

**PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO CAREER PROGRESSION OF
FEMALE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF IN THE UNIVERSITY OF
NAIROBI**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MASTER OF
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NOVEMBER, 2016

DECLARATION

Declaration by the candidate

I hereby confirm that this research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other award in any other university or institution.

.....

Lilian Atieno Onyango

D61/64429/2013

.....

Date

Declaration by the supervisor

I hereby confirm that the work reported in this research project was carried out by the candidate under my supervision as the supervisor

.....

Mr. George Omondi

.....

Date

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my daughter Sasha Alice; you have been such a blessing to me and to my parents Willian O. Onyango and Alice A. Onyango, you are truly the best parents anyone could ever have.

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to determine the perceived barriers to career progression of female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The target population was the 527 female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi. Out of the 527 female administrative staff, a sample of 105 women who comprises is 20% of the population was selected through systematic sampling. Every 5th woman in the list was picked. Primary data was collected through the use of a semi-structured questionnaire. Descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequency counts means and standard deviation were used to analyze the data. Findings were presented using frequency tables, charts and graphs. Out of the 105 questionnaires that were distributed to the respondents, 96 were returned completed (81.4%) response rate. The findings were that majority of the respondents (57.3%) had received only one promotion since being employed in the University, (18.8%) had received two promotions, (15.6%) had not been promoted since being employed in the University while respondents who had been promoted three or four times accounted for only (4.2%).

This study achieved its primary objective, which was “to determine the perceived barriers to career progression of female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi”. The findings show that the perceived barriers to women career progression are: family related factors; stereotyping; training and development opportunities; and mentoring and networking. The study identified Mentoring and networking to be the major barrier to women’s career progression with an aggregate mean of 4.38, followed by family related barriers with a mean of 3.28, then stereotyping factors with a mean of 2.53 and finally training and development opportunities which had an aggregate mean of 2.34.

In order to overcome these barriers and for women to achieve progress in their careers it is recommended that individual female employees should endeavor to overcome the above mentioned barriers to facilitate their career progression. The University should also support female employees in overcoming these barriers through various policy interventions. For further research a similar study could be carried out in other industries to find out whether the same results prevail.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Even though women have been successful in entering and rising in managerial ranks in organizations worldwide, men still continue to dominate executive and senior management positions (Lize & Nkomo, 2010). A business survey done by Grant-Thomson (2007) showed that there are no women in senior positions in four out of ten businesses in the world. Over the years, researchers have sought to understand why so few women occupy senior management positions, and why many fail to reconcile ambitious career aspirations with family responsibilities (Ezzedeen & Ritchey, 2009). A study done by the World Enterprise Fund (WEF) to measure the gender gap showed that Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland and New Zealand were among the top of ten countries in the overall rankings in terms of narrowing the gender gap (Greig, Hausmann, Tyson, & Zahidi, 2007).

No country in the world according to this report, has yet reached equality between women and men (Greig et al., 2007), neither has the gender gap where women and men share decision-making power been eliminated. On its analysis of the status of women in management the WEF report also revealed that the number of women holding managerial positions was much lower to that of men even where women were employed for wages in similar numbers to men (Tlass & Kauser, 2010). In 46 out 63 countries it was reported that only 20 to 40 percent of management positions were being held by women, women were therefore making a very slow progress in achieving equality in managerial positions. (Wirth, 2004; Cortis & Cessar, 2005; Wood, 2008).

This study is guided by the Theory of Justice as developed by Rawls (1971) and the Social Cognitive Career Theory as stipulated by Albert Bandura (1986). In the Theory of Justice, Rawls argues that the concept of freedom and equality are not mutually exclusive. His assessment of the justice system leads him to conclude that for justice to be truly just, everyone must be offered the same rights under the law. Social cognitive career theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) on the other hand emphasizes cognitive-person variables that enable people to influence their own career development as well as extra- variables that enhance or constrain personal agency.

University Of Nairobi has attempted to enhance women's career mobility in university management with the main challenge hindering women's career mobility being the failure to implement policies on recruitment and promotion. Statistics from the University indicate that all the top three academic positions; Vice chancellor and two Deputy Vice Chancellors are occupied by men. 75% of the heads of services departments at the university are also men. The tendency to associate certain professions and academic disciplines with either men or women and the fact that currently men dominate many senior positions, has created a need to put into practice specific measures to achieve gender balance in recruitment, training and promotion in the university. Consequently the university has committed to put the following into practice; practice affirmative action and use a competitive recruitment process at all levels, for every position ensure there is a gender balance in the pool of applicants, and gender balance is put into practice in the final decision where a female and male candidate for a position are considered of equal merit, re-introduce training programmes for both academic and non-academic staff and

ensure that both men and women participate equally in the programmes, use affirmative action to hire into positions where one gender is underrepresented in certain positions , provide support to staff in the form of incentives, scholarships and study leave to enable female administrative staff members to complete postgraduate studies, and ensure that men and women receive equal pay for equal or similar work or work of similar value (University of Nairobi Gender Policy on Employment, 2015).

1.1.1 Concept of Perception

Perception can be defined as the way one understands or interprets something; a mental impression. With regards to management's perception on women's career progression, there is evidence show that many employers' have negative attitudes towards women in the professions and employment in general (Dale *et al.*, 2005). Traditional views held by employers on the suitability of men or women for certain jobs often creates an unwillingness by employers to consider flexible working hours and childcare issues. In many societies women's access to senior management positions and their participation outside the home in some societies is often controlled by societal belief systems, Shah and Shah (2012).

The senses play a major role in perception and behavior, not only do they allow one to interpret his or her environment; they also determine how one reacts to it, Griffin (1992). Perception leads to decision making and action making. The decision is to act or not to act and this depends on how one develops motivation. While we all share the same motivation as humans, how each person makes a decision is based on the human instinct of self-preservation. We are always trying to maximize our chances of survival and to

preserve ourselves. This is a common motivation among all human beings. We differ greatly and we each express our individuality in the choices we make and the actions we take to achieve self-preservation. Factors such as cultural setting, past experiences, imagination, memories, feelings, values and beliefs greatly influence how one analyzes what they perceive and considering the fact that the content and degree of these influences is different for everyone, a similar object or event can be perceived very differently by different people. This is why perception is not reality.

1.1.2 Concept of Career

In layman's language the term career is used to indicate or mean among other things, sequences of and patterns in occupations and work positions, and an upward progress in occupation an occupation or in life in general. A career is different from 'just a job' and mostly applies to the work history and progress of professionals and other elites. The term career can also be used to refer more generally to a biography or life history or as an overarching construct to make sense of life.

It can also be said that a career is a pattern of work experiences in one's entire life span as seen with regards to a number of phases or stages reflecting the transition from one stage of life to the next (Weinert, 2001). Collin (1998) also explains that the term career is derived from the interaction of individuals with organisations and society. As Savickas (2009) proposes, this interaction then becomes a story that working people build about themselves and is no longer merely just a sequence of jobs. A career consists of different stages and in each stage the individual faces different issues (Schreuder and Coetzee, 2006).

1.1.3 Career Progression

Career progress refers to forward movement from one level up to the next, an increase in more job responsibilities and having a better status (Beauchamp & Bowie, 2004). Other scholars such as Ackah and Heaton (2003) define career advancement as consisting of promotions and increased earnings. Increased earnings may be in the form of merit pay, bonus pay and cash awards (Dessler, 2008). Super (1957) identified five stages in career progression - growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline that were thought to capture individuals' work related experiences from the years of childhood to retirement. Miller and Form (1951) and Hall and Nougaim (1968) also identified five career stages, and Schein (1978) proposed a sequence of nine stages of career development.

According to Savikas (2009) current career development theories and techniques are facing a crisis in that their fundamental assumption of predictability based on stability and stages is debatable may no longer be functional. Age ranges in which individuals typically encounter the tasks associated with each stage of career development have been identified by models of career development have identified age ranges in which individuals typically encounter the tasks associated with each stage of career development. These models however, seem to have assumed that all individuals pursue a continuous linear career within one occupation, in perhaps one or two organizations, and without major disruptions or redirections.

Stevens (1990) also states that life stages are often portrayed as a methodological succession of expected events as if they will happen on cue for all of us. According to Stevens (1990) each career has a lifecycle with four discrete stages: exploration, advancement, maintenance and decline. Flexer, Baer, Luft and Simmons (2008) on the other hand emphasize that although these four stages are specific to employment, a broad definition of career development incorporates all life areas. There should be an inclusion of the influences from other life roles and responsibilities that ultimately lead to a satisfactory quality of life .They conclude that the four stages support a comprehensive view of career development and transition planning. While there are four discrete stages of development, they do not necessarily only take place once in an individual's life, but could take place on numerous occasions through career changes, such as changing jobs (Flexer et al., 2008).

1.1.4 The University of Nairobi

The University of Nairobi, one of the largest universities in Kenya has a history as an institution of education that dates back to 1956. In 1970 the University of Nairobi became an independent university when the University of East Africa was split into three independent universities: the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Makerere University in Uganda, and the University of Nairobi.

The inception of the University of Nairobi dates from 1956, with the establishment of the Royal Technical College, which admitted its first group of A-level graduates for technical courses in April of that same year. On 25 June 1961 the Royal Technical College was changed into the second university college in East Africa under the name Royal College

Nairobi and in conjunction with the University of London students were able to study for award degrees of the University of London. Later in May of 1964, the Royal College Nairobi was renamed University College Nairobi as a constituent College of inter-territorial, Federal University of East Africa and there after enrolled students were to study for college degrees of the University of East Africa and not London. Later In 1970, the University College Nairobi was transformed into the first national university in Kenya and was renamed the University of Nairobi. The university tops in Kenya's university ranking and is ranked 7th in Africa and 1968 in the world according to Webometrics Ranking of World Universities.

The University of Nairobi is the pioneer institution of University education in Kenya and the region having been established by an Act of Parliament Cap 210 of the Laws of Kenya. For a long time, it had been the only institution of higher learning in Kenya and it responded to the national, regional and Africa's high level manpower training needs by developing and evolving strong, diversified academic programmes and specializations in sciences, applied sciences, technology, humanities, social sciences and the arts. To date, the range of programmes offered number approximately over two hundred.

1.2 Research Problem

Men have traditionally been viewed as superior to women and for this reason women have been marginalized in all sectors of development, Chacha (2004). This scenario is not only seen in Kenya but also in the entire Sub-Saharan Africa and the world. In their study of gender hierarchy relationships in the United Kingdom Eagly & Carly (2007) observed that barriers to women in management existed worldwide and although 40

percent of the world's labour force was represented by women, their representation in management positions remained very low. Even in professions that are traditionally predominantly feminine such as education and social work, women did not occupy senior decision making positions in relation to their numbers. While men planned, organized, directed and controlled women seemed to be stuck in doer positions with jobs that were low paying. To improve the status of women there was need therefore to change societal attitudes and cultural situation that allowed female participation in management to make them more competitive. This is in agreement with Chodorow's theory (1989) which observed that women are still discriminated against in the labor force and are unequal in the family and physical violence against women is not decreasing. She also observed that even though legal bases of male domination are eroding the society we live in is still male dominated.

University of Nairobi statistics indicate that all the top three academic positions; Vice Chancellor, and two Deputy Vice Chancellors are of male gender. The situation is the same among heads of services departments, with more than 75% of the heads of departments being of male gender. Several other studies have also revealed the barriers women face in their career progression that has hindered their access to top managerial positions. A study carried out in the United States showed that men are promoted faster and frequently than their female counterparts the reasons given being that men are able to use informal networks to achieve promotion as compared to women who rely on formal promotions alone. This was supported by this study where respondents confirmed that

women are not good in networking and are not able to lobby for promotions because of the culture.

In a study a study to determine factors affecting women's career mobility in educational management (Kibaara,2014) it was concluded that despite gender consideration on paper there was little effort was made to mainstream gender in university management and most universities had policies on recruitment and promotion but did not implement them. The criteria for promotions clearly articulated in the policy documents were rarely followed, which in turn affected negatively affected women's career mobility in university management. Mukulu (2012) did a study to determine the perceived organizational barriers to women career progression in Kenya's civil service; the study showed that despite having the necessary qualifications and experiences women in the civil service still face many challenges and they still have to deal with lack of support from their supervisors, peers, spouses and staff.

A similar study carried out by Al-Lamki (2010), reported that lack of role models and mentoring programs is a major organizational concern that limits women's access to top managerial positions. The absence of enough women in senior management positions to provide support makes it difficult for women to find a mentor in Kenyan organizations. Furthermore, given men's control in organizations they are more likely to be mentors. This shows that in Kenya women miss opportunities for career progression because they lack female role models. Most women therefore view the promotion process as highly prone to all manner of abuse including gender discrimination. In view of the above this

study therefore sought to answer the question: What are the perceived barriers to career progression of female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi?

1.3 Objective of the Study

To determine the perceived barriers to career progression of female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi.

1.4 Value of the Study

Contribution to Policy and Policy Makers: The findings and recommendations from this study will be of benefit to the government of Kenya and University management as it will highlight the challenges faced by women in career advancement and therefore help them to come up with policies that will address these challenges to ensure that more women are able to advance in their careers at the university.

Contribution to Human Resource Practice: The study findings may be helpful to Human Resource Practitioners in the various sectors of the economy in making informed decision for addressing the identified barriers. These interventions may be in the form of Human Resources support to women, and training programmes on diversity management for all employees with the aim of embracing gender diversity in the workplace. This study will also help in transforming the recruitment and selection practices of the organizations.

Contribution to theory: The study aims at contributing to the theoretical knowledge about perceived barriers to women career advancement. The study makes an attempt to address the perceived barriers by linking the problem to the relevant theories. It is also meant to

assist Human Resource Development professionals to better implement planning of initiatives and training programs with gender sensitivity considerations. The study will create an understanding of the barriers that women face in the workplace that hinder their progress and therefore would help in creating a friendlier and more gender sensitive work environment.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter contains a review of the literature related to the purpose of the study objectives. The chapter presents the theoretical foundation of the study and the barriers to career progression of female employees.

2.2 Theoretical Foundation of the Study

This study will be focused on the two theories; Theory of Justice and Social Cognitive Career Theory.

2.2.1 Theory of Justice

Rawls (1971) theory of justice provides a skeletal account of his project of using social contract theory to generate principles of justice for assigning basic rights and duties and determining the division of social benefits in a society. The theory argues that the two principles that would be reached through an agreement in an original position of fairness and equality are: each person is to have an equal right to the most extensive basic liberty compatible with a similar liberty for others and; that social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are both reasonably expected to be to everyone's advantage; and attached to positions and offices open to all. (Nussbaum, 2000). However, the theory is not talking about complete liberty to do, to have or to keep absolutely anything. The inequalities he is talking about are: First the Inequalities in the distribution of income, jobs and wealth; second the Inequalities set up by institutions that use differences in authority and responsibility or chains of command.

The theory suggests that everyone must experience equality not only in political participation or where voting is concerned but also where distribution of both primary and secondary goods are concerned, this however, does not mean that men and women are equal in some ultimate metaphysical sense, even though each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override (Piccard, 2004). This theory is therefore applicable and suitable to this study as it emphasizes the view that all people are equal as citizens and not necessarily that men and women are equal by nature. Differences in recruitment should therefore only exist where they can be justified on the grounds of competence. According to this theory, inequalities in society are only acceptable if they are arranged in such a way that they help out the least fortunate people in the society. Affirmative action is a practice that should address inequality in the society and is therefore meant to promote justice.

2.2.2 Social Cognitive Career Theory

This theory was developed by Bandura (1986). The social Cognitive Career theory emphasizes how contextual and individual personality, cognitive and behavioral variables predict vocational satisfaction (Lent, 2005; Lent and Brown, 2006). From an employee's point of view, knowing how personality, behavioral and environmental factors function together may offer the opportunity to assist people to become as satisfied with their careers as nature and environmental factors support (Lent and Brown, 2006). Examining the model of the Social Cognitive Career Theory can also assist in understanding how behavioral, personality and environmental factors jointly impact work satisfaction (Lent and Brown, 2006). By intergrating frequently studied correlates of work satisfaction into

a few, broader conceptual categories, this extended model of Social Cognitive Career theory tries to balance comprehensiveness and simplicity in explaining the multiple influences on work satisfaction. While the bivariate relations contained in this model have received study, this extended model proposed by the Social Cognitive Career Theory provides a theoretical logic for determining how these variables may function together. Since the study of the extended theoretical model has been focused on student samples to date (Lent *et al.*, 2005), this current study will also add to the literature by exploring how a subset of the relationships proposed by this theoretical model relates to employed workers, as stipulated by (Lent & Brown, 2006).

2.3 Barriers to Career Progression of Female Employees

The barriers to career progress include: family related barriers, stereotyping barriers, training and development opportunities and mentoring and networking.

2.3.1 Family Related

Several interconnected social-family issues have been cited by various authors as barriers to women's career advancement (Linge, 2011; Emerson 2005). These include family responsibilities and marital status. For instance according to Metz (2005) having children affects how women are perceived at work with regards to people's perception of their commitment to work. Such a perception can have serious implications for performance appraisal because commitment is naturally taken into account during performance appraisal as a primary factor to promotion (Legault & Chessario, 2003). The authors added that this observation agrees with gender based normative expectations that

irrespective of their employment statuses, women are still primarily responsible for home maintenance and childcare.

In America William and Cooper (2004) conducted a study that revealed that women do 65to85 per cent of child care work. Reduced time in the workplace due to child care means that women experience reduced wages and lack of benefits and advancement that accompany that choice. According to Cross (2010), child bearing remains a major barrier to women's career progression. The pressure faced by women in trying to balance career and family responsibility present the most significant barrier in women's career advancement. Women face career mobility barriers when they begin to consider starting a family (Rosser, 2004).

In Turkey, most women in executive positions are married with one or two children, (kabasakal, 2004). The availability of low paid maids in Turkey enables most women managers to delegate household duties and child-rearing responsibilities to fulltime employed maids. In Western Europe several studies reveal that due to the heavy household demands on married women, most women are forced to choose between their careers and private life. On the other hand, according to Laufer (1999), in many instances women are mostly concentrated in professions that are considered feminine such as teaching and nursing and even in such professions they remain in lower job groups than their male counterparts.

Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) conducted a study in Malaysia that revealed that for career women family responsibilities was the most significant barrier to career progress. Women were struggling with gaining credibility and respect from the managers and supervisors and were having a hard time managing work assignment. Family responsibility was found to be the major reason why most women resigned from work. Li and Leung (2001) state that in Singapore, heavy commitment in house hold and family responsibilities interfere with women's career advancement. For instance, a woman is supposed to take the family roles associated with parental, marital and home maker despite being employed. Subramanian, Arumugam and Akeel (2014) found that family responsibility related barriers hindered women's career development. This was because women had to continue with their family care responsibilities even if they took up more demanding jobs.

A study by Mayrhofer, Meyer, Schiffinger and Schmidt (2007) found family responsibilities to be one of the major factors that influenced the quantity of time and energy that someone is able and willing to spend on work. A study done by the European foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions indicates that men preferred to work an average of 36.5 hour week while women preferred a 30 hour week. This is to say that women employees preferred a shorter week as compared to their male counterparts. The study showed that family responsibilities as the reasons for women's need to reduce actual working hours. A study on barriers to executive suit in Ireland as conducted by Cross (2010), revealed that having children remains to be a major barrier for women. She argues that in their child bearing years tension exists for women resulting

from the biological fact that only they can reproduce. According to the findings career progress and having children seem to be incompatible as it is only women who must take time off of their careers in order to have children.

Ismail and Ibrahim (2008) in their studies showed that the extra domestic duties that women have can create work overloads which then affects women's work experiences by reducing their potential for achievement in their careers, thus the difficulty of having both a career and family life may compel female managers to remain single and childless since by doing so, they reduce the number of social roles and the degrees of role conflicts. Davidson and Cooper (1992), suggest that career interruptions may lower women's self-esteem. This may be as a result of employer's unwillingness to retrain the workforce after the period of interruption even if they hold many years of experience. Metz (2005) argues that having children negatively affects the relationship between work hours and input for managerial advancement among women. The above observation therefore, suggests children take away time which would be spend at work to the children and therefore women lose out on working the long hours required for advancement to managerial jobs with resultant consequences of lack of promotion. Legault and Chessario (2003) state that time consumed at work seems to be a major factor in determining commitment of employees and employees are urged to put in long hours to accomplish tasks instead of setting a certain amount of time to work.

2.3.2 Stereotyping

Issac, Kaatz & Carnes (2012) describe a term stereotypic threat in their article, ‘deconstructing the glass ceiling’, which says that when women are dubbed as lacking leadership skills and being emotional (Crocker et al. 1998), it may result to undermine the self-confidence and aspirations among women (Davies, Spencer & Steele, 2005). Managerial role gender stereotypes occur when the traits which are considered to be mandatory in accomplishing the role are ascribed to one sex (Schein, 1973, 1975, 2001, 2006). This is the top managerial positions are more acceptable to males.

According to Oswald (2008) and Rudman and Phelan (2010) , gender role stereotype may influence occupation preference by affecting both one’s perceived ability and interest in different careers. Additionally, these stereotypes affect the perceptions and expectations of leaders (Cabrera et al., 2009) and work to influence income (Blau et al., 2002) and performance ratings in the organization (Bauer & Baltes, 2002; Bowen et al., 2000).

For the longest time women have been viewed as child-bearers and home makers (Wright, 1990) and this continues to be the case despite the fact that nowadays people are perceived to be more liberal in matters concerning gender equality.

Schein (1996) discovered that when a female employee prefers to work with a male boss as opposed to a female boss, it supports the continuity of the “think managers, think male” syndrome. According to Hsung and Chow (2001), male managers were identified as better superiors and respectable as compared to female managers. Many studies have proven that the existence and persistence of stereotypical cultural practices and socialization and gender biases are responsible for the poor representation of women in

senior management positions (Curry, 2000; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Embry, Padget & Caldwell, 2008; Shah, 2009; Shah & Shah, 2012). Vinkenburg and Van, (2005) propose that the most frequent barriers to women's advancement were gender biases. Similarly Coleman (2011) also confirmed that 'gendered attitudes' play a major role in women's career progression (p. 174) and strongly support women's childcare and domestic responsibilities (Fu & Shaffer, 2001; Hewlett, Luce & West, 2005), whereas men have been given the role of breadwinner (Snow, Swan & Raghavan, 2003; Duxbury & Higgins, 2005).

Stereotypes against women as managers are some of the factors that hinder women's career progress and offer women fewer opportunities, (Bierema and Opengart,2002) and (Burton, 1991). Crystal and Tudor (1993) emphasized the following stereotypes concerning women: Women loose time for and interest in their jobs because they often put family responsibility above work responsibilities; Women do not possess the necessary drive required to succeed in business due to their tendency to work for supplemental income; Being too emotional and less aggressive disqualifies women from being suitable for top management positions; Compared to men, women are not as committed to their careers (Korn and Ferry, 1992) and women do not possess quantitative skills (Korn and Ferry, 1992). Kittay (2001) showed that perceptions about effective management continue to be based on a purely masculine gender stereotype which tends to create conflict between the gender role of women pursuing a career in management and the role of management. The use of feminine management styles results into women being branded as ineffective leaders, (Githui, 2011). This conflict in roles

due to gender stereotypes leads to discrimination of women when it comes to top management positions.

2.3.3 Training and Development Opportunities

Education, training and development can act as both a challenge and support, (Burke 2002). Organizational support systems (Culpan and Wright, 2002), mentoring (Mattis, 2002), networking (Wirth, 2001), training and development programs (Wirth, 2001), and organization cultures that support women (Bajdo and Dickson, 2001) are very important for women's advancement to management positions but the career paths between men and women are not the same and men often make more career moves and have more management positions before obtaining general manager's position (Blayney & Blotnicky, 2010). To deal with these unfavorable conditions there is need for women to develop adaptive strategies through which they can actively construct and modify their roles, resources and relationships to deal with problems and create benefits from these multiple roles (Ezzedeen, 2009).

Available information shows that women remain underrepresented in policy-making and management level positions (Francis 1995; House-Midamba 1990, 1996; Kibwana 1995; Landau 1995; Nzomo, 1995). There are very few women occupying the jobs that offer opportunities for advancement to positions of greater decision-making, authority, responsibility, prestige, self-fulfillment and higher pay in public, parastatal and private sector organizations. For instance only 7.9% of top level positions and 21.1% of middle level positions were occupied by women by 1986 in the modern sector in Kenya (Hughes and Mwiria 1989). Additionally, compared to men, women are less likely to experience

cross-sectoral mobility (Hughes 1986). In Kenya female employees are also less likely to receive further training both of the job and on the job. (Francis 1995; House-Midamba 1996; Kibwana 1995; Nzomo 1995; United Nations 1995).

2.3.4 Mentoring and Networking

Informal networks only serve the purpose of fulfilling the need to be seen to be doing something and may actually prevent or boost an employee's chances of promotion (Kandola 2004). However, networks are still important for increasing visibility and career advancement (Vinnicombe & Singh, 2003; Maxfield, 2005; Ogden et al., 2006). Networking was an important enabler to career development (Ogden et al., 2006).

There are two types of networking namely internal and external networking. Internal networking means networking within an organization. Maxfield (2005) identifies internal networking as an important characteristic or behavior that is thought to be important for one to progress in an organization; if one struggles to network internally, they may be viewed as unable to represent the organization adequately on an external basis. On the other hand external networking refers to the ability to network with others outside the organization. Networking ability was identified as a business skill that is important for building relations with clients, and as a method by which one's visibility to senior management is revealed, and in this way enhanced career progression (Maxfield, 2005).

Research has shown the importance of mentors to women managers. However, female managers still face organizational barriers that hinder the development of mentor relationships. Burke and Mckeen (1997) did a comparison of managerial and professional women with and without mentors on a range of measures i.e personal, demographic and situational characteristics, work outcomes and aspects of psychological well-being. According to their study women with mentor relationships were younger, on the other hand, women in higher level positions had shorter job tenure, worked more hours and attached higher priority to their careers.

A study by Cross (2009), revealed that male managers were highly engaging in networking activities which gave them increased levels of visibility among the senior management team as compared to their female counterparts. Findings by Headlam-Wells et al., (2006) women being mentored showed improvements in many key employability skills. For example, their ability to identify their weaknesses and ways to develop professionally improved substantially as did their networking skills and ability to identify their strengths. Mentors also stated that women had experienced development in terms of greater self-awareness, increased confidence, improved reflective skills and development of online skills. Mentoring therefore plays an important role in the career development of successful women managers (Headlam-Wells, 2004).

Cullen and Luna (1993) agree that lack of mentoring is a barrier to women's career advancement. A study that was conducted on career advancement for women in higher education by Maack and Passet (1994) also concluded that women in higher education who have been mentored attain higher levels of career advancement than the ones who

have not been mentored. Brown (2005) agrees with this assertion by indicating that in a study of 91 female college presidents, the majority who were “presidents” had primary mentors and were also mentors to others. According to Ackah and Heaton (2003) a network of friends, colleagues, and clients can be extremely useful to career advancement because it can prove beneficial in getting things done. Creating a network of mutual friends who can be relied upon to assist in matters relating to career can help an employee to find the best career opportunities and get in a better financial situation. For most employees, their work group is a source of social interaction where they can also share their frustrations and feelings of satisfaction.

Zhong (2006) emphasizes the need for women to create their networks and to participate in men’s networks. Maxifield (2005) argues that women lacked the important tool of networking because they found networking challenging and according to Ackah and Heaton (2003) women were denied access to networks through which they could make themselves known and learn about the promotion processes. In Tanzania women who do not network are at a greater risk of being rendered invisible and never remembered when promotions are being discussed (Adler & Izraeli, 1994).

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter covers research design, population of the study, sampling design, data collection and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The descriptive survey design was adopted. This design was preferred since it involves gathering data to test questions regarding the current status of the participants of the study which guarantees ease in understanding the insight and ideas concerning the research problem under investigation. This research design is also best suited for gathering data on current practices and it enables meaningful description of a distribution of scores or measurements using a few indices or statistics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.3 Target Population

The target population was the 527 female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi. Out of the 1,798 administrative staff, 527 are women (Staff establishment (in post) 2015).

3.4 Sampling Design

Out of the 527 female administrative staff 105 women who comprises is 20% of the population was selected through systematic sampling. Every 5th woman in the list was picked.

3.5 Data Collection

Primary data was collected with the aid of semi-structured self-administered questionnaires. The questionnaires were divided into two parts, part one collected demographic data while part two collected data addressing the goals of the study. The

questionnaires were distributed by dropping and picking method and respondents were expected to complete the questionnaires within a period of 2 days.

3.6 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics for instance frequency counts, standard deviation, percentages and means were used to analyze the data and the findings were exhibited using frequency tables, charts and graphs.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter contains the presentation, demographic characteristics of the respondents and the perceived barriers.

4.2 Response Rate

Of the 105 questionnaires that were given to the respondents, 96 were completed and returned (81.4%) response rate.

4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents age distributions, highest academic level of respondents, length of service in the University, length of service in the current position, and number of promotions after appointment in the University.

4.3.1 Age Distribution of the Respondents

Majority of the respondents (36.5%) were aged between 31 and 40 years old, followed by those aged below 20 years (28.1%) and then 21 to 30 years old (20.8%). The least number of respondents (4.2%) were those aged above 60 years. It can be concluded that majority of the female administrative staff in the University were aged 40 years and below, which is a relatively youthful age. These responses are presented in figure 4.1 below.

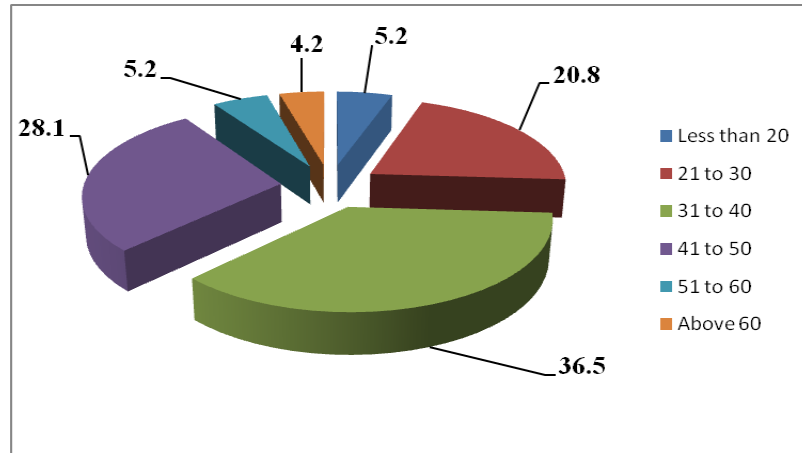


Figure 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents

4.3.2 Highest Level of Education of the Respondents

Majority of the respondents (66.7%) had attained an undergraduate degree, followed by (22.9%) who had attained a Postgraduate degree. The rest (10.4%) had attained a College Certificate. The findings show that the respondents had sound knowledge of issues raised in the questionnaire and were expected to provide objective responses. The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.2 below.

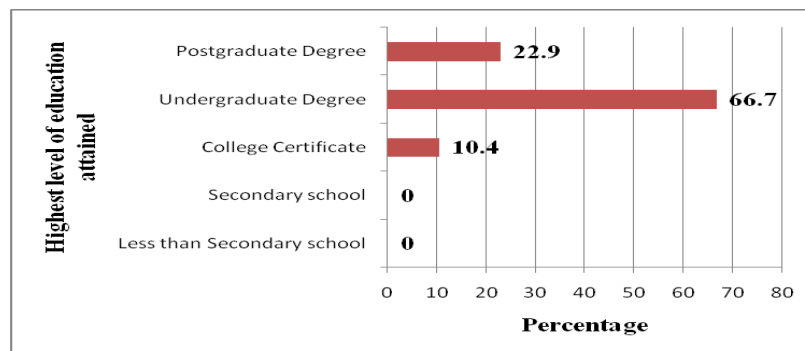


Figure 4.2: Highest Level of Education of the Respondents

4.3.3 Length of Service in the University of Nairobi

Majority of the respondents (94.8%) had worked in the University of Nairobi for 5 years or less, while 5.2% of the respondents had worked in the University for a period of

between 6 and 10 years. However, their interactions with the staff who had been in the establishment for a longer period could enable them gain an understanding of the perceived barriers to women career progress in the University, hence they would be able to provide objective responses to the study questions. . The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.3 below.

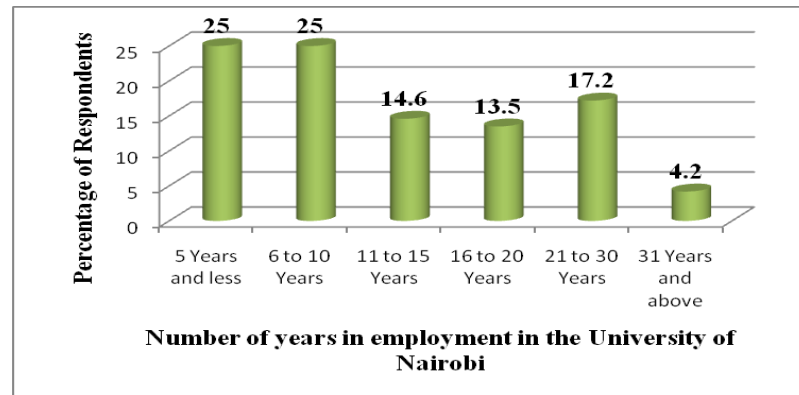


Figure 4.3: Length of Service in the University of Nairobi

4.3.4 Length of Service in the Current Position

Majority of the respondents (69.8%) had worked in the current position for a period of 5 years or less. Whereas (6.3%) of the respondents had worked in the current position for between 6 to 10 years, (9.4%) had worked for between 11 to 15 years, (5.2%) had worked in the current position for between 16 and 20 years, and (9.4%). The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.4 below.

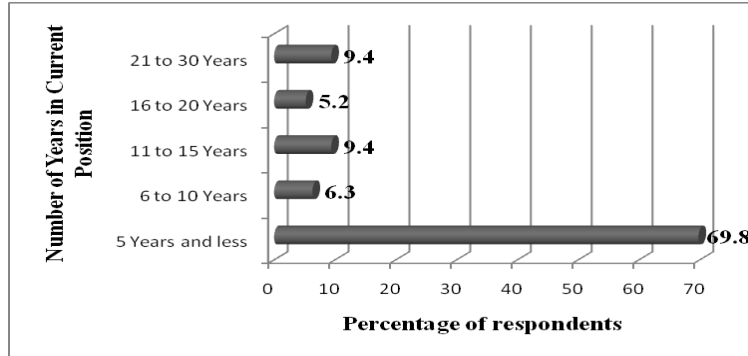


Figure 4.4: Length of Service in the Current Position

4.3.5 Number of Promotions After Appointment in the University

Majority of the respondents (57.3%) had received only one promotion since being employed in the University. Whereas (18.8%) of the respondents stated that they had received two promotions, (15.6%) of the respondents had not received any promotion since being employed in the University. The respondents who had received three or four promotions accounted for (4.2%). The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.5 below.

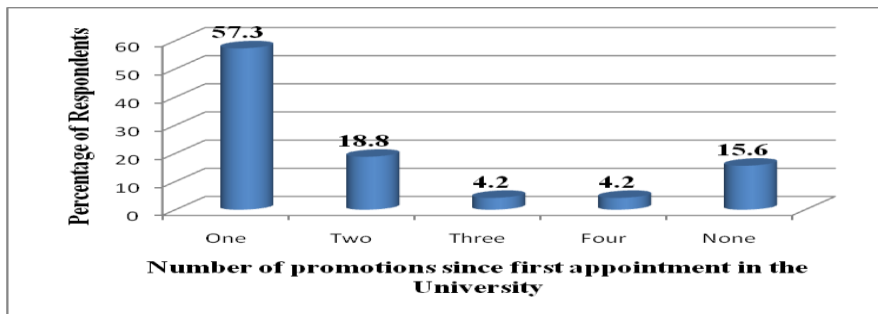


Figure 4.5: Number of Promotions After Appointment in the University

4.4 Perceived Barriers to Career Progression of Female Administrative Staff in the University of Nairobi

The perceived barriers to career progression of female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi are mentoring and networking, family related factors, stereotyping factors and training and development opportunities.

4.4.1 Mentoring and Networking

Lack of Mentoring and networking relationships was perceived to be the major barrier to career progress of female administrative staff with an aggregate mean of 4.38. Mentoring and networking is important for women's advancement on account of boosting confidence and emotional support. Women who receive mentorship experience development through improved reflective skills, greater self-awareness, increased confidence and development of online skills. Mentoring is frequently seen as playing an important role in the career development of successful women managers (Headlam-Wells, 2004). According to Ogden *et al.*, (2006) networking played an important role to career development.

4.4.2 Family Related Factors

With an aggregate mean of 3.28 family related factors were also seen to majorly affect the career progression of women in the workplace. When demands of the job increasingly interfere with family life, women face conflict which influences their career outcomes. For women with young children, it becomes hard to balance work-life especially when trying to balance their role as the primary caregiver with additional responsibility in the organization. With reduced time in the workplace, women experienced depressed wages and lack of benefits and advancement that accompany that choice. Research findings as

supported by Linge (2011) and Emerson (2005) noted that several interconnected social-family issues were cited by various authors as obstacles to women's career advancement, and these include family responsibilities and marital status. According to Metz (2005), the having children may affect how women are perceived at work by questioning their commitment to work. Legault and Chessario (2003) assert that such a perception can have serious implications for performance appraisal because commitment is naturally taken into account during performance appraisal as a primary factor to promotion.

4.4.3 Stereotyping

Findings of the study showed that stereotyping with an aggregate mean of 2.53 ranked third as a barrier to career progression of female administrative staff. The highest ranked statement was "Traditionally, women are viewed as child-bearers and keepers of the home", with a mean of 4.25. The least ranked statement was 'Women lack leadership skills, which undermine their self-confidence' (mean of 1.82). Women tend to place family demands above work consideration and hence lose time for, and interest in their jobs. Gender biases are the most frequent barriers to women's advancement. As supported by Wright (1990), traditionally, and for the longest time, women have been viewed as child-bearers and keepers of the home. This notion continued to be the case despite the fact that the present charade gives the impression that people are liberal-minded about the issues pertaining to gender equality. The study that was conducted by Crystal and Todor (1993) highlighted the following stereotypes concerning women: Women tend to place family demands above work consideration and hence lose time for, and interest in their jobs; Women work for supplemental income and hence lack the necessary drive to succeed in business; Women are unsuitable for top management

positions because they are too emotional and lack aggressiveness; Women are not as committed as men to their careers (Korn & Ferry, 1992); and Women lack quantitative skills (Korn & Ferry, 1992).

4.4 Training and Development Opportunities

According to the study findings, training and development was the least ranked barrier with an aggregate mean of 2.34. It is observed that training and development programs that support women’s career advancement are lacking. Women employees are less likely to receive further training either off-the-job or on-the-job. Women are deprived of access to formal training opportunities and access to firm sponsored training and development schemes, partly because of the high labor turnover rates of women, which amounts to indirect cost for employers. According to Burke (2002), education, training and development can be conceived of as being either or both challenge and support.

Table 4.1: Perceived Barriers To Career Progression of Female Administrative Staff

Statements related to perceive barriers to career progression of female administrative staff	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Ranking
Mentoring and Networking							
Mentoring plays an important role in the career development of successful women managers	-	-	10.4	53.1	36.1	4.26	1
Women’s networks could be a strategy to give the women a voice in an organization and better their lots.	-	1.0	10.4	52.1	36.5	4.24	2
Mentoring and networking relationships are valuable for women’s advancement in view of boosting emotional support	-	-	4.2	62.5	32.5	4.23	3
Mentoring and networking relationships are valuable for women’s advancement in view of boosting confidence	-	-	10.4	58.3	31.3	4.21	4
Building a network of mutual friends who can be called upon to assist in career matters can help an employee to find the best career opportunities and get in a better financial situation.	-	-	15.6	50.0	34.4	4.19	5
Mentoring and networking relationships are valuable for women’s advancement in	-	9.4	4.2	54.2	32.3	4.09	6

view of boosting career satisfaction							
Networks provide women with a situation where they can learn by observing role models and being mentored.	-	5.2	18.8	44.8	31.3	4.02	7
Women's networks could be a vehicle for individual strategy in advancing their career	10.4	9.4	7.3	43.8	29.2	3.72	8
Employees who network with clients look good to management because they help to strengthen the employer's stability	5.2	9.4	19.8	49.0	16.7	3.63	9
'Overbearing' male bosses, sometimes 'flirtatious' male mentors who tend see women as sex objects.	11.5	9.4	21.9	42.7	14.6	3.40	10
Women who do not network remain vulnerable and liable to being rendered invisible and never remembered when promotions are being discussed	16.7	19.8	25.0	33.3	5.2	2.91	11
Lack of role models at work place	32.3	14.6	6.3	36.5	10.4	2.78	12
There are fewer women mentors	31.3	24.0	10.4	27.1	7.3	2.55	13
Average Mean						4.38	1
Family Related factors							
When demands of the job increasingly encroach into family life, women experience conflict which affects their career outcomes	5.2	6.3	26.0	41.7	20.8	3.67	1
Work-life balance is very difficult for women with young children especially when they try to balance their role as the primary caregiver with additional responsibility in the organization.	5.2	-	35.4	44.8	14.6	3.64	2
As women reduce their time in the workplace, they see depressed wages and lack of benefits and advancement that accompany that choice.	5.2	14.6	15.6	42.7	21.9	3.61	3
Family responsibility and marital status negatively affect women's career progression	10.4	6.3	26.0	42.7	14.6	3.45	4
The presence of children affects how women are perceived at work like people's perception of women's commitment to work (this may affect performance appraisal)	10.4	15.6	28.1	40.6	5.2	3.15	5
Women employees preferred a shorter week as compared to their male counterparts; family responsibilities being the reasons for women's need to reduce actual working hours.	15.6	18.8	30.2	24.0	11.5	2.97	6
Child bearing is a barrier to women career progression.	15.6	10.4	40.6	29.2	4.2	2.96	7
Having children weakens the relationship between work hours and input for managerial advancement among women.	15.6	22.9	31.3	25.0	5.2	2.81	8
Average Mean						3.28	2

Stereotyping							
Traditionally, women are viewed as child-bearers and keepers of the home	2.1	-	10.4	45.8	41.7	4.25	1
Women tend to place family demands above work consideration and hence lose time for, and interest in their jobs	11.5	-	20.8	57.3	10.4	3.85	2
Gender biases are the most frequent barriers to women's advancement.	5.2	6.3	5.2	67.7	15.6	3.82	3
Women work for supplemental income and hence lack the necessary drive to succeed in business	31.3	24.0	10.4	29.2	5.2	3.55	4
Women employee prefers to collaborate with a male boss rather than a woman boss; it supports the continuity of the "think managers, think male" syndrome.	16.7	9.4	20.8	28.1	25.0	3.35	5
Commitment to personal responsibilities is a barrier to women's career progression	5.2	25.0	29.2	34.4	6.3	3.11	6
Our organization believes in the stereotype "think manager, think male", meaning success is a male characteristic.	16.7	8.3	35.4	33.3	6.3	3.04	7
Men as compared to women, evaluate their own performance more favorably than women	21.9	18.8	15.6	33.3	10.4	2.92	8
Women are unsuitable for top management positions because they are too emotional and lack aggressiveness	41.7	24.0	6.3	28.1		2.53	9
Commitment to family is a barrier to women's career progression	31.3	29.2	6.3	28.1	5.2	2.47	10
Cultural and social beliefs, attitudes and practices prevent girls from benefitting from educational opportunities and subsequently in gaining access to top managerial positions.	5.2	14.6	11.5	27.1	41.7	2.47	10
Men managers are better superiors and respectable compared to women managers.	28.1	9.4	14.6	38.5	9.4	2.40	12
Women are emotional, which negatively affect their career advancement	40.6	26.0	5.2	28.1	-	2.21	13
Women are not as committed as men to their careers	40.6	34.4	1.0	18.8	5.2	2.21	13
Women lack quantitative skills	46.9	28.1	-	18.8	6.3	2.14	15
Men are more forceful, assertive, aggressive, confident, independent, rational and task-oriented, whereas women are more nurturing, emotional, considerate, submissive, affectionate, and indecisive and people oriented.	46.9	28.1	-	18.8	6.3	2.09	16
The top managerial roles are more suited to males. (Achievement orientation, forcefulness and strength in decision-making are attributes that are regularly ascribed to men, and these traits are considered as essential in fulfilling 1managerial roles)	63.5	13.5	1.0	17.7	4.2	1.85	17

Women lack leadership skills, which undermine their self-confidence	57.3	25.0	-	13.5	4.2	1.82	18
Average Mean						2.53	3
Training and Development Opportunities							
Training and development programs that support women's career advancement are lacking	27.1	13.5	10.4	29.2	19.8	3.01	1
Women employees tend to be less likely to receive further training either off-the-job or on-the-job	32.9	24.0	21.9	17.7	4.2	2.38	2
Women who anticipate a career interruption due to maternity would invest less in education and formation	21.9	41.7	26.0	5.2	5.2	2.30	3
Women have less access to education and to positions of political power than men	45.8	12.5	22.9	10.4	8.3	2.23	5
Women lose out on access to formal training opportunities and access to firm sponsored training and development schemes, partly because of the high labor turnover rates of women, which amounts to indirect cost for employers	37.5	22.9	14.6	25.0	-	2.27	4
Average Mean						2.34	4
n = 96							

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

5.2 Summary

Majority of the respondents (57.3%) had received only one promotion since being employed in the University, (18.8%) were promoted twice since being employed at the University, and (15.6%) had not been promoted since being employed at the University. The respondents who had been promoted three or four promotions accounted for (4.2%). Barriers career progression of female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi are: mentoring and networking (average mean of 4.38), family related factors (average mean of 3.28); stereotyping factors (average mean of 2.53); and training and development opportunities (average mean of 2.34).

5.3 Conclusions

This study achieved its primary objective, which was “to determine the perceived barriers to career progression of female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi”. The findings show that the perceived barriers to women career progression are: family related factors; stereotyping; training and development opportunities; and mentoring and networking. Findings indicate that the order of ranking of the barriers to career progression of female administrative staff in the University of Nairobi is as follows: 1st ranked is mentoring and networking (average mean of 4.38); 2nd ranked was family related factors (average mean of 3.28); 3rd ranked was stereotyping factors (average mean of 2.53); and the 4th and least ranked of the perceived barriers was training and development opportunities (average mea of 2.34).

5.4 Recommendations

It is recommended that individual female employees should endeavor to overcome the above mentioned barriers to facilitate their career progression.

The University should support female employees in overcoming these barriers through various policy interventions.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Study

A similar study could be carried out in other industries to find out whether the same results prevail. Whereas the current study focused on four the four factors: family related factors, stereotyping, training and development opportunities, and mentoring and networking, other studies should focus on other perceived career progression of female employees.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. Age (Years) (1) = Less than 20 [] (2) = 21 - 30 [] (3) = 31 – 40 []
 (4) = 41 – 50 [] (5) = 51 - 60 [] (6) = Above 60 []
2. Highest education level attained:
 Less than Secondary school [] Secondary school []
 College Certificate [] College Diploma []
 Undergraduate Degree [] Postgraduate Degree []
3. Number of Years Worked in the University: _____
4. Current position in the University: _____
5. Number of Years worked in the current position: _____
6. Number of Promotions after appointment into the University
 One [] Two [] Three [] Four [] Above 4 promotions [] none []

SECTION II: PERCIEVED BARRIERS TO CAREER PROGRESSION OF FEMALE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with each of the following statements

Strongly Agree = **5**; Agree = **4**; Neither Agree Nor Disagree = **3**; Disagree = **2**; strongly disagree = **1**

Family Related Factors	5	4	3	2	1
Family responsibility and marital status negatively affect women’s career progression					
The presence of children affects how women are perceived at work like people’s perception of women’s commitment to work (this may affect performance appraisal)					
When demands of the job increasingly encroach into family life, women					

experience conflict which affects their career outcomes					
Work-life balance is very difficult for women with young children especially when they try to balance their role as the primary caregiver with additional responsibility in the organization.					
As women reduce their time in the workplace, they see depressed wages and lack of benefits and advancement that accompany that choice.					
Child bearing is a barrier to women career progression.					
Women employees preferred a shorter week as compared to their male counterparts; family responsibilities being the reasons for women’s need to reduce actual working hours.					
Having children weakens the relationship between work hours and input for managerial advancement among women.					
Stereotyping	5	4	3	2	1
Women lack leadership skills, which undermine their self-confidence					
Women are emotional, which negatively affect their career advancement					
Men as compared to women, evaluate their own performance more favorably than women					
The top managerial roles are more suited to males. (Achievement orientation, forcefulness and strength in decision-making are attributes that are regularly ascribed to men, and these traits are considered as essential in fulfilling managerial roles)					
Traditionally, women are viewed as child-bearers and keepers of the home					
Our organization believes in the stereotype “think manager, think male”, meaning success is a male characteristic.					
Women employee prefers to collaborate with a male boss rather than a woman boss; it supports the continuity of the “think managers, think male” syndrome.					
Men managers are better superiors and respectable compared to women managers.					
Gender biases are the most frequent barriers to women’s advancement.					
Commitment to personal responsibilities is a barrier to women’s career					

progression					
Commitment to family is a barrier to women's career progression					
Cultural and social beliefs, attitudes and practices prevent girls from benefitting from educational opportunities and subsequently in gaining access to top managerial positions.					
Women tend to place family demands above work consideration and hence lose time for, and interest in their jobs;					
Women are unsuitable for top management positions because they are too emotional and lack aggressiveness					
Women are not as committed as men to their careers					
Women lack quantitative skills					
Men are more forceful, assertive, aggressive, confident, independent, rational and task-oriented, whereas women are more nurturing, emotional, considerate, submissive, affectionate, and indecisive and people oriented.					
Training and Development Opportunities	5	4	3	2	1
Women have less access to education and to positions of political power than men					
Women lose out on access to formal training opportunities and access to firm sponsored training and development schemes, partly because of the high labor turnover rates of women, which amounts to indirect cost for employers					
Women who anticipate a career interruption due to maternity would invest less in education and formation					
Training and development programs that support women's career advancement are lacking					
Women employees tend to be less likely to receive further training either off-the-job or on-the-job					
Mentoring and Networking	5	4	3	2	1
There are fewer women mentors					
'Overbearing' male bosses, sometimes 'flirtatious' male mentors who tend see women as sex objects.					

Lack of role models at work place					
Women's networks could be a vehicle for individual strategy in advancing their career					
Women's networks could be a strategy to give the women a voice in an organization and better their lots.					
Mentoring and networking relationships are valuable for women's advancement in view of boosting emotional support					
Mentoring plays an important role in the career development of successful women managers					
Building a network of mutual friends who can be called upon to assist in career matters can help an employee to find the best career opportunities and get in a better financial situation.					
Employees who network with clients look good to management because they help to strengthen the employer's stability					
Networks provide women with a situation where they can learn by observing role models and being mentored.					
Women who do not network remain vulnerable and liable to being rendered invisible and never remembered when promotions are being discussed					

Thank you for your time