our need and as I said, I attended every possible course I could.”*

- **Follow-up question: And they provide the finances?**

Participants responded that: *“They provide for all fees involved.”*

- **Follow-up question: So those who are on contract they don’t have the opportunity?**

Participants responded as follows:

*“No, unfortunately. Even the part-time, only all permanent staff. You see, it’s an investment and they want a return back. You can’t go do nothing and come back because then you must write a report to say what are your plans for the next 5 years and they monitor that.”*

On a different note, some respondents explained that their organizations had never helped them personally to advance to their current positions. Their advancement to leadership positions was based on their personal efforts and hard work. They said they had no training and no induction, of which the universities as their organizations had policies in place to support women in career advancement. However, their universities did not ensure that these policies were put into practice.

In sum, the above responses show that participants' institutions support women who are in leadership positions today both financially and through training or workshops. However, the question one may ask is whether this support is sufficient or if it is accessible to all women for their career advancement? It is the view of this researcher that the answer to this question is in the negative. The fact that some women had never been helped to advance in their careers might be one of the factors that hinders the progression of women to higher positions at UoTs. This could be the reason why researchers have come up with various efforts needed to overcome personal and psychological barriers that hinder women's career advancement (Elwer, Harryson, Bolin and Hammarstrom, 2013:17; Williams, Kilanski and Muller 2014:12). Personal barriers are those which are intrinsic to the woman herself, while psychological barriers are factors which inhibit the woman's efforts to advance herself. To overcome these personal and psychological barriers, Elwer, Harryson, Bolin and Hammarstrom (2013:17) suggested the following strategies: informing those who qualify of promotional possibilities; training women to resolve role conflict internally and to define life goals according to their own value systems; training women to have high aspirations; and motivating them to have confidence in their abilities to succeed.

## **6.7 Section F: Upward Mobility of Women in Higher Education**

The purpose of this section was to identify strategies that would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education.

### **6.7.1 What strategies do you think would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education?**

Participants suggested that more knowledge of sexism, research, education, self-organization and organizational support would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education. The explanations of these suggestions are as follows:



- **More knowledge of sexism**

Understanding sexism was one of the strategies that were suggested to enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education. Participants suggested that mainstream feminism should be studied at first-year level. This participant believes that:

*“Young women need to understand that they are not here to please any boy...not with sex...not with love...not with anything. There are many women who cannot challenge men because culturally they are raised not to challenge men. So we have to mainstream feminism .... women need to know that they have a right to respect...not to be abused...they cannot sleep for marks or promotion and also know that they deserve to be promoted .... they deserve to be in higher positions.”*

This implies that there is the need to mainstream feminist so as to create more awareness about the rights and abilities of women.

- **Research**

Secondly, some of the respondents believed that women should be encouraged to do research so that they could publish articles and be speakers at conferences. Again, they noted that vice-chancellors should assist with doctor lecturers to increase their research or education because to be promoted from doctorate to associate professor, the focus is on research. Berry and Franks (2010:3) and McCrady (2012:9) further explain this view by stating that promotion systems in the higher education sector largely rely on the research outputs of staff, and this is a challenge for women because their many other duties, especially domestic responsibilities, leave them with less time to devote to research. Since cultures and traditions prevent most women from achieving this, as research has proven, there is a need for management and

government to design policies that will encourage women to publish, just like the participants of this study did in order to advance in their careers.

- **Self-organization**

Thirdly, it was suggested that women need to organize themselves better. They need to support each other. They need to represent themselves strategically in those committees that are starting to make a difference or that make key decisions about appointments. They believed that if women are organized, it would become easier for them to advance in their careers. They could then easily see which woman is qualified so that they could push that woman. The researcher believes that this strategy was suggested because cultural factors have created the impression that women are not suitable for executive management positions, as their main duties are supposed to be about taking care of the home (Corward 2010:4). These gender roles are carried into the workplace where most men still believe that a woman is supposed to be a subordinate and not the boss. With these factors in mind, the progress of women would always be impeded if they do not follow the suggested strategy provided by the participants.

- **Organizational support**

The respondents also believed that their organizations needed to support younger women who find it difficult to cope with their family obligations, such as not being able to stay late at work and fetching children. One suggestion would be that organizations could have crèches for young women with children to leave them and fetch them later. The researcher believes that this recommendation was provided because studies have proven that with the bulk of domestic work still falling on women's shoulders, women's career advancement continues to be hampered (Chen and Hune 2011; and Eagly and Carli 2007). Poor and Brown (2013:14) assert that many women struggle to meet up with early morning meetings because of the time they spend in preparing breakfast and children for school. Some women actually resign from their jobs because they are

highly affected by the dilemma that they face. This is a serious problem for women. Hence the need for organizations to support women who find it hard to handle this challenge.

- **Education**

Lastly, participants in this study noted that women should be encouraged to further their education. Women were encouraged to finish their Master's and PhDs and even post-Doctoral studies in order to advance in their career. This participant narrated her career advancement story as follow:

*“Let me tell you my story. When I finished my masters and PhD I went there as a Post Doc but when I was about to finish my Post Doc they had to immediately give me a position of Senior Research Specialist. And when I was about to finish my contract as a Senior Research Specialist, I was head hunted by UNISA as an HOD. So, when I was still at UNISA in my first term, I got this position as a dean. So, I don't take any second terms anywhere and I never found myself in a position where I have to look.”*

The researcher believes that the above suggestion was provided because one of the strategies that women of this study used to advance in their careers was through the attainment of higher qualifications, like Master's degrees and more especially PhDs.

#### **6.7.2 What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?**

The following recommendations were made by participants to women going into leadership positions for the first time: Integrity and humility, hard work and publications,

subtlety, training in management, mentorship, networking and courage. The explanations to these recommendations are as follows:

- **Integrity and humility**

The first piece of advice from the participants was that of integrity and humility. Participants believed that integrity would help women excel in their careers. They recommended that women must be humble enough to ask for direction, but proud enough to say no when things are not correct. The following was said by one participant:

*“First one is...go in with your integrity intact, you will excel with your integrity intact. Two, you must be humble enough to ask for direction but proud enough to say no when things are not correct.”*

- **Hard work and publications**

The second recommendation was hard work and determination. They noted that women who are lazy cannot get anywhere or fit into leadership positions, so they must prepare to work hard and do their jobs themselves. The following recommendation was made by one participant:

*“One thing that I have seen in this office is that one has to be hard working and have determination. Because I do professorial promotions, having a PhD doesn’t necessary mean you walk by foot into the professorial position. You’ve got to work. You’ve got to publish. You’ve got to bring in money, you’ve got to bring all these other things that people don’t realize are essential. It’s a warzone, so laziness cannot get you anywhere. You must prepare, you must do your job, you must improve yourself.”*

Similarly, another participant said the following:

*“Keep your research going so that when they google you, they will know you. People don’t want to work with useless people. So, when they google you, they see who they are working with and they will come on board and its exciting that people want to work with me now.”*

- **Subtlety**

Another recommendation was that women should be subtle about what they do because once they start questioning and being vocal about what they are doing in terms of discrimination they may end up actually doing more than what they are fighting for. The following response was what one participant said:

*“My advice learning from my own experience is that be subtle about what you do because once you start questioning or being vocal about what they are doing in terms of discrimination, then you may end up actually doing more than what you are fighting for. Be subtle.... try and be part of it and softly, gently and consciously be very subtle about what they are doing, but once you start tackling it and being a serious advocate and vocal about it, they don’t take you seriously then you will get very little done.”*

- **Training in management**

Women were encouraged to do or study management courses because when they are promoted to go into management positions as academics, they have to go as leaders not only as a subject expert.

*“I would encourage a person to really do management courses. Because if you go into a management position as an academic, you go as a leader not only as a subject expert. I would also advise them to learn from a mentor and then take opportunities where they teach these management*

*courses. Because there is a middle management level and there is also top management. Because the responsibilities differ. Also take responsibility for your actions.”*

- **Mentorship and networking**

Additionally, women were advised to have and to learn from a mentor. They believed that this would help them advance fast in their careers. They also recommended that women should join active women and other leadership development network groups as a means of broadening their horizons and creating a supportive network outside of the organization to grow their leadership potential. The opportunity to network with other women in the industry is a great asset to their growth and development. One participant noted that:

*“Just a quick answer to your question, try not to do what is outside your resources and most importantly learn from your mentors. Join active women and other leadership development network groups as a means of broadening their horizons and creating a supportive network outside of the organization. Also maximize your capabilities, your time...I am actually preaching to myself here.”*

A similar response was given by one participant regarding networking:

*“Put yourself out there. Talk to people, work hard and humble yourself. People will be there and want to engage with you.”*

- **Courage**

Women were encouraged to be brave. Participants noted that women should try something totally new in their career, have faith in their own abilities to grow, adapt and have the courage to face their challenges head on.

*“Just be yourself and don’t be subscribed to boys’ clubs, especially in executive management. Be brave! have faith in their own abilities to grow. You have to be courageous to face the challenges ahead.”*

The responses to this question were very inspiring and the information or suggestions that were given were considered. The next section presents a discussion of the findings and situate them in the context of relevant literature. The researcher also discusses the implications of the study by focusing on four sub-sections. The first section as presents a brief summary of the study presented in Chapters 2, 3 and 4, as well as the study objectives and contributions. The second section discusses the findings and situates them in the current literature on the various challenges women in leadership positions at Universities of Technology in South Africa face and the various strategies used to advance to leadership positions. Finally, the researcher discusses the implications of the study and draws the conclusion.

## **6.8 Discussion of the findings**

This section discusses the findings and situates them in the current literature on the various challenges women in leadership positions at Universities of Technology in South Africa face, as well as the various strategies used to advance to leadership positions. This study confirmed numerous challenges from previous research on this subject and a number of strategies for women advancing to leadership positions, despite the challenges that they faced. The study revealed that women in leadership positions in all the Universities of Technology in South Africa face almost all the common challenges identified in the literature. Previous research has shown that the major barriers that hinder women’s progress are: the Glass ceiling; a lack of perceived positive role models for women; frustration with research; work-life balance; inflexibility at the workplace and workload; perception and stereotyping at the workplace; institutional environment; racism; selection and recruitment; culture and tradition;

discrimination; lack of self-esteem and confidence and insufficient policies and programmes to address gender issues (Eagly and Carli 2007; Vanderbroeck 2010:8; Lewis and Simpson 2011; Nguyen 2012; Awung and Dorasamy 2016; Gouws 2012; Vanderbroeck 2010:8; Lewis and Simpson 2011 and Swam 2011). Of these barriers, the major challenge that women in this study faced in advancing to their positions of leadership were; racism and socialization, maternity leave and frustration with research, negative gender stereotypes and women's unwillingness to take leadership roles. Despite the above challenges, the women in this study successfully advanced in their careers. This could imply that women have developed strategies to overcome some of these barriers.

Additionally, the findings revealed interesting strategies that these women employed to overcome challenges in their pursuit of career advancement. The findings revealed that women's self-ability, determination, mentors, family support and Institutional support appear to be fundamental for their success. This may imply that in order for women to be promoted or to advance in their careers, women themselves need to focus more on their strengths and ability, and stop focusing on their weaknesses or challenges. This finding is in line with previous studies on the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions (Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011; Denzso and Ross 2012; Rensburb 2013; Cheung and Halpern 2010; Turner 2007; Harris and Leberman 2011; Airini et al. 2011 and April, et. al. 2011). Each of the challenges and advancement strategies of women is discussed in more detail below:

#### **6.8.1 Challenges and strategies used by women to advance in their careers**

Based on the literature reviewed and the results from the participants, each strategy that these women used is linked to the appropriate career advancement barriers they faced in advancing in their careers. For instance:



- **Racism and socialization**

Participants explained that racism and socialization were their biggest challenge. They noted that they were being undermined by men when they first applied for positions of leadership. One participant said the following about socialization: *“I think men don’t take women seriously and as a result of that, women are given supportive roles” ....* This shows that men experience academic culture as being masculine. Also, Hoobler et al. (2011) believe that the glass ceiling is a form of stereotyping that results from perceptions of women’s expected behaviors in the workplace. These beliefs have resulted in women being discriminated against in the workplace and judged as unsuitable for leadership positions, despite being educated and visible (Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012 and Hoobler et al. 2011).

Despite these challenges, women in this study were found to be strategic thinkers. Participants explained that they read about management and aspiring leaders’ books and how they dealt with downfalls. Most of the work they read were by aspiring leaders and motivational speakers. They focused on those kinds of reading because they wanted to be successful in leadership. One respondent explained that:

*“What helps me was reading. I read a lot about management and aspiring leaders and how they deal with downfalls.... And I don’t read about leadership from the academic point of view. Most of the work I read, you find that they are aspiring leaders and motivational speakers. The good thing about their books is that they are broad. .... So, I focus on those kinds of reading because you cannot be successful in leadership if people are opposing what you aspire to achieve. So to win, you really need to work hard to win them”.*

Literature has proposed that women can break through the glass ceiling but that it involves goal-setting, self-assertion and self-promotion through directive

communication; determination to persevere and achieve goals, and the need to be receptive to research and education that would advance a woman's career path (Baumgartner and Schneider 2010). Moreover, this strategy is in line with Bandura's (2006:164) view that "*people set themselves goals and anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions to guide and motivate their efforts*". This implies that the anticipated results of the actions of individuals can serve as motivating or de-motivating factors in their actions. In this case, the women of this study knew that reading management books would result in their rising to leadership positions in their organizations.

With regard to racism, one of the respondents noted that: "*I was being undermined by other races because I a black woman...*".

As per literature, findings from Meera and Deo (2014:8-22) revealed that in the United States, institutional bias which begins at the hiring stage continues throughout women's careers. The study also revealed that legal education is "*fundamentally connected to the political system and to the political economy of race*" and therefore reproduces racism institutionally, with women of color at the bottom of the hierarchy (Meera and Deo 2014:8-22). It was also discovered that women of color faced particular barriers with hiring and promotion because of the bias and discrimination present within legal academia. Their findings showed that the hiring gap between white and non-white was not the same in the United States. For instance, 73% of white law professors are granted tenure by year eight, as compared to only 47% of law professors of color. The selection and hiring practices of an institution play a role in the continuing low representation of women in top management positions in higher education. This means that a good percentage of women are already disadvantaged by their employment status, which has obvious implications for the career advancement and promotion of these women to senior positions.

The strategy to overcome this challenge was not directly addressed by the women of this study. However, recommendations were provided to women which could imply that

these were their strategies. It was recommended that women should maintain their integrity and be humble. Participants believed that integrity would help women excel in their careers. They advised that women must be humble enough to ask for direction, but proud enough to say no when things are not correct. The following was said by one participant:

*“... go in with your integrity intact, you will excel with your integrity intact. Also, you must be humble enough to ask for direction but proud enough to say no when things are not correct”.*

Another participant recommended that women should have faith in their own abilities to grow, adapt and have the courage to face their challenges head on. The following comment was presented:

*“Just be yourself and don’t be subscribed to boys’ clubs, especially in executive management. Be brave! have faith in their own abilities to grow. You have to be courageous to face the challenges head” ....*

In a similar light, Iroegbu (2015) emphasized the influence of Bandura’s self-efficacy theory on workplace performance. Through a review of various studies, he reveals that the level of self-efficacy of individuals has an influence on the way they performed at the work-place. He however argues that such an influence is not in isolation, but rather in correlation with other contextual factors (Iroegbu 2015:173). This implies that for women’s self-efficacy to be effective in enhancing their career advancement, other facilitating factors (such as integrity, humility and bravery) must also be involved.

- **Maternity leave and frustration with research**

Another challenges that came up was the issue of maternity leave and frustration with research. Some of the women stated that while women were on maternity leave, their fellow male colleagues were progressing. One participant said the following about maternity leave:

*Women's under-representation in leadership positions is due to the fact that every time there is a call for a position, you find that women are not ready, especially in higher education, because this publishing of articles is really leaping. In most cases, women publish less than men because of other responsibilities that they have, that men don't have. Women have to take these leaves, like maternity leave; men are progressing, whilst you are on these maternity leaves. As a result, when it comes to promotion, the promotion criteria will always favor men because they are ahead of the majority of women, since the majority of women are married and they have kids. So, those breaks in between delay the progress of women."*

In line with the finding, literature revealed that the absence of policies that take into consideration the domestic responsibilities of working women disadvantages them, given that they bear a heavier share of family responsibilities than men (Boushey and Farrell 2013:6). With regard to research, Levine, Lin, Kern, Wright and Carrese (2011:4) contend that frustration with research is one of the reasons for the lack of progress of women, especially in higher education because promotion in higher education largely depends upon the publications, record of academics (Batool and Sajid 2013:4). This implies that women are less likely to be promoted than their male counterparts because domestic responsibilities limit their research activities (Wechsler 2015, Valerio 2009). It is in this regard that Plietz (2012:12), Baumgartner and Schneider (2010:6) have asserted workloads and other responsibilities are a hindrance on the research productivity of women in academics, and this adversely affects their chances of being promoted. Despite these challenges, the higher education sector boasts of women

who have advanced to leadership positions as a result of their outstanding research records (Morley 2013; Reilly and Quirin 2015).

Participants in this study used their families as a strategy to improve in their research: family support, mentor support and networking. They indicated that they had great support from extended family who assisted them with household chores and childcare. One participant made the following remarks relating to family support:

*Fortunately for me, I have a support system at home. My mom would look after my if I had to go somewhere. Even when I went to study, she took care of my kids. That is why I am saying, a support system is needed if you are going to get there. You must have a strong support system, So I did have a strong support system because my mom did not mind looking after my kids. When I am at home, I am able to still open my laptop and work because I am free.*

Contrary to the participant's strategies, research has shown that mentoring can help give women more access to networking, encourage women to be more positive about seeking new positions and assist aspiring women with career planning (Kelly, 2011; Cecilia, 2012; Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011 and April, et. al. 2011). Furthermore, networking is an important strategy for women to rise to leadership positions, in the sense that it enables them to interact with role models and mentors, which gives them access to information and opportunities that can enhance their career advancement (April, et.al. 2011 and Harris and Leberman 2011). This strategy is also important because it assists women in higher education to learn from their superiors how to handle challenging activities like research, especially as some mentors even publish with their mentees to help promote them.

- **Work and family attachment**

The second challenge that women in this study noted was the fear of not coping with work and family commitments. Participants explained that family obligations affected them in their career advancement and it is still a challenge, even though they have made progress in their careers. It was explained that family attachments were a challenge to women who want to apply for leadership positions at universities because some of the women were hesitant to accept positions that would keep them away from their families. They preferred to stay with their families than taking a high position in places away from the families. This hindrance is similar to what previous researchers have argued, that the pressure of family responsibilities can be stressful and frustrating for many women, and hinder their abilities to work towards promotion (Poor and Brown 2013; Wechsler 2015; Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011; and Chen and Hune 2011). As a result, they end up with fewer years of experience and fewer hours of employment, since they take more days off work and work part-time, and this had an adverse effect on their earnings and career advancement.

Research has shown that even when women have relief from domestic chores, they are still sidelined from promotion to time-consuming and demanding positions, because of the workplace stereotype which still perceives them as having domestic responsibilities (Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011; Chen and Hune 2011; and Eagly and Carli 2007). In the same light, Wechsler (2015:13) asserts that family responsibilities make women to be less mobile than their male counterparts and this compels them to avoid taking positions that would require them to work longer days and travel often. As such, “women have little time to socialize with colleagues to build up relations and network plus proving their commitment to the social side of the organization” (Wechsler 2015:13). It is therefore undeniable that the career advancement of women continues to be slowed because most of the domestic work still rests on their shoulders.

In order to overcome these challenges, most of the participants in this study had significant support from family members (especially their mothers) in fulfilling many of their duties at home. Their mothers were willing to look after their children when they had to go somewhere or study. The following emerged from one of the respondents regarding family support:

*“Fortunately for me, I have a support system at home. My mom would look after my kids if I had to go somewhere. Even when I went to study, she took care of my kids.”*

According to Cheung and Halpern (2010:9), partners, family and extended family play an important role in helping some women to advance to positions of leadership in higher education by assisting with housework and childcare. This implies that women need a strong family support system to help them to progress in their careers. Gone are the days when it was believed that men who undertook household responsibilities were going against culture and tradition. There is therefore a need for societal norms to change because men can also take care of household chores and childcare.

The researcher therefore believes that family and spousal support are important in the advancement of women in higher education. Given that not all women could have the same access to family support systems, it would be necessary to provide affordable childcare and after-school facilities to help alleviate the domestic burden of career women in the higher education sector.

- **Negative gender stereotypes**

Stereotypes about the leadership abilities of women have been identified as an obstacle to their career progression. Women in this study reported that they face stereotypes from both men and women in their places of work. It was reported that

some women do not take other women seriously in the work-place. A majority of the women explained that men do not take women seriously and as a result of that, women are given supportive roles in organizations. They believe that if women are not taken seriously, either they would get discouraged and stop trying or it will take the best out of them. One of the female deans noted that:

*“Men do not want to be led by a woman. According to them, you don’t belong in management and I think even belonging to a higher education institution is also difficult to accept”.*

This could be due to the way men were socialized, which has made them assume that women cannot operate or make certain decision as a leader. Literature shows that obstacles to the career advancement of women have to do with stereotypes on gender and leadership, which perceive women as unfit for management positions (Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi 2011). The authors noted that this stereotype in the work environment occurs because most jobs were previously held solely by men who are seen as leaders in organizations, while women are seen as supportive followers. This contributes in creating the perception, even amongst women themselves, that they are not fit for leadership and as such discourages them from pursuing leadership roles (Winker and Degele 2011). Hausmann, Tyson and Zahidi (2011) also revealed that women who abide by the traditional “female” or feminine characteristics are considered to be too nice and therefore not capable enough to handle leadership positions. On the other hand, those that show more masculine characteristics are also considered to be hard. This perception alone is a challenge for women who are in leadership positions because they have to work more than their male counterparts in order to prove themselves. McDonagh (2010:42) also assert that of stereotyping at the workplace, male colleagues are less likely to help women who are in leadership positions. Women in leadership have mentioned professional self- advancement as a mechanism to deal with prejudice perpetuated by gender stereotypes towards their authority.



Women are not scared of making tough management decisions and standing by them. They are focused and plan ahead in order to achieve their goals. As this participant commented:

*I am an early bird .... I take work home...I have to prepare...for you to be on top of your game...you have to publish...you need to go to conferences so that you know what is happening in your discipline.... You just can't take anything for granted...you have to continuously capacitate yourself. The truth about me is that I am scared of failure".* Similarly, another female leader commented about her strategy: *"I plan ahead; by the time I got to this university, the first week I had meetings with my staff because I knew exactly what I wanted to talk to them about [.....].*

These comments corroborate Bandura's (1986:401) view that fear of failure is also a feeling that may convince individuals of their inability to perform a particular task.

- **Lack of confidence and unwillingness to take leadership roles**

A lack of confidence and unwillingness to take leadership roles came up as one of the challenges that women faced in rising to positions of leadership at their universities. According to McCormick et al. (2002:43) women in leadership positions are less confident of their abilities to perform than their male counterparts of the same age and educational levels, because female leaders tend to have lower levels of perceived self-efficacy than men. In the same vein, Logan's (2003:4) assert that many women hesitate to apply for promotion because they do not have the confidence to take up leadership positions. A majority of the women in this study mentioned that they were being "pushed" into leadership by others. In other words, women lack the confidence and unwillingness to take up leadership positions as they place limitations on their own abilities. This was pointed out by some participants who said: *"The post is challenging and has so many problems"*. Another participant said the following:

*"women are not courageous enough to accept big roles this is because our social background has influences. we grew up in families where women were not leaders. So this affects us. We feel we should be led."*

This may be attributed to social norms that gives men more time for work than women. University management would as such often be in favor of men when it comes to selecting a manager. Social norms also pose a psychological challenge to women in that some of them tend to feel guilty when they devote too much time to their career activities as opposed to their family responsibilities (Neale and Ozkanli 2010; White and Ozkanli 2011 and Airini et al. 2011). This finding may indicate that UoT women's slow career progression is mainly due to the social expectations of their roles in the family and also due to stereotypes. The researcher believes that with the help of organizational interventions and women's personal efforts, advancement to leadership would be easier (Cheung and Halpern 2010).

This study found that mentor support played a significant role for these women to take up leadership roles. The women explained that having a mentor greatly helped them to access important information and opportunities for career advancement. The following was also said by one participant regarding mentor support:

*"when I had my master's degree which was way back before my first child was born it's been 24 years now almost, my supervisor said to me, as soon as I handed in my thesis, he said to me, you know what, you need to plan for your professorship. And you know I was so tired with writing my dissertation and lots of processes and field work for over two years. So if there is anybody in my life, there is a French man who instilled in my mind way back that you've got to be thinking about..., you know once you complete with this stage, in three years, five years, twenty years, what should now be the next level"*

Similarly, the following was said by another participant regarding mentor support:

*With me it was different because I got a supervisor from my masters to my PhD who actually believed in women and that women are very good leaders. So, she became my mentor. She was not only my academic leader but she became my mentor in terms of the problems that I had and what is it I can do about them and how can she help me to go through problems...”*

This strategy is in line with Blackwood and Brown-Welty's (2011) and April, et.al. (2011) assertion that women can be motivated in their careers through mentors. They believe that mentors encourage women to be more positive about seeking new positions and can assist aspiring women with career planning. Mentors are of particular importance during leadership transitions. Orser, Riding and Stanley (2012) argued that despite the importance of mentoring for the career advancement of women, there are few mentors available for women. This implies that organizations should develop mentoring programmes that can help women. Mckensey (2012) and Evan (2011) noted that some organizations have partnerships with companies that provide mentoring programmes in certain areas where women are lacking or need guidance. Baumgartner and Schneider (2010) strongly recommend that there is need for mentors and mentoring programmes in order to support women to work towards promotion, earn higher incomes, reduce turn over, and have greater career satisfaction and easier socialization.

In conclusion, despite the personal and environmental challenges that the women in leadership positions at UoTs in South Africa faced in their careers, they were able to overcome the said challenges and advance in their careers. This was possible through strategies ranging from personal effort, self-belief, family support, mentorship and institutional support.

## **6.9 Conclusion**

This chapter presented the data analysis and a discussion of the research findings. Qualitative data analysis tools were used to extract information. The results of the study were presented based on the variables per section. The analysis suggests that the advancement strategies of women were influenced by time management, education, planning ahead, family support, institutional union and their organizations. This implies that the advancement of these women was not only based on their organizations, but on their own personal and family support. In the next chapter, the research objectives will be revisited. The study will also be concluded and recommendations will be made that can contribute to the career advancement of women into leadership positions in general and higher education in particular.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **7.1 Introduction**

In the previous chapter, the data obtained from the semi structured interviews was analyzed and discussed. The aim of this chapter is to present the final conclusions of the study. The chapter starts with a presentation of a summary of the study, followed by the conclusions of the key findings and their implications. The chapter ends with a presentation of the research contribution of the study and recommendations for future research.

### **7.2 Summary of the study**

The study is made up of seven chapters, as follows:

The first chapter was the introduction to the study, and it focused on the background to the study; the research problems; aims and objectives; the research questions and their significance to the study. It also defined the key words and then clarified them. A preliminary description of the research methodology was discussed, as well as the structure of the thesis.

The second chapter focused on literature on women in employment from a global perspective in order to have a bigger picture of the progress of women worldwide. This was followed by the challenges women experience in pursuing their careers, the situation of women in leadership positions and support towards the advancement of women in their careers.

The third chapter critically examined the historical overview of women in the workplace in South Africa and higher education in particular; challenges facing gender equity; the

advancement strategies of women in leadership positions and the various legislative frameworks in South Africa and their relevance to the advancement of women into leadership positions.

Chapter Four looked at how Social Cognitive Theory variables connect with women in leadership. The chapter provided the foundation to help make meaning and to understand the career advancement of women who occupy leadership positions in higher education in terms of their interests, choices and performance.

Chapter Five described the research approach taken in this study. The chapter began with the research methodology chosen for the study. It subsequently outlined and explained the research design, target population, sampling method, measuring instrument, recruitment process, data collection method, data analysis, limitations, confidentiality and anonymity, validity and reliability and ethical considerations. The research design ensured that the data collection, findings, conclusion and recommendations were plausible. The analysis revealed that the advancement of women was influenced by their individual choices and effort, their family and institutional support.

Chapter Six focused on the analysis of the data. The interviews that were conducted with the participants were organised and the findings were interpreted.

Chapter Seven is the current chapter, and it presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study. It also suggests possible areas for future studies.

### **7.3 Conclusions on the key findings**

The key findings gained from the study focused on the main research objectives. The research objectives have been revisited and used as a way of presenting the findings

in order to see how they have been addressed in the study. The research objectives that guided this study are presented below, followed by a discussion of the findings. The objectives of this study were:

- To investigate the challenges that women face in rising to positions of leadership in higher education;
- To investigate the advancement strategies used by women to advance in their careers;
- To identify the leadership perceptions of women in executive management;
- To analyse the organizational factors that hinder and /or promote the advancement of women from a Social Cognitive perspective; and
- To recommend strategies that would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education.

The researcher believes that the aim of the study has been achieved in that the findings have demonstrated that the advancement of women was influenced by their individual choices and efforts, their family and institutional support. This has been done by addressing the research objectives that guided the study. The objectives set up in this study were addressed in the following manner.

### **7.3.1 Challenges that women face in rising to positions of leadership in higher education**

The first objective was to investigate the challenges that women face in rising to positions of leadership in higher education. The study revealed that women are still influenced by gender role stereotypes. This manifested itself in the form of low self-esteem; lack of confidence; fear of not coping with the workload; women's perception

their family roles; and the absence of support from the home and the workplace. Other challenges faced by the participants were related to institutional structures and processes. For instance, unequal treatment in the workplace and insufficient policies to support women on fixed-term contracts. The study found that some women were excluded from promotion because of their race, age and gender. These unequal treatments were portrayed in the attitudes of those in power, which are often hidden in organizational structures. Policies to support women, especially women who were on contract were found to be insufficient to enable them to advance in their careers. These were the challenges that women in this study faced in rising to positions of leadership at their universities. They also believed that it could be the reasons for female under-representation in leadership positions. Such a situation perpetrates gender imbalances in higher education leadership.

### **7.3.2 Advancement strategies used by women to advance in their careers**

The second objective was to investigate the strategies that the women used to advance in their careers. The study revealed that women used personal strategies and external support to advance to positions of leadership and to remain in them, despite challenges. These personal strategies included: Personal goals, broadened access to education and planning ahead. It was reported that these women had targets with clear timeframes for things they had to achieve. Most of these targets were aimed at completing their PhDs. In this regard, the study found that the more women get educated, the more they advance into leadership. In sum, one could attribute their advancement to endurance; hard work; determination; passion; high self-efficacy; and career resilience.

In addition, family support and institutional support were the external strategies that women also used to advance to leadership positions. The majority of the women attributed their advancement to the support they received from their families, especially



their spouses. The main support that was provided by family members was child-care support. In the workplace, participants had support from unions, colleagues, gender forums, financial aid and staff development programs to help them to advance in their careers. These elements assisted them in occupying leadership positions. The aforementioned strategies imply that with the right support and personal efforts, women who aspire to be in similar positions can occupy them.

### **7.3.3 Perceptions of women occupying leadership positions in the workplace**

The third objective was to identify the perceptions of women occupying leadership positions in the workplace. This objective aimed to analyze how women's perceptions of themselves and their roles shaped their leadership aspirations. The study revealed that what motivated or inspired women to become leaders was the fact that they had role models, some were bored with lecturing, some wanted a change of level and some were inspired through reading management books, nurturing qualities and psychometric tests. The findings show that women possess the knowledge and skills required for a task to be performed, but lack the belief that they are capable of performing that action. This could be due to the fact that women are still confronted by numerous challenges both at home and at work. Therefore, there is a need for women to change their perceptions and believe more in their abilities and skills.

### **7.3.4 Organizational factors that hinder and/or promote the advancement of women from a Social Cognitive perspective**

The fourth objective was to analyze the organizational factors that hinder and /or promote the advancement of women from a Social Cognitive perspective. The study revealed that some women received financial support, while others attributed their advancement to their personal efforts, without any support from their institutions. The study also revealed that gender forums supported their universities in advancing

gender issues. Other participants reported that their gender forums needed to have “more conscious program plans with targets, timelines, accountability, monitoring and evaluation”. Holders of this opinion noted that their gender forum is more focused on throwing parties. This implies that the UoTs’ policies have not achieved their objectives, since there is still unequal treatment and practices in the institutions. It is uncertain why organizations are not able to provide sufficient policies that would increase the advancement of women to leadership positions.

### **7.3.5 Recommended strategies that would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education**

The fifth objective was to recommend strategies that would enhance the upward mobility of women in the higher education sector. Some participants of the study revealed that the upward mobility of women could be achieved through integrity and humility, hard work and publications, subtlety, training and mentorship, networking and courage. In doing so it is believed that it will bring about change in the perception of women and result in a change in people’s minds about the roles of women in society. Some of the recommended strategies are new (for instance subtlety, integrity and humility) while strategies such as publications, mentorship, networking and courage are not new (Hofmeyr and Mzobe 2012, Kelly, 2011; Cecilia, 2012; Blackwood and Brown-Welty 2011 and April, et. al. 2011).

## **7.4 Implications**

Although concern has been raised about the under-representation of women in higher education leadership globally, it is worth mentioning that the status of the career advancement of women in higher education is improving. This study examined the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions in higher education, as well as the challenges that they face in rising to such positions. The study was qualitative

in nature and focused on the women in leadership positions at the Universities of Technology in South Africa. The data collected through interviews clearly reflected that most participants attributed the challenges of gender imbalances in higher education leadership to factors prevailing at home and at the workplace. Participants noted that: At home, family demands play a major role in delaying most women from pursuing their education in time and applying for promotion. The majority of women had to consider their children or family first, before deciding whether to further their education or to advance academically. Some women, for instance, delayed registration for a PhD or a publication as they believed that family or children demands were challenging. Furthermore, the study found that women experienced challenges at the workplace, such as racism and socialization; maternity leave, age and family attachment; negative stereotypes; lack of confidence; and unwillingness to take leadership roles. These challenges seem to be common amongst most studies regarding women's under-representation in leadership positions (Grant Thornton Report 2012; Awung and Dorasamy 2015; Alvesson and Billing 2009; Odhaiambo 2011; Ely, Ibarra and Kolb 2011; Botool and Sajid 2013; Chiloane-Tsoka 2016; Gabind 2011; Williams, Kilanski and Muller 2014).

Despite these challenges, the researcher found that these women still managed to advance to leadership positions through various support systems. For instance, personal support (personal goals, education and planning ahead); family support (from relatives and spouses); and institutional support (from their subordinates, line managers and peers) were the main strategies that influenced the advancement of women into leadership positions at UoTs. Existing literature on the career advancement of women in leadership in higher education has also revealed that for women to rise to executive positions, they need to make use of the relevant resources and strategies that are available (Speradino 2011 and Grogan 2010).

Another interesting result from this study was how women's perceptions of themselves and their roles shaped their leadership aspirations participants in this study noted that the reading of management books, boredom with routine lecturing, nurturing qualities and psychometric tests were the factors that shaped their leadership aspirations. These findings might be similar or different in other universities. Hence, to further understand the roles that shape women's leadership aspirations in other universities globally, new studies exploring this issue could be carried out on mid-level female administrators.

The findings also indicated that during the advancement processes, women's self-efficacy beliefs and personal goals contributed to their personal growth and progress. In this regard, the study has shown that not only do career advancement strategies have positive effects on these women's own professional growth and self-efficacy beliefs, they also serve as positive motivators to other women who aspire to advance in their careers.

Moreover, the results of this study are that the career advancement of women at UoTs took different timelines or durations (between 20 years to 35 years of their careers) and was influenced by different factors. This suggests that women's career advancements may not follow the same pace, even if they have the same ambitions or put in the same efforts because the different institutions in which they work would either facilitate or constrain their advancement in different ways. So, when and how women become leaders or become involved in leadership differs for participants.

Lastly, to better understand the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions, more participants could provide more detailed descriptions. Due to the limited number of women in leadership positions at UoTs, this study could only interview 37 women who at the time were occupying leadership positions at all the Universities of Technology in South Africa. A larger number of participants would

provide richer information that could assist in the advancement of women who are in leadership positions, not only in the higher education sector but in all organizations globally.

## **7.5 Contributions of the study**

This study focused on the career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa. The study contributes to directing attention to the success stories of women in leadership so that they serve as lessons to other women who find it difficult to advance. The study has contributed in generating additional data for research in the area of Social Cognitive Theory and the career advancement of women. As far as the researcher knows, there has been no study that applies Albert Bandura's theory to the study of higher education, especially with regard to the advancement of women in leadership positions at UOTs. The explanation of the stated contributions are as follows:

Firstly, the study has contributed in directing attention to the success stories of women in leadership so that they serve as lessons to other women who find it difficult to advance. It does this by shifting the focus from the challenges faced by women in their careers to the success stories of women who have advanced to leadership positions. The study provides the challenges that women in leadership position at UoTs face in advancing in their careers, the various strategies they used to overcome those challenges; and the various supports systems that enabled them to advance to leadership positions. The study therefore serves as a foundation for other researchers who may want to undertake further research on a similar problem within their organizational contexts, so that they serve as lessons to other women who find it difficult to advance.

Secondly, this study has contributed in providing guidance for women going into leadership positions for the first time. It places emphasis on the things that women need to take into consideration before taking leadership positions, as well as what needs to be done when they are leaders. The era of the “concrete wall” and the “glass ceiling” that hindered the career progression of women into leadership positions is now history for most of the South African higher education sector. Women’s advancement to leadership entails determination, self-evaluation and reflection on the many twists and turns it takes to reach the desired destination.

Thirdly, the study has equally made a contribution by demonstrating how Bandura’s Social Cognitive theory and social cognitive variables connect with women in leadership in terms of self-efficacy, personal goals and outcome expectations within the process of career advancement. This contributes in the shift from a male-dominated study area to women’s career advancement in higher education, both locally and internationally. This has been done by looking at the choices women made and what strategies they used to develop or advance in their careers.

Fourthly, the study also contributes to an understanding of the support system that UoTs have in advancing gender issues and how the organizations have helped women to advance in their careers. The study highlights different support systems that the organizations provided, which could each influence women’s advancement to leadership positions.

Furthermore, this study adds to the existing literature on the advancement of women in higher education and highlights the interplay of factors responsible for the under-representation of women in higher education leadership. It helps to highlight the strategies of women in leadership positions in higher education in general, and at UoTs in particular. These strategies are very important in building gender equity in higher education. In addition, this study identified factors that contribute to the success of

some of the few women who have risen to leadership positions in universities in South Africa.

## **7.6 Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made to enhance the career advancement of women in leadership positions in higher education. These recommendations are directed at the Management of Universities of Technology in South Africa, to all career women and to researchers.

### **7.6.1 Recommendations to the management of UoTs**

- There is a need for management to have flexible work time that can assist women in their caretaking responsibilities. This could be achieved by changing the rules that govern institutions and other workplaces. Flexibility could also be achieved by finishing meetings on time and within working hours to accommodate employees' personal needs. Work should be based on contributions, rather than time spent in the office.
- It is recommended that women should be sensitized and encouraged to further their education. This could be done by providing study and sabbatical leave, more flexible time for studies, workload reduction and employing more staff to assist with workloads.
- There is a need to strengthen policies to support women with their personal and professional roles. One way of doing this could be by providing maternity leave and childcare centers within institutions, since not all women have paid time for family care and maternity, especially those on contract and those working part-time. In the absence of such policies, caregiving responsibilities would continue

to hinder the career paths and leadership opportunities of women. Secondly, laws need to be upgraded to protect pregnant workers. The aim of this law would be to ensure that pregnancy does not prevent women from progressing in their careers, and that they are not forced out of their jobs or denied leadership opportunities because of pregnancy.

- Institutions need to have mechanisms for the monitoring and evaluation of policies that are formulated. This would ensure that the right procedures are followed in the process of selecting and recruiting staff for leadership positions. Policies also need to be regularly reviewed in order to address new problems that may emerge. This study found out that gender policies at UoTs were not periodically amended to address the challenges that women were facing. The researcher therefore recommends that university management needs to undertake regular reviews of gender policies in order to address some of these challenges.

### **7.6.2 Recommendations to women**

The findings of this study revealed that achieving leadership positions requires passion, education, embracing challenge and positive self-perception. On that note, the researcher would like to recommend the following to women who aspire to leadership positions:

- Firstly, the researcher would like to recommend that despite the challenges that career women are facing, they should continue to strive to advance to positions of influence and power in the universities so as to be part of the social and economic transformation of the country. This could be achieved if women reflect on strategies needed to balance the professional duties and family responsibilities.



- It is recommended that women should understand the stereotype threat so that it can help to diminish the effect on them. This could be achieved by using role models who can help them to oppose or manage stereotypes. They can also identify mentors who are willing to assist them in their career journeys.
- The researcher recommends that women seek network membership and mentors through organizations or women's network. Networks provide women with the opportunity to meet other people who are doing well in their careers. Also, mentoring programmes provide guidance from other women. Mentoring would give women the support, skill and encouragement required to be leaders.
- Moreover, there is a need for women to attend more training and development programmes offered at UoTs and out of their institutions such as conferences, workshops and short courses that could enhance their competencies and attitudes. This would help to empower them to advance to the top, and change their perceptions of their abilities to lead.

### **7.6.3 Recommendations to higher education**

Higher education institutions should increase the representation of women in leadership positions. There are areas that they need to target and work on in order to support women in their career advancement. Higher education institutions should support women to access and succeed in leadership positions by doing the following:

- It is recommended that each department set clear targets for their department and also take the responsibility for supporting the advancement and representation of women in their department, rather than leaving it to the human resources department. This could be done by having a departmental annual target report for each female employee and progress should be monitored,

published and celebrated regularly. This could boost women's performance since they are motivated to increase their effort.

- Additionally, each department and university should give careful thought to promotion criteria. This could be achieved if each department ensures that excellence is judged on the completion of tasks and not against some notional norm of the over-committed. For instance, promotion criteria should not simply be based on one's preparedness to work all hours of the day and night, on travelling to all continents of the world yearly to give conference presentations, while less time is given to build up a group of PhD students.
- Lastly, it is recommended that higher education institutions (especially UoTs) should design and offer graduate programmes that reflect the needs of women leaders. This could be achieved if gender-related issues are included in the courses that they offer by all the departments or rather have a degree program in Gender studies. This is because not all the universities in South Africa offer a degree in gender studies (for instance UoTs) or courses that address gender-related issues in all departments. This would provide women with appropriate career planning and opportunities for the future.

#### **7.6.4 Recommendations for future research**

- This study has applied Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory to the study of career advancement strategies of women in leadership in higher education. It would be beneficial for further research to apply the same model to study other aspects that can enable women's advancement to leadership positions.
- It is recommended that more men should be engaged in gender issues. For too long, the fight for the rights and advancement of women has been left to women

themselves. Men's involvement, sponsorship and accountability can raise the dialogue to a new level. This is one of the best ways whereby both women and men would benefit from a change in corporate culture. Men are more receptive to culture-change messages coming from other men. It is in this regard that Bennhold (2010) argues that as men increasingly share in domestic responsibilities, their abilities to balance home and office work will constitute the next wave of support for gender equity.

- It is also recommended that a mixed method approach (that is qualitative and quantitative data) be used in a study of this nature, where a questionnaire is developed to collect data from participants who are far away from the researcher or are not available or willing to be interviewed. This may give a higher participation rate.

## **7.7 Conclusion**

The study was aimed at investigating the advancement strategies of women in leadership positions at Universities of Technology. In trying to investigate these strategies, the researcher began by identifying the challenges that these women experienced during their career aspirations to educational leadership and the various strategies that were used to advance to the positions they are currently holding. The results revealed that participants experienced gender bias, stereotypes and misconceptions about their ability to be leaders, as well as organizational politics, regardless of how much they had proven themselves. The study also discovered that career women experienced a high degree of role overload, which is associated with childbearing, domestic responsibilities and family commitment. These challenges are not new. The results revealed that women at UoT are still unconsciously experiencing career advancement challenges. The women in this study presented remarkable qualities of resilience, courage and self-reliance. It was noted that women's own

abilities and efforts play a significant role in their career progression. At the same time, women in this study were supported by their families and mentors. Recommendations have been made to management, career women and to future researchers to help solve some of these problems. It is, therefore, important to note that change and equality will not only be based on the implementation of laws (the Employment Equity Act), but also on the effective monitoring and evaluation of policies in place. Furthermore, women need to take advantage of the opportunities and support systems available to them, instead of complaining of the challenges they face in their careers.

The study lays no claim to having exhausted all that could be said about the career advancement of women in leadership in Universities of South Africa, neither does it claim to have exhausted all possible angles from which the research exercise has been carried out. It however sets the pace from where other researchers could continue and bring their own contributions to the subject.

## References

- Airini, S.C., Conner, L., McPherson, K., Midson, B. and Wilson, C. 2011. Learning to be leaders in higher education: what helps or hinders women's advancement as leaders in universities. *Educational Management Administration and Leadership*, 39(1): 44–62.
- Alvesson, M. and Billing, Y.D. 2010. *Understanding gender and organizations*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage.
- Atik, D. and Şahin, D. 2012. Sex role conflict at work: Its impact on consumption practices of working women in Turkey. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 36(1): 10-16.
- Awung, M. and Dorasamy, N. 2015. The impact of domestic chores on the career progression of women in higher education: the case of the Durban University of Technology. *Environmental Economics*, 6(4):94-102.
- Awung, M. and Dorasamy, N. 2016. The effectiveness of gender equity policies in higher education: the case of the Durban University of Technology. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 48(1, 2):119-128.
- April, L. and Peters, A.L. 2011. Black women faculty in educational leadership: unpacking their silence in research. In: Jean-Marie, G and Lloyd-Jones, B (ed.) *Women of color in higher education: turbulent past, promising future*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.
- Babbie, E. Halley, F.S., Wagner, W.E.W. and Zaino, J. 2012. *Adventures social research: data analysis using IBM SPSS statistics*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Badat, S. 2007. Theorizing institutional change: post-1994 South African higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 34(4): 455-467.

Badat, S. 2010. The challenges of transformation in higher education and training institutions in South Africa. Available: <https://www.dbsa.org/EN/About-Us/Publications/Documents/The%20challenges%20of%20transformation%20in%20higher%20education%20and%20training%20institutions%20in%20South%20Africa%20by%20Saleem%20Badat.pdf>. (Accessed 5 April 2016).

Bakker, A. B. and Demerouti, E. 2014. Job demands-resources theory. In: *Work and wellbeing: Wellbeing: A complete reference guide*, 1–28. Available: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781118539415.wbwell019> (Accessed 21 July 2017).

Bandura, A. 1977. *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bandura, A. 1986. *Social foundations of thought and action: a social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J: Prentice-Hall.

Bandura, A. 1995. Exercise of personal and collective efficacy in changing societies. *Self-efficacy in changing societies*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bandura, A. 2001. Social cognitive theory: an agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1):1-26.

Bandura, A. 2006. Toward a psychology of human agency. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 1(2) :164-180.

Barbour, R.S. 2014. *Introducing qualitative research: a student guide*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Barrett, L. and Barrett, P. 2010. Women and academic workload: career slow lane or workload? *High Education Journal*, 6(1): 141-155. Available: [i.c.barrett@sa/ford.ac.uk](mailto:i.c.barrett@sa/ford.ac.uk). (Accessed 10 May 2017).

Bass, B. and Riggio, R. 2006. *Transformational leadership*. 2nd ed. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Batool, S.Q. and Sajid, M.A. 2013. Barriers faced by women managers at universities. *Middle East Journal of Scientific Research*, 13(3): 324-378.

Baumgartner, M.S. and Schneider, D.E. 2010. Perceptions of women in management: a thematic analysis of razing the glass ceiling. *Journal of Career Development*, 37(2): 559-576.

Bellamy, C. 2011. *Principles of methodology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New Dehli: Sage.

Berry, P. and Franks, T. J. 2010. Women in the world of corporate business: looking at the glass ceiling. *Contemporary Issues in Education Research*, 3(2):1-9.

Bhandare, M.C. 2008. *The world of gender justice*. New Delhi: Har-Anand publications.

Bhattacharyya, D. 2010. *Cross cultural management: texts and cases*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. New Dehli: PH Learning.

Blackwood, J. and Brown-Welty, S. 2011. Mentoring and interim positions: pathways to leadership for women of color. In: Jean-Marie, G. and Lloyd-Jones, B. eds. *Women*

*of color in higher education: changing directions and new perspectives*. Bingley: Emerald Group.

Blair-Log, M. 2013. *Competing devotions: career and family among women executives*. 4th ed. London: Harvard University Press.

Bogdan, R.Y. and Biklen, S. 2003. *Qualitative research for education: an introduction to theories and methods*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Booyesen, L.A.E. and Nkomo, S. M. 2010. Gender role stereotypes and requisite management characteristics: the case of South Africa. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 25(4): 285-300.

Boushey. A. and Farell, J. 2013. A woman's agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: a dozen policies to promote economic security for women and their families. *Centre for American Progress*, 1-3.

Bovaird, T. and Loffler, E. 2010. *Public management and governance*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: M.P.G Book Group.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2013. *Successful qualitative research: a practical guide for beginners*. New York: Sage.

Bruckmuller, S. Ryan., M.K. Rink, F. and Haslam, S.A. 2014. The glass cliff and its lessons for organizational policy. *Social Issues and Policy Review*, 8(1): 202-232.

Bush, T. 2011. *Theories of educational leadership and management*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. London: Sage.



Cameron, R.G. 2009. New public management reforms in the South African public service: *Journey of Public Administration*, 44(4): 910-942.

Case, M.A. Anne, M. 2009. A few words in favor of cultivating incest taboo in the workplaces. Available: [https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=public\\_law\\_and\\_legal\\_theory](https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1003&context=public_law_and_legal_theory) (Accessed 20 June 2017).

Ceci, S.J. and Williams, M. 2010. Understanding current causes of women's underrepresentation in the sciences. Available: <https://www.pnas.org/content/108/8/3157>. (Accessed 20 March 2018).

Cecilia, T.M. 2012. Career advancement of women senior academic administrators in Indonesia: supports and challenges. PhD thesis, University of Iowa. Available: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/etd>. (Accessed 1 April 2017).

Celikten, M. 2010. Attitudes towards women school administration in Turkey. *Academic Journal*, 130(4): 531–557.

Chen, E.W.C. and Hune, S. 2011. Asian American Pacific Islander women from Ph.D. to campus president: gains and leaks in the pipeline. In: Jean-Marie, G. and Lloyd-Jones, B. eds. *Women of color in higher education: changing directions and new perspectives*. Bingley: Emerald Group.

Cheung, F.M. and Halpern, D.F. 2010. Women at the top: powerful leaders define success as work + family in a culture of gender. *American Psychologist*, 65(3):182-193.

Chirileasa, L.C. 2013. University and insertion environment progresses in the knowledge of the relationship between the two entities. *Anelele Universitatii Din Oradea, Seria Geografie*, 23(2): 321:332.

Chisikwa, P.I. 2010. Influence of social-cultural factors on gender imbalance in appointment of head teachers in mixed secondary schools in Vihiga district, Kenya *Educational Research*, 1(10): 535-541.

Chronister, K.M. and McWhirter, E.H. 2003. Applying social cognitive career theory to the empowerment of battered women. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 81:418-425.

Chiloane-Tsoka, G.E. 2010. Perceptions of barriers to the advancement of women in management and leadership positions in South Africa. *Gender and Behavior*, 8(2): 2976-2995.

Chiloane-Tsoka, G.E. 2016. Factors influencing the perceptions of youth entrepreneurship development in South Africa. *Problems and Prospective in Management*, 14(2-3):556-563.

Clegg, M., Kornberger, M. and Tyrone, P. 2012. *Managing and organizations: an introduction to theory and practices*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Cloete, F. 2003. *Strategic management support technologies in the public sector*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media.

Condry, S.E. 2010. *Human resource management in government*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed, Texas: Jossey-Bass.

Coward, L.S. 2010. Barriers to women's progress: psychology as basis and solution. *Forum on Public Policy*, 5:1-12.

Creswell, J.W. 2008. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. London: Vicki Knight.

Creswell, W.J. and Clark, V.L.V. 2011. *Designing and conducting mixed method research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.

Dancaster, L. and Cohen, T. 2010. Workers with family responsibilities: a comparative analysis to advocate for the legal right to request flexible working arrangements in South Africa. *South African Journal of Labour Relations*, 3(1): 31-45.

Davidson, M. J., and Burke, R. J. 2011. *Women in management worldwide: progress and prospects*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Surrey: Gower Publishing.

De La Ray, C. 2009. Council on Higher Education Monitor: the states of higher education in South Africa, 20(8):3-86.

De Varies, L. 2012. Overcoming barriers to women in leadership in higher education: South African Association of Women Graduates. Available: [www.saawg.org/org/downloads/saaw\\_colloquium\\_report\\_2012.pdf](http://www.saawg.org/org/downloads/saaw_colloquium_report_2012.pdf). (Accessed 13 July 2017).

De Vaus, D. 2014. *Social research today. surveys in social research*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. New York, NY, US: Routledge/Taylor and Francis Group.

Denhardt, R.B. and Denhardt, J.V. 2008. *Public administration: an action orientation*. Belmont: Wadsworth.

Denscombe, M. 2013. *The good research guide: for small-scale social research projects* 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Dobele, A., Rundle, S., Kopanidis, F. and Steel, M. 2010. All things being equal: observing Australian individual academic workloads. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 32(3):225-237.

Dominici, F., Fred, L.P. and Zeger, S.L. 2009. So few women leaders: it is no longer a pipeline problem, so what are the root causes. *Journal of American Association of University Professors*, 95(4): 25-27.

Dorius, S., and Firebaugh, G. 2010. Trends in global gender inequality. *Social Forces*, 88(5): 1941–1968.

Dychtwald, M. and Larson, P. 2010. *How women's soaring economic power will transform our world for the better*. Dallas: Voice Publishing.

Eagly, A. H. and Carli, L.L. 2007. *Through the labyrinth: the truth about how women become leaders*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

Eagly, A.H. 2013. Gender and Work: challenging conventional wisdom. *Harvard Business School*. Available: <https://www.hbs.edu/faculty/conferences/2013-w50-research.../livingston.pdf>. (Accessed 22 July 2016).

Eisner, S. 2013. Leadership: gender and executive style. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 78(1):86-98.

Elacqua, T.C., Beehr, T. A., Hansen, C. P. and Webster, J. 2009. Managers' beliefs about the glass ceiling: interpersonal and organizational factors. *Psychology of Women Quarterly*, 33(3): 285-294.

Elwér, S. Harryson, L., Bolin, M., and Hammarstrom, A. 2013. Patterns of gender equality at workplaces and psychological distress. *Plos ONE*, 8(1). Available <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0053246>: (Accessed 13 March 2018).

Ely, R., Ibarra, H. and Kolb, D.M. 2011. Taking gender into account: theory and design for women's leadership development program. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 10(3): 474-493.

Evan, D. 2011. Room at the top: advancement and equity for women in the business world. *National Civic Review*, 62-64.

Filsinger, C. and Worth, S. 2012. Conference report, women and leadership, closing the gender gap. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 10(2): 111–119.

Gabriela, I., Dan, D. and Antonia, E.C. 2013. Closing the gender gap in accessing leadership positions in universities: we know the facts, it's time to act. *International Journal of Academic Research*, 5(4): 399–405.

Garbharran, A. 2013. Structural implications of the activation of moral disengagement in social cognitive theory. PhD, University of Witwatersrand South Africa.

Gibson, S.K. 2004. Being mentored: the experience of women faculty. *Journal of Career Development*, 30(3):173-188.

Gorard, S. 2013. *Research design: creating robust approaches for the social sciences*. London: Sage.

Gouws, A. 2012. *Overcoming barriers to women in leadership in higher education*. Cape Town: South African Association of Women Graduates. Available: [www.saawg.org/org/downloads/saaw\\_colloquium\\_report\\_2012.pdf](http://www.saawg.org/org/downloads/saaw_colloquium_report_2012.pdf). (Accessed 1 January 2019).

Grace, G. 2011. *School leadership: beyond education management*. London: Reutledge.

Grant Thornton International Business Report. 2012. *Women in senior management: still not enough. an Instinct for growth*. Available: [www.slideshare.net/GranThorntonplibr-2012-women-in-seniormanagement-still-not-enough](http://www.slideshare.net/GranThorntonplibr-2012-women-in-seniormanagement-still-not-enough). (Accessed 8 August 2016).

Gray, D.E. 2009. *Doing research in the real world*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Sage.

Greenberg, H. and Sweeney, P. 2012. *How to hire and develop your next top performer*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Magraw-Hill.

Grogan, M. 2010. Conclusion: women around the reshaping leadership for education. *Journal of Education Administration*, 48(6): 782–786.

Guest, D.E. 2011. Still searching for some answers. *Human Resource Management Journal*, 2(1): 3-13.

Halbesleben, J.R.B. 2010. A meta-analysis of work engagement: relationships with burnout, demands, resources and consequences. In: Bakker A.B. and Leiter, M.P. eds.

*Work engagement: A handbook of essential theory and research.* Bingley: Psychology Press.

Harris, C.A. and Leberman, S.L. 2011. Women Leadership development for women in New Zealand women's universities: learning from the New Zealand women in leadership program. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 14(1):96-112.

Hausmann, R., Tyson, L. and Zahidi, S. 2011. *The global gender gap report 2011.* Geneva: World Economic Forum. Available: [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GenderGap\\_Report\\_2011.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GenderGap_Report_2011.pdf). (Accessed 11 July 2017).

Hawkins, R.M.F. 1995. Self-efficacy: a cause of debate. *Journal of Behavioural Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry*, 26(3): 235-240.

Henn, H., Weinstein, M. and Foard, N. 2009. *A critical introduction to social research.* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Hofmeyr, K. and Mzobe, C. 2012. Progress towards advancing women in South African organizations: myth or reality. *African Journal of Business Management*, 6(4):1276-1289.

Hoobler, J.M., Lemmon, G. and Wayne, A.J. 2011. Women's underrepresentation in upper management: new insights on a persistent problem. *Organizational Dynamics*, 40: 151-156.

Hopkins, M.M., O'Neil, D.A. and Sullivan, S.E. 2011. Do women's networks help advance women's careers? differences in perceptions of female workers and top leadership. *Career Development International*, 11(7): 733-754.

Howitt, D. 2010. *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Hunters, C. 2012. *Managing people in South Africa: human resource management as competitive advantage*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pretoria: ABC Printer.

Hyde, J.S. 2014. Gender similarities and differences. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 65: 373-398.

Iroegbu, M.N. 2015. Self-Efficacy and work performance: a theoretical framework of Albert Bandura's Model, review of findings, implications and directions for future research. *Psychology and Behavioral Sciences*, 4(4):170-173.

Jackson, L.R. 2012. The Self-efficacy beliefs of black women leaders in fortune 500 companies. *Theses and Dissertations*. Available: <http://scholarworks.uark.edu/etd/337>. (Accessed 24 June 2017).

Jacobs, P. and Schain, L. 2009. Professional women: the continuing struggle for acceptance and equality. *Journal of Academic and Business Ethics*, 1: 98-111.

Jansen, J.K. 2001. Does the national plan effectively address the critical issues facing higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 15(3): 5-9.

Jha, M.K and Jha, H.K. 2013. An empirical study on work life balance of women entrepreneurs in Jharkhand State. *Asian Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3(4): 12-17.



Johansson, M. and Muller, M. 2014. The discourse of meritocracy contested/reproduced: foreign women academics in UK business schools. *Sage Journal*, 21(6): 821-843.

John, L. 2013. *Food management: idea for college health, health, school and business during United States*. Cleveland: Penton media.

Karelaia, N, and Guillén, L. 2014. Me, a woman and a leader: positive social identity and identity conflict. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 125(2): 204-219.

Kawulich, B.B. 2004. Data analysis techniques in qualitative research. *Journal of Research in Education*, 4(1): 96-113.

Kele, T. and Pietersen, J. 2015. Women leaders in a South African higher institution: narrations of their leadership operations. *International Journal of Sustainable Development*, 8(5):11-15.

Kelly, A.M. 2016. Social cognitive perspective of gender disparities in undergraduate physics. *Physic Review Physics Education Research*, 12(2): Available: 10.1103/PhysRevPhysEducRes.12.020116. (Accessed 3 April 2018).

Kilanski, K. and Muller, C. 2014. Corporate diversity programs and gender inequality in the oil and gas Industry. *Sage Journal*, 41(4): 440-476.

Kolehmainen, M.A. 2014. The effects of stress on physical activity and exercise. *Springer International Publishing*, 44(1):81-121.

Kovalainen, A. and Poutanen, S. 2013. Gendering innovation process in an industrial plant – revisiting tokenism, gender and innovation. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, 5(3): 257-274.

Laud, R. L. and Johnson, M. 2012. Upward mobility: a typology of tactics and strategies for career advancement. *Career Development International*, 17(3): 231-254.

Lee-Gosselin, H., Briere, S. and Ann, H. 2013. Resistances to gender mainstreaming in organizations: toward a new approach. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 28(8): 468-485.

Lent, R. W. 2002. Social cognitive career theory. In: Brown. *Career choice and development*. 4th ed. San Francisco: Wiley, 255-311.

Levine, R., Lin, F., Kern, D., Wright, S. and Carrese, J. 2011. Stories from early-career women physicians who have left academic medicine: a qualitative study at a single institution. *Academic Medicine*, 86(6): 752-758.

Levitt, D.H. 2010. Women and leadership: a developmental paradox? *Adultspan: Theory Research and Practice*, 9(2): 66-75.

Lewis, P. and Simpson, R. 2011. Kanter revisited: gender, power and invisibility. *International Journal of Management review*, 14(2): 141-158.

Lineham, M. and Scullion, H. 2008. The development of Aemali global managers: the role of mentoring and networking. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 83(1): 29-40.

Longman, K.A. and Aderson, P. 2011. Gender trends in senior level leadership: a 12 years' analysis of the CCU U.S. member institution. *Christian Higher Education*, 10(5):422-443.

Lunenburg, F. 2011. Self-efficacy in the workplace: implications for motivation and performance. *International Journal of Management, Business, And Administration*, 14(1): 221-228.

Luthra, A. and Dahiya, R. 2015. Effective leadership is all about communicating effectively: connecting leadership and communication. *International Journal of Management and Business*, 5(3): 43-48.

Lynn, G. 2016. The zone of parental discretion: an ethical tool for dealing with disagreement between parents and doctors about medical treatment for a child. *Sage Journal*, 11(1): 1-8.

Macionis, J.J. and Plummer, K. 2012. *Sociology: a global introduction*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Harlow: Pearson.

Madsen, S. R. 2010. Chinese women administrators in higher education: developing leadership throughout life. *Academic Leadership*, 8(2). Available : <https://scholars.fhsu.edu/alj/vol8/iss2/12>. (Accessed 2 July 2017).

Marchington, M. and Wikiason, A. 2012. *Human resource management at work*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. London. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Marshall, C. and Rossman, B.G. 2011. *Designing qualitative research*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. California: Sage.

Marshall, J. 2009. The gendering of leadership in corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 20(2): 165–81.

Mathipa, E.R. and Tsoka, E.M. 2001. Possible barriers to the advancement of women to leadership positions in the education profession. *South African Journal of Education*, 21(4): 324-331.

Matsa, D.A. and Miller, A.R. 2012. *A female style in corporate leadership? Evidence from quotas*. Working paper, Northwestern University. Available: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1636047](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1636047). (Accessed 5 March 2018).

Mavin, S. and Grady, G. 2012. Doing gender well and differently in management. *Gender in Management: an International Journal*, 27(4): 218-231.

May, R. 2011. Casualization here to stay? *The Modern University and its Divided workforce*. Dialogue down under, refereed proceedings of the 25th conference of AIRAANZ. Auckland: Airaanz.

Mayet, C.H., Surtee, S. and Bernard, A. 2015. Women leaders in higher education: a psycho-spiritual perspective. *South African Journal of Psychology*, 45(1):102-115.

McCormick, M.J., Tanguma, J. and Lopez-Forment, A.S. 2002. Extending Self-efficacy theory to leadership: a review and empirical test. *Journal of Leadership Education*, 1(2):34-49.

McCrary, B.S. 2012. Overcoming the glass ceiling: views from the cellar and the roof. *Behavior Therapy*, 43(4): 718-720.

McGinn, L.K. and Newman, M.G. 2012. Inspiration from role models and advice for moving forward. *Behavior Therapy*, 43(4): 721-723.

McGregor, J. 2010. Who needs gender? *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 25(4): 269-274.

Meek, V.L., Goedegebuure, L., Santiago, R. and Carvalho, T. 2010. The changing dynamics of higher education middle management. *Dordrecht: Springer*, 33(6).

Meera, E. and Deo, M.E. 2014. Looking forward to diversity in legal academia. *Berkeley Journal of Gender, Law and Justice*, 29(2): 4-6.

Metz, I. 2009. Organizational factors, social factor, and women's advancement: *applied psychology: An International Review*, 58(2): 193-213.

Moorosi, P. 2010. South African female principals' career paths: understanding the gender gap in secondary school management. *Educational Management, Administration and Leadership*, 38 (8): 1-19.

Moraham, P.S., Rosen, S., Richman, R.C. and Gleason, A. 2011. The leadership continuum: a framework for organizational and individual assessment relative to the advancement of women physicians and scientists. *Journal of Women's Health*, 20(3): 389-395.

Mouley, L. 2005. Gender Equity in Common wealth higher education. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 28 (2-3): 209-221.

Mouley, L. 2013. The roles of the game: women and leaderist turn in higher education. *Gender and Education*, 25 (1): 116-131.

Mouton, J. 2011. *Understanding social research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.

Murniati, C.T. 2012. Career advancement of women senior academic administrator's in Indonesia: supports and challenges. PhD, University of Iowa. Available: <https://doi.org/10.17077/etd.cfeshqhl>. (Accessed the July 2017).

Neuman, W. 2014. *Social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches*. 7<sup>th</sup> ed. Whitewater: Pearson.

Nguyen, T.L.H. 2012. Barriers to and facilitators of female Deans' career advancement in higher education: an exploratory study in Vietnam. *Springer Science Business Media Dordrecht*, 66 (1)123-138.

Nkomo, S.Q. and Ngambi, H. 2009. African women in leadership: current knowledge and a framework for future studies. *International Journal of African Renaissance Study*, 4(1): 49-68.

Norman K.D. and Lincoln, Y.D. 2011. The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In: *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage, 1-43.

Norman, K.D. and Lincoln, Y.S. 2013. *Strategies of qualitative inequality*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. California: Sage.

Odhiambo, G. 2011. A critical analysis women and higher education leadership in Kenya *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 33 (6): 667-678.

Onsongo, J. 2009. Affirmative action, gender equality and university administration-Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. *London Review of Education*, 7(1): 71-81.

Orser, B., Riding, A. and Stanley, J. 2012. Perceived career challenges and response strategies of women in advanced technology sector. *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, 24(1/2): 73-93.

Österlind, M. and Haake, U. 2010. The leadership discourse amongst female police leaders in Sweden. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*, 30(16):1-24.

Pintrich, P.R. 2002. A motivational science perspective on the role of student motivation in learning and teaching contexts. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 95(4): 667–68.

Plietz, C.O. 2012. Generation next and the female brand in healthcare management. *Frontiers of Health Services Management*, 28(4): 29-32.

Poor, C.J. and Brown, S. 2013. Increasing retention of women in engineering at WSU: a model for a women's mentoring program. *College Student Journal*, 47(3): 421-428.

Posholi, M. 2013. An examination of factors affecting career advancement of women into senior positions in selected parastatals in Lesotho. *African Journal of Business Management*, 7(35):3343-3357.

Pritchard, A.M. 2009. *Ways of Learning: Learning theories and learning styles in the classroom*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Abingdon: Routledge.

Pynes, J.E. 2013. *Human resource management for public and non-profit organization*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Jossey-Bass.

Quinlan, L.M. 2008. Leader personality characteristics and their effects on trust in the organizational setting. PhD, Walden University.

Rainey, H.G. 2014. *Understanding and managing public organizations*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Jossey-Bass.

Raufflet, E. 2009. Mobilizing business for post-secondary education. *Journal of Business Ethic*, 89: 191-202.

Republic of South Africa, Department of Public Service and Administration, 1997. White Paper on Public Human Resource in the Public Service. Pretoria: Government printers.

Republic of South Africa, 1997. Higher education Act 101 of 1997. *Department of Education*. Pretoria: Government printers.

Republic of South Africa, 1997. Notice 1196 of 1997 Education White Paper: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa, Department of Education, 1997. White Paper on Transforming Public Services Delivery. Pretoria: Government Printers.

Republic of South Africa, 2002. Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 Available: <http://www.labour.gov.za>. (Accessed 5 September 2016).

Republic of South Africa, 2002. *Labour Relation Act No. 66 of 1995*. Available: <http://www.labour.gov.za>. (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017).

Republic of South Africa, 2004. Employment Equity Act of 1998. Available: <http://www.labour.gov.za>. (Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> October 2017).



Republic of South Africa, Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998: *Code of good Practices on the Integration of Employment Equity on Human Resource Policies and Practices*. Available: <http://www.labour.gov.za>. (Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017).

Republic of South Africa. 1997. *Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Republic of South Africa, Department of Education, 1997. *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*. Pretoria: Government Gazette. Government Printers.

Republic of South African, Board for People Practice (SABPP) Women's Report, 2011. Sherbone Street: Parktown. Available: [www.sabpp.co.za](http://www.sabpp.co.za). (Accessed: 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016).

Republic of South Africa, Department of Education, 1997. *Education White Paper 3: A programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*. Pretoria. Government Gazette. Government Printers.

Republic of South African, Board for People Practice (SABPP) Women's Report 2011. Sherbone Street: Parktown. Available: [www.sabpp.co.za](http://www.sabpp.co.za). (Accessed 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2016).

Republic of South African Parliament, 1995. Qualifications Authority Act No. 58 of 1995. Available: <http://www.saga.org.za/list.asp?key=legislation>. (Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016).

Republic of South African Parliament, Qualifications Authority Act No. 58 of 1995. Available: <http://www.saga.org.za/list.asp?key=legislation>. (Accessed 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2016).

Ribeiro, S., Bosch, A. and Becker, J. 2016. Retention of women accountants: the interaction of job demands and job resources: *South Africa Journal of Human Resource Management*, 14(1): 759-869.

Rich B.L., Lepine J.A. and Crawford E.R. 2010. Job engagement: antecedents and effects on job performance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53: 617-635.

Riordan, S. and Potgieter, L.J. 2011. Career success of women academic in South Africa *South Africa Journal of Psychology*, 41(2): 157:172.

Ropers-Huilman, R. and Winters, K. T. 2011. Feminist research in higher education. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 82(6): 667-690.

Rowley, C. and Yukongdi, V. 2008. The changing face of women managers in Asia. *Personal Review*, 39(1):153-155.

Rule, P. and John, V. 2011. Your guide to case study research. *Educational Research for Social Change*, 2(1): 133-135.

Ryan, M.K., Haslam, S., Hersby, M. D. and Bongiorno, R. 2011. Think crisis-think female: the glass cliff and contextual variation in the think manager–think male stereotype. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 96(3): 470-484.

Saichaie, K. and Morpew, C.C. 2014. What college and university websites reveals reveal about the purposes of higher education: *The Journal of Higher Education*, 85(4): 500-530.

Sekaran, U. and Bougie, R. 2013. *Research methods for business: a skill-building approach*. 6<sup>th</sup> ed. Rome: Trento Srl.

Shay, S. 2014. Conceptualizing curriculum differentiation in higher education: a sociology of knowledge point of review. *Journal of Sociology in Education*, 34(4): 563-582.

Shoffner, M. E., Newsome., D.W., Barrio Minton, C.A. and Wachter Morris, C.A. 2015. Young adolescents' outcome expectations: a qualitative study. *Journal of Career Development*, 42(2): 102-116.

Silander, C. Haake, W. and Lindberg, L. 2012. The different worlds of academia: a horizontal analysis of gender equity in Swedish higher education, *The International Journal of Higher Education and Educational Planning*, 66(1): 173-81.

Silverman, D. 2013. *Doing qualitative research*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Los Angeles: Sage.

Simon, H. 2009. *Case study research in practice*. London: Sage.

Sisson, K. 2010. Employment Relations Matter: Warwick papers in industrial relations, Warwick Business School. Available: <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/48540>. (Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> June 2017).

Sperandio, J. 2011. *Gender equality in education: looking beyond party*. New York. International Institute for Educational Planning. Available: [https://genderpolicyforum.files.wordpress.com/.../gender\\_policy\\_forum\\_outcome\\_rep](https://genderpolicyforum.files.wordpress.com/.../gender_policy_forum_outcome_rep). (Accessed 12 January 2018).

Still, L. 2009. Women in management: a personal retrospective. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 15(4): 555-561.

Thomas, A. 2002. Employment equity in South Africa: lessons from the global school. *International Journal of Manpower*, 23(3): 237-25.

Toole, L.J.O. and Meier, K.J. 2011. *Public Management: organization, government and performance*. London: University press.

Treiman, D.J. 2009. *Quantitative data analysis: doing social research to test ideas*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Turner, J. and Mavin, S. 2008. What can we learn from senior leader narratives? The strutting and fretting of becoming a leader. *Leadership and organization Development Journal*, 29(4): 376-391.

UNESCO. 2002. *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2002. Education for All: Is the World on Track?* Paris, UNESCO.

Ursin, J., Aittola, H., Henderson, C. and Valimaa, J. 2010. Is education getting lost in university merger? *Tertiary Education and Management*, 16(4):327-340.

Valerio, A.M. 2009. *Developing women leaders: a guide for men and women in organizations*. Singapore: Oxford Press.

Vanderbroeck, P. 2010. The traps that keep women from reaching the top and how to avoid them. *Journal of Management Development*, 29(9): 764-770.

Vinnicombe, S. and Singh, V. 2002. Sex role stereotyping and requisites of successful top Managers. *Women in Management Review*, 17(3):120-130.

Vyas-Doorgapersad, S. 2001. Paradigm shift from new public administration to new public management. *The Journal for Trans-Disciplinary Research*, 78(5):55-89.

Wagner, C., Kawulich, B.B. and Garner, M. 2012. *Doing social research: a global context*. New York: McGraw Hill Education.

Wallace, M.A. and Marchant, T. 2011. Female administrative managers in Australian universities: not male and not academic. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 33(6):567-81.

Water, M. 2013. Teacher leadership: some South African voices. *Education Management, Administration and Leadership*, 34(4): 511-532.

Wechsler, P. 2015. Women CFOs in the Fortune 500: Is this progress? *Fortune*. Available: <http://fortune.com/2015/02/24/58-women-cfos-in-thefortune>. (Accessed 12 April 2018).

Weerts, D.J., Freed, G.H. and Morphey, C.C. 2014. Organizational identity in higher education: conceptual and empirical perspectives. In: Paulsen J.B. ed. *Higher Education Handbook of Theory Research* (229-278). Dordrecht, the Netherlands: Springer.

Well, J.T. and Ross, F.K. 2012. Best practices for promotion of diversity in the accounting profession. *Journal of Accountancy*, 213(6): 88.

Whitchurch, C. 2008. Beyond administration and management: reconstructing the identities of professional staff in UK higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 30(4): 375-386.

White, K. and Ozkanli, O. 2011. A comparative study of perceptions of gender and leadership in Australian and Turkish universities. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, 33(1): 3-16.

Williams, C.L., Kilanski, K. and Muller, C. 2014. Corporate diversity programs and gender inequality in the oil and gas industry. *Work and Occupations*, 41(4): 440-476.

Winker, G. and Degele, N. 2011. Intersectionality as multi-level analysis: dealing with social inequality. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 18(1): 51-66.

Wood, G. 2008. Gender stereotypical attitudes: past, present and future influences on women's career advancement. *Equal Opportunities International*, 27(7): 613-628.

World Bank, 2012. *World Development Report 2012: Gender Equality and development*. Washington DC: The World Bank. Available: <http://econ.worldbank.org>. (Accessed 30 July 2016).

Yukl, G., Gordon, A. and Taber, T. 2002. A hierarchical taxonomy of leadership behavior: integrating a half century of behavior research. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 9(1):15-32.

## APPENDIX 1 QUESTIONNAIRE



### FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC MANAGEMENT & ECONOMICS

Dear Participant,

I am a PhD student in the Department of Public Management and Economics at the DUT, under the supervision of Prof N. Dorasamy. The title of my research is **“The career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa”**. The data collection for my study requires that I interview all women who currently occupy leadership positions in UoTs in South Africa. It is in this regard that I have selected you as part of my sample, and I would be grateful if you could give me an appointment for the interview to be conducted. I would also like to find out whether you would prefer a telephone or a face-to-face interview. The purpose of this interview is to acquire information that will provide primary data for a PhD degree in Public Management. The result of this study will help to facilitate the upward mobility of women in higher education. The study is solely for academic purposes. The answers you provide will be kept confidential and no identifying information will be provided. Participation in the study is voluntary and the results will be made available to pros and copies will be lodged in the DUT repository Lab.

The proposed interview questions and the ethical clearance certificate are hereby attached for your consideration.

Mabel Awung

Durban University of Technology  
Department of Public Management and Economics  
Tel: 0738406592  
Email: [mabelanyi@yahoo.com](mailto:mabelanyi@yahoo.com).



## **TOPIC: CAREER ADVANCEMENT STRATEGIES OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AT UNIVERSITIES OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA**

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

#### **SECTION A: BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**Question A1:** What is your highest academic qualification?

**Question A2:** How long have you been working in higher education?

#### **SECTION B: CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN AT UoTs**

The aim of this section is to investigate the challenges that women faced in rising to positions of leadership in higher education.

**Question B1:** What is your opinion about women's under-representation in leadership positions?

**Question B2:** What challenges have you faced in rising to a position of leadership at your university?

**Question B3:** How do you motivate yourself?

#### **SECTION C: PERCEPTION OF WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP ASPIRATIONS**

The aim of this section is to analyze how women's perceptions of themselves and their roles shaped their leadership aspirations.

**Question C1:** What motivated or inspire you to become a leader?

**Question C2:** When did you become a leader?

#### **SECTION D: STRATEGIES USED BY WOMEN TO ADVANCE IN THEIR CAREERS.**

In this section, the researcher's aim is to investigate the advancement strategies used by women to advance to leadership positions.

**Question D1:** How long did it take you to get promoted to the current post?

**Question D2:** What strategies did you use to advance in your career?

## **SECTION E: ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS THAT HINDER AND /OR PROMOTE THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN AT UoTs**

This section seeks to analyze the organizational factors that hinder and /or promote the advancement of women to leadership positions.

**Question E1:** What support system does the university have in advancing gender issues?

**Question E2:** How has your organization helped you to advance in your career?

## **SECTION F: UPWARD MOBILITY OF WOMEN IN HIGHER EDUCATION?**

The aim of this section is to identify strategies that would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education.

**Question F1:** What strategies do you think would enhance the upward mobility of women in higher education?

**Question F2:** What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?

**Question F3:** Are there any important issues that I have not asked you that you think are important for me to know?

**Thank you for your time and cooperation. Your opinions are highly appreciated.**

## APPENDIX 2: LETTER OF CONSENT



### LETTER OF CONSENT

#### Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this Study-Research Ethics Clearance Number: **REC149/16**,
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

I, Mabel Awung, hereby confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Mabel A. Awung

08 /02/2017

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Researcher**

**Date**

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Witness (If applicable)**

**Date**

**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date**

**Signature**

## APPENDIX 3: LETTER OF INFORMED CONCERN



### LETTER OF INFORMATION

**Title of the Research Study:** Career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa

**Principal Investigator/s/researcher:** Mabel A. Awung

**Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s:** Prof N Dorasamy

#### **Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:**

This study aims to investigate the career advancement strategies of women in leadership positions at Universities of Technology (UoTs) in South Africa. The study focuses on female vice-chancellors and deputy vice-chancellors; registrars and vice-registrars; directors and deans, as these ranks are classified as senior management. Research has focused more on the challenges women face in their careers, while little has been said about the experiences of women who have advanced to leadership positions (Speradino 2011:6 and Mayet 2015:11). According to Boushey and Farrell (2013:6), Wallace and Smith (2011:3) and Chiloane-Tsoka (2010:6), this lack of progress is a result of a lack of flexibility and unpredictable scheduling at the workplace, networking, mentoring, stereotypes at the workplace, work-life balance, organizational structures and policies, socio-cultural perception and societal values that continue to oppress women. However, there is limited literature on the experiences of women who have advanced to leadership positions despite these challenges. Hence, this study

seeks to investigate how women manage to advance in leadership positions in the higher education sector. The researcher believes that focusing on the advancement strategies of women in leadership would provide a more effective response in handling the challenges that women face in advancing to senior positions in higher education. This is because solutions that are based on analyzing challenges are hypothetical and may not be feasible in real situations, while success strategies are more reliable solutions as they are factual and proven. Furthermore, strategies that have negatively impacted women's progress will be highlighted. It is in this regard that this study adopts the Social Cognitive Theory to investigate the strategies that women in higher education leadership have used to advance in their careers. The central role of this theory is that an individual and his or her environment can observe others and reflect on their interest, career choices and performance, and alter his or her development accordingly in their careers (Bandura 1986:2).

#### **Outline of the Procedures:**

The data collection method was interviews. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2003:45), an interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people although sometimes involving more, that is directed by someone in order to get information from the other. For this study, the researcher used telephonic and face-to-face semi structured interviews. Semi-structured interviewing is a data collection method where by the researcher approaches the conversation with some pre-written questions in the form of an interview guide (Howitt, 2010:8). Telephonic interviews were used in four of the UoTs (CPUT, TUT, VUT and CUT) that are far and costly for the researcher, while face-to-face interviews was used in the remaining two universities (DUT and MUT) because the researcher is based in this province and it is would not be too costly to carry out. With these methods, the researcher asked the participants questions and recorded the answers. The reason for choosing this option was that the women in executive positions usually have very busy schedules. The questions were structured based on achieving its objectives. All questions were in English and are expected to

be answered in English since the medium of communication is English. The questions were clear and easy to answer. The place and time of the interview were determined by the participants since they usually have a very busy schedule. The length of interviews ranged from approximately 25 minutes to 60 minutes depending on how open the participant was willing to converse or share her information.

**Risks or Discomforts to the Participant:** There was no risk of discomfort to the participant.

**Benefits:** The research will provide recommendations to enhance the career progression of women in higher education. The research findings will also be published in journals and presented at conferences.

**Reason/s why the Participant May Withdraw from the Study:**

If you feel that you do not wish to participate in this research, you will not be forced to and there will be no negative consequences for you if you choose to withdraw.

**Remuneration:** None

**Costs of the Study:** None

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:** No identification of any sort would be asked and no identity of any respondents will be known. The researcher undertakes to maintain confidentiality and anonymity. No names will be required during the interviews or mentioned when analysing the data. The information received during the project will only be used for research purposes and not be released for any employment-related performance evaluation, promotion or disciplinary purpose. All the information obtained will be stored for 15 years, after which the data will be destroyed. The stored data will only be accessible to the researcher and supervisor.

**Confidentiality and anonymity**

According to Henn, Weinstein and Foard (2009:94), confidentiality refers to how the researcher holds the data in confidence and keeps it from public consumption. The transcript will be kept in a confined place for 5 years. Anonymity means that the project does not collect identifying information of individual subjects (e.g, name, address, Email address, etc). In that case, participants who agree to be interviewed will be

assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of the research. No names will be required during the interview or mentioned when analysing the data. No identification of any sort will be asked and no identity of any respondents will be known. The information received during the project will only be used for research purposes and not be released for any employment-related performance evaluation, promotion or disciplinary purpose. The reports will be kept in the department and the library.

**Research-related Injury:** You will not incur any injury as you will only be expected to answer the questions that will be asked to offices. Academic institutions will not be identified in any of the project's research out-puts and thesis.

**Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:** For any inquiries, please contact the following:

Supervisor: Prof N. Dorasamy (Faculty of Management Sciences) on 27(31)3736862, Cell: 0722678704 email: [nirmala@dut.ac.za](mailto:nirmala@dut.ac.za).

Researcher: Mabel A. Awung (student at DUT), on 0738406592, email: [mabelanyi@yahoo.com](mailto:mabelanyi@yahoo.com) or the Institutional Research Ethics administrator on 031 373 2900. Complaints can be reported to the DVC: TIP, Prof. S. Moyo on 031 373 2382 or [moyos@dut.ac.za](mailto:moyos@dut.ac.za)





Cape  
Peninsula  
University  
of Technology

Office of the Deputy Vice Chancellor:  
Research, Technology Innovation & Partnerships  
Bellville Campus  
P O Box 1906  
Bellville 7535  
Tel: 021-9596242  
Email: [NhlapoC@cput.ac.za](mailto:NhlapoC@cput.ac.za)

07 March 2018

**Ms Mabel Anyinkia Awung**  
Department of Public Management and Economics  
Faculty of Management Sciences  
Durban University of Technology  
Durban  
4001

Email: [Anyinkiam1@dut.ac.za](mailto:Anyinkiam1@dut.ac.za)

Dear Ms Awung

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT CPUT**

The Institutional Ethics Committee received your application entitled: "Career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa" together with the dossier of supporting documents.

Permission is herewith granted for you to do research at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Wishing you the best in your study.

Sincerely



P.O. Box 1906 • Bellville 7535 South Africa • Tel: +27 21 4603291 • Email: fbmsethics@cput.ac.za  
Symphony Road Bellville 7535

Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	Faculty: <b>BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES</b>
--	--

At a meeting of the Faculty's Research Ethics Committee on **20 February 2018**, Ethics Approval was granted to **Mabel Anyinkia Awung (21356955)** for research activities of **PhD in Management Sciences: Public Management** at the Durban University of Technology using the University of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology as one of the case studies.

Title of dissertation/thesis/project:	CAREER ADVANCEMENT STRATEGIES OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP AT UNIVERSITIES OF TECHNOLOGY IN SOUTH AFRICA  Lead Researcher/Supervisor: Prof N Dorasamy
---------------------------------------	---

Comments:

Decision: **APPROVED**

	20 February 2018
Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	Date



Central University of  
Technology, Free State

■ **ACADEMIC PLANNING**

**Mrs Mabel Anyinkia Awung**

**46 Morningside Village 101**

**80 Fyfe Road**

**Durban**

**AnyinkiaM@dut.ac.za**

**Permission for Mabel Anyinkia Awung to conduct telephone and face-to-face semi structured interviews at the Central University of Technology campuses for her PhD studies entitled "Career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa"**

Dear Mrs Mabel Anyinkia Awung

This is to confirm that you have been granted permission to conduct telephone and face-to-face semi structured interviews at the Central University of Technology campuses for her PhD studies entitled "Career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa"

The conditions of the permission are:

- The survey will not interrupt any of the official activities at the CUT;
- You will supply us with the copy of your report;
- The cost of all related activities will be covered by yourself;
- Recruitment of participants is the sole responsibility of yourself;
- Voluntary nature of the potential participant's decision to consent to participate should be strictly observed;
- You should not disclose a potential participant's decision to participate or otherwise to any other party;
- Permission does not compel, in any sense, participation of staff members or students in your survey.

**DIRECTOR: INSTITUTIONAL PLANNING AND QUALITY ENHANCEMENT**

**DR DM BALIA**

**07 JUNE 2017**



*Directorate for Research and Postgraduate Support  
Durban University of Technology  
Tromso Annexe, Steve Biko Campus  
P.O. Box 1334, Durban 4000  
Tel.: 031-3732576/7  
Fax: 031-3732946  
E-mail: [moyos@dut.ac.za](mailto:moyos@dut.ac.za)*

17<sup>th</sup> May 2017

Ms Mabel Anyinkia Awung  
c/o Department of Public Management and Economics  
Durban University of Technology

Dear Ms Awung

### **PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE DUT**

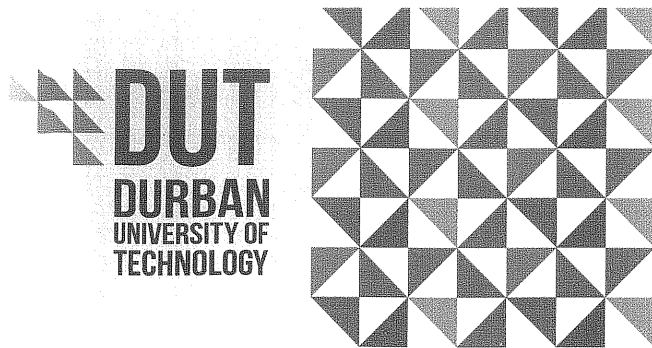
Your email correspondence in respect of the above refers. I am pleased to inform you that the Institutional Research Committee (IRC) has granted permission for you to conduct your research "Career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa" at the Durban University of Technology.

The DUT may impose any other condition it deems appropriate in the circumstances having regard to nature and extent of access to and use of information requested.

We would be grateful if a summary of your key research findings can be submitted to the IRC on completion of your studies.

Kindest regards.  
Yours sincerely

PROF SIBUSISO MOYO  
DVC (ACTING): RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND ENGAGEMENT  
DIRECTOR: RESEARCH AND POSTGRADUATE SUPPORT



Institutional Research Ethics Committee  
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Berwyn Court  
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus  
Durban University of Technology  
  
P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001  
  
Tel: 031 373 2375  
Email: lavishad@dut.ac.za  
[http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional\\_research\\_ethics](http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics)  
  
[www.dut.ac.za](http://www.dut.ac.za)

2 March 2017

IREC Reference Number: **REC 149/16**

Mrs M A Awung  
46 Morningside Village 101  
80 Fyfe Road  
Durban

Dear Mrs Awung

**Career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa**

I am pleased to inform you that Provisional Approval has been granted to your proposal REC 149/16 subject to:

- Obtaining and submitting the necessary gatekeeper permission/s to the IREC.

Full approval is subject to meeting the above condition.

The Proposal has been allocated the following Ethical Clearance number **IREC 015/17**. Please use this number in all communication with this office.

Approval has been granted for a period of two years, before the expiry of which you are required to apply for safety monitoring and annual recertification. Please use the Safety Monitoring and Annual Recertification Report form which can be found in the Standard Operating Procedures [SOP's] of the IREC. This form must be submitted to the IREC at least 3 months before the ethics approval for the study expires.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the IREC according to the IREC SOP's.

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the IREC as outlined in the IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely

\_\_\_\_\_  
Professor J K Adam  
Chairperson: IREC





**Mangosuthu**

**University of Technology**

**UMLAZI - KWAZULU NATAL**

P.O. Box 12363 Jacobs 4026 Durban Tel: (031) 907 7111 Fax: (031) 907 2892

06 November, 2017

Dear Mrs M.A. Awung

Durban University of Technology

It is my pleasure to inform you that permission to conduct project titled: "Career advancement strategies of women in leadership at University of Technology in South Africa" has been granted.

Permission to conduct the project is granted on the condition that any changes to the project must be brought to the attention of the MUT Research Ethics Committee as soon as possible.

Good luck with your research.

Yours faithfully,

Prof. K Shale

Director: Research (Acting)

031 9077354/7450

[Shale.karabo@mut.ac.za](mailto:Shale.karabo@mut.ac.za)

## Research Ethics Committee

---

*The TUT Research Ethics Committee is a registered Institutional Review Board (IRB 00005968) with the US Office for Human Research Protections (IORG# 0004997) (Expires 30 Jan 2020). Also, it has Federal Wide Assurance for the Protection of Human Subjects for International Institutions (FWA 00011501) (Expires 22 Jan 2019). In South Africa it is registered with the National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-160509-21).*

---

October 29, 2017

Ref #: TUTREC/2017/08/004 Name: Awung MA Student #: 21356955, DUT
---

Ms MA Awung  
C/o Prof N Dorasamy  
Faculty of Management Sciences  
Durban University of Technology

Dear Ms Awung,

<b>Decision: Final Approval</b>
---------------------------------

---

**Name:** Awung MA

**Project title:** *Career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa*

**Qualification:** PhD in Management Sciences Public Management, Durban University of Technology

**Supervisor:** Prof N Dorasamy

---

Thank you for submitting the revised project documents for ethics clearance by the Research Ethics Committee (REC), Tshwane University of Technology (TUT). In reviewing the documents, the comments and notes below are tabled for your consideration, attention and/or notification:

- **Proposal**
  - **Sampling Method.** The REC took note of the updated Table 1.
  
- **Letter of Consent & Information Leaflet**
  - **Anonymity and Confidentiality.** The revised Anonymity and Confidentiality sections are in order and duly noted.
  - **Employment Vulnerability.** The inclusion of the *employment vulnerability* statement is in order and duly noted.

---

*We empower people*

The Chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee, Tshwane University of Technology, reviewed the revised project documents on October 29, 2017. **Final Approval** is granted to the study.

The proposed research project may now continue with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher/s will conduct the study according to the procedures and methods indicated in the approved proposal, particularly in terms of any undertakings and/or assurances made regarding the confidentiality of the collected data.
- 2) The proposal will again be submitted to the Committee for prospective ethical clearance if there are any substantial changes from the approved proposal.
- 3) The researcher/s will act within the parameters of any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Strict adherence to the following South African legislation, where applicable, is especially important: Protection of Personal Information Act (Act 4 of 2013), Children's Act (Act 38 of 2005) and the National Health Act (Act 61 of 2003).
- 4) The current ethics approval expiry date for this project is **December 31, 2020**. No research activities may continue after the ethics approval expiry date. Submission of a duly completed Research Ethics Progress Report (available at: <http://www.tut.ac.za/Other/rnnew/ResearchEthicsCommittees/Pages/default.aspx>) will constitute an application for renewal of REC ethics approval.

Note:

*The reference number [top right corner of this communiqué] should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication [e.g. Webmail, E-mail messages, letters] with the intended research participants.*

Yours sincerely,

WA HOFFMANN (Prof)  
Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee  
[TUTRef#2017=08=004=AwungMA]



---

*We empower people*





VUT

**Vaal University of Technology**

*Your world to a better future*

**RESEARCH DIRECTORATE**

**Tel: (016) 950 9531**

## Research and Innovation Ethical Clearance Certificate

<b>Applicant:</b>	MA Awung
<b>Project:</b>	Career advancement strategies of women in leadership at Universities of Technology in South Africa
<b>Institution:</b>	Vaal University of Technology
<b>Date Approved:</b>	24 July 2017
<b>Ethical Clearance Number:</b>	ECN45-2017
<b>Approved: Yes/No</b>	Yes

**DR SM NELANA**

**CHAIRPERSON: RESEARCH & INNOVATION ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Date: 24 July 2017

**Research and Innovation  
Ethics**  
Private Bag X 021  
VANDERBIJLPARK  
1900  
Vaal University of Technology