

PERSISTENT GENDER INEQUITY IN ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT AT MAKERERE UNIVERSITY: IS THERE A GENDERED AGENDA?

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Abstract

The study investigated the persistent gender inequity in academic employment to specifically establish, on one hand, what explains and maintains gender inequity and, on the other hand, what can be done to close the gender inequity gap at Makerere University. Secondary and primary data were used. The results were presented descriptively and analytically, supported by tables and simple statistics. Findings indicated that gender inequity in academic employment was not a gendered agenda but rather, it was influenced by the individual's social background; the trend and numbers of females and males who graduate; the institutional structures and environment; the mental models and stereotypes staff formulate about themselves and about the profession/titles; and the commitment of the institution to addressing gender inequity in academic employment. It was recommended that individuals, especially women need to prioritize their time for academic advancement by utilizing the existing opportunities at the University and participating in the work of University committees that address gender inequity. The University should regularly monitor and evaluate their committees' mandates, structures and policies with a view of improving their efficacy. The Uganda Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) should monitor institutions with a view to address the gender inequities that exist and persist in employment. The Ministry of Education and Sports should address the gender stereotypes early enough in the education cycle.

Key words: Gender and academic tenure-ship; Family formation and academic employment gap; Gender inequity in academic employment.

BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Uganda Government is committed to gender equality and gender equity in all aspects of life. The Government has progressively enacted policies, programmes and interventions towards gender equality and gender equity. These policies and programmes are within the broader context and discussions of the international social development goals on gender equality. The Uganda Constitution of 1995, as amended, mandates the government to realize gender equality and equal access of all people to opportunities in the political, economic and social sectors of society. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is the line ministry charged with the responsibility of operationalizing the Uganda Gender Policy (UGP). The Uganda Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) carries out the State's constitutional mandate to eliminate discrimination and inequalities against any individual or group of

persons on the grounds of sex, age, race, colour, ethnic origin, tribe, birth, creed or religion, health status, social or economic standing, political opinion or disability, and to take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalized on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them; and to provide for other related matters (The Equal Opportunities Commission Act, 2007). To operationalize this function, all line ministries have gender desks to oversee the mainstreaming of gender in all policies and programmes in line with their mandate. In a situation characterized by resource inadequacies in the implementation of gender equality and equity, gender budgeting has been an integral part in the national budgeting processing. Sector budgets are approved by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on presentation of a certificate of gender compliance from the EOC. The Uganda Employment Act (2006) provides provisions for employment of some specific categories of persons, in particular, women, people with disability and children. Section 39 of the Employment Act (2006) provides for maternity leave, sick leave and paternity leave. In the education sector, programmes such as the Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE) and affirmative action at admission to public institutions, including universities, are some of the special initiatives towards gender equality and gender equity. All these initiatives were intended to reduce the gender gap in access to education, a prerequisite for academic employment. At national level affirmative initiatives include enhancement of political representation of women in the Uganda Parliament, with a provision that 1/3 of the members have to be women, even though women constitute 52 per cent of the population (UBOS, 2014).

Makerere University was the first public institution in Uganda to embrace the affirmative action initiative in 1991, with the award of 1.5 points to high school girls with a view of making them more eligible for entry to various academic programmes of study at the Makerere University. The aim was to make Makerere University a gender responsive institution in both the academic and administration sections. This initiative was enhanced by the establishment of the School of Women and Gender Studies in 1991 and the Gender Mainstreaming Department in 2001. The aim was to ensure that gender issues were an integral part in teaching, learning, research and outreach as well as in influencing public policy and administration. It is now over two decades since the gender agenda was fast tracked. In 2016 Makerere University graduated a total of 14,193 students, 64 of whom were doctoral students. Female enrolment hit the 44 per cent mark in the same year (Makerere University Fact Book, 2015). The numbers of women graduating with PhDs, including the tenured and non-tenure track in higher education, have been steadily rising. The above notwithstanding, gender inequities in academic employment still persist, with women still underrepresented in many departments and colleges (Makerere University, Fact book, 2015). There doesn't seem to be any sign that the gender inequity gap in employment and, especially in academia, is about to close in the near future. Therefore, the state and perceptions of staff towards gender inequity in academic employment; what explains gender inequity; and what maintains the

gender inequity gap need to be investigated so as to provide evidence-based knowledge to address gender inequity.

Literature Review on Gender Inequity in Academic Employment

Traditionally the work of faculty members of universities consists of teaching, research and scholarship, and various forms of community service (UBOS, 2014; Makerere University Fact Book, 2015; Knapp, et al., 2011). Note that women make up the majority of students in American colleges and universities. The increase in the proportion of degrees earned by women has been especially dramatic, from only 3 per cent in 1960-61 to a projected 51 per cent in 2011 (Misra et. al., 2011). The shift to a predominantly female student body has been dramatic and yet by and large, the progress for women into the most prestigious and well-paid positions in academia has lagged far behind the advances experienced by their male counterparts.

Misra et. al. (2011) further observed the disproportionate time the male and female academic staff spent in teaching and service and noted that this was a significant obstacle for women associate professors to attain full professorial rank. It was observed that although associate professors of both sexes taught lectures for a similar amount of time (four to six hours a week), the distribution of work tasks varied considerably. Men spent seven and a half hours more a week on their research than women did. Curtis (2010) points out that faculty members employed full time already represented a somewhat privileged category with a significant gap between women and men being observed in favour of men. The same trend was observed for faculty members employed part time. Although the proportion of full-time faculty members with non-tenure-track appointments had steadily increased, the proportion of women in that contingent situation remained larger and the gap was not closing. As more faculty members were appointed to non-tenure-track positions, the proportion of tenured women faculty was smaller. The Modern Language Association (2009) and Misra, et al., (2011) confirmed that women were less likely to be promoted than men, and when they were promoted, the process took much longer time. Progression to the level of full professor remained an elusive goal for women. Women faculty members spent a greater proportion of their time on teaching at undergraduate level and student mentoring than men did. They spent more time on service, either as members of departmental or institutional committees or with outside organizations (Porter, 2007; Bradburn and Sikora, 2002; Toutkoushian and Bellas, 1999; Park, 1996; Blackburn, et al., 1991).

Mason and Marc (2004) analysed the life trajectories of PhD recipients, including their decisions about marriage and fertility. It was found that the life trajectories of tenured women differed from those of tenured men. Only one in three women who took a fast-track university job before having a child ever became a mother. Women who achieved tenure were more than twice as likely as their male counterparts to be single twelve years after earning

their PhD. Women who were married when they began their faculty careers were much more likely than men in the same position to become divorced or separated from their spouses. It was noted that women could not simply have it all: both tenure and a family.

Cobb-Clark, (1999) observed that the gender gap was insignificant among younger workers of ages 18 – 25years. The gender differences in experience were most prominent among men and women aged 26 – 39 years, suggesting that these differences arose mainly during the child bearing years. Mason and Goulden (2004) referred to this as the baby gap. Women aged between thirty and fifty who have children clock over a hundred hours each week on care giving, housework, and professional responsibilities as compared to a little more than eighty-five hours for men with children. It was further noted that women changed their family formation patterns to pursue the elusive goal of equality in the workplace. Women aiming for high positions in the professional, corporate, and academic worlds did not get married nor did they have children in their early twenties the way their mothers, who had no similar ambitions, did. It was noted that the culture had shifted to a delay mode, where a good climb up the career ladder was considered the prudent preface to starting families. While focusing only on professional outcomes as the measure of gender equality, we fail to recognize the widening gap between men and women in forming their families as measured by marriage and children. Gender equity measures should consider not only how many women were professors and deans relative to their male counterparts; but to ask how many women with children were in high places compared to men with children. This kind of evidence could reveal that women have much further to go than men do.

Gappa, Austin, & Trice (2007), argued that while many men provide care to family members, women often handle the larger part of family responsibilities, implying that policies which offer flexible work arrangements are important for attracting and supporting female faculty (<https://www.aaup.org/issues/balancing-family-academic-work>). It was noted that many faculty members sacrifice time with family to demonstrate that they are committed to their work. A number of female graduate students affirmed that they would not become faculty members because they did not see how they could combine work and family in a way that was reasonable for them and their families. It was pointed out that achieving gender equity in terms of careers and families in the academy requires re-structuring of the workplace. Structural changes ought to be put in place to tackle some of the greatest obstacles to success for women, preferably during the probationary period. These changes include but are not limited to stopping the tenure clock for childbirth. Childbirth needs generously modified duties and on-the-site child care. It was observed that passive and active resistance on the part of men and women pose a serious roadblock to cultural change. It was noted that the average age of obtaining a PhD degree is 33 years, placing the tenure year at age 40. Women were more likely to receive the PhD at a slightly older median age, that is, at 34.1 years as compared to 32.8 years for men. This period of intensive work to establish academic career coincided with prime child-rearing years. Because women were more likely to carry the burden of child-

rearing duties, they were often forced to make a choice between an all – time consuming professional career or having children - a choice men were unlikely to be forced to have to make.

The Mapping Project Survey conducted by Professor Robert Drago and colleagues at Penn State University emphasized that work/family problems among faculty arise partly from "bias avoidance" behaviour on the part of faculty members that leads them to avoid family commitments they would otherwise make, fail to fulfil family commitments, or spend time on strategies to hide parenthood and care-giving from others at work. This was more likely to be common in men as compared to women (<https://www.aaup.org/issues/balancing-family-academic-work>). From the literature cited, it appears that the most significant predators of gender inequity are time, family formation, the individual her/himself, the institution gender equality stance and the "baby gap".

Theoretical Framework

Gregory Mankiw (2007) explains the concept of scarcity as the state when there are not enough resources available to satisfy everyone's wants in terms of income, time, and leisure among other resources. In terms of academic growth, these resources are essential for aspiring academics to make a break through to tenure-ship. It is argued that one can never have it all, hence the concept of opportunity cost – the alternative foregone because of that resource being deployed elsewhere, meaning that resources that are deployed for one activity are simply not available for other activities. Williams (2010) and Milton Friedman, who won the Nobel Prize for Economics, put it blatantly that there is nothing such as free lunch, pointing to the issues of sacrifice.

The application of the opportunity cost to this study is that time is a critical resource with many competing demands on it such as the academic development and family formation, where gender roles, more particularly, reproductive, community and productive are different for men and women. One has to weigh the costs and benefits of allocating time to the various productive and reproductive alternatives and take on the "best alternative". One has to make rational choices to make the best use of resources between competing needs by allocating them where they bring maximum benefits. Williams (2010) notes in one study that women who took one year off work sacrificed 20% of their lifetime earnings, while women who took two or three years off sacrificed 30%. Friedman, Rimsky and Johnson, (1996) point out that an organization may wish to respond to the gender inequities, but this is subject to the demand to maximize organizational efficiency that may be at odds with gender equity initiatives. While this could be possible in public institutions where efficiency is not the main goal, it is highly unlikely in a private institution. Institutions are bound by their visions and missions to engage staff who were less encumbered by their family issues. Williams (2010) discusses the masculine culture in both blue-collar and white-collar jobs and observes basic patterns of

gender bias. First, the “maternal wall” — a bias that prevents women from getting jobs as well as keeping jobs once they got a child. Second, the “prove it again!” problem — women finding that they have to work twice as hard to prove that they are as competent as their male co-workers. Women are expected to act with traditional masculine characteristics to gain respect but at the same time to maintain feminine characteristics so as not to be perceived as too macho.

In light of the above, the theoretical framework has been guided by the concepts of scarcity, rationality, choice theory and opportunity cost as regards individuals and the theory of efficiency with regard to institutions and institutional structures. These seem to work in favour of masculine structures with organizational rules and regulations that emphasize productivity, efficiency and achievement with less regard to individual difference and how these differences are catered for within the organizational environment.

Methodology

This was a case study of Makerere University. Both primary and time series secondary data on academic staff were used. Secondary data was obtained from the Makerere University Fact Books. The secondary data set runs from 2008 when data about the University academic staff became available in a gender disaggregated form on key performance indicators in line with the mandate of the University, that is, teaching, learning, research and outreach.

Primary data was sought from male and female academic staff through interviews and a structured questionnaire. Respondents were from different colleges of the University, including the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, (CHUSS), the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES), the College of Computing and Information Sciences (COCIS), the University Library, the College of Health Sciences (CHS), the College of Education and External Studies, and the College of Veterinary Medicine, Animal Resources and Bio-Security (COVAB). The questionnaire was completed by willing respondents, both female and male academic staff. Accordingly, data was analysed by objectives using MS Excel software, estimating simple line graphs and simple statistics. The descriptive approach added a deeper understanding of the results.

Sixty four (64) academic staff completed the questionnaire, including 35 male and 29 female staff. Of those, 49 both male and female were married and only one reported to be single while the rest did not respond to this question. The minimum qualification for first recruitment in academic tenure ship was a master’s degree and the entry point in that academic structure was assistant lecturer. The sample included staffs that held at least a master’s degree or PhD. Academic staffs that matched these criteria were randomly selected depending on their willingness to participate.

FINDINGS

Social Background and its Effect on Academic Tenure-ship

The social background of the academic staff revealed that the male respondent's age ranged from 29 to 66 years, while that of female respondents ranged from 32 to 61 years of age. Fifty one (51) respondents were married and ten (10) were single. Thirteen out of 29 female academic staff got their first children before they graduated, implying that they were already encumbered with family issues before they were graduated and tenured. The age difference between the time when the female staffs got their first born children and when they got their first highest qualification was (-28 years).

Only eight out of 29 of the female staff had their first born children when they were already tenured. The lowest number of dependants in female staff households was 2 people. This was observed in two out of the 29 households. For the male academic staff, the age difference between when they got their first born children and when they got their first highest qualification was (-25 years). Eleven out of 35 male academic staff got their first children before they gained their highest qualifications, a smaller percentage compared to the female academic staff. It was observed that less male than female staff got encumbered with family issues way before they were tenured than their female counter part.

The biggest household size for both male and female academic staff was 10 people including the biological and other dependants. The smallest household size was one individual and it was observed in three out of 35 male households. The results implied female households carried a higher number of dependants than their male counterparts and therefore female staff had a heavier burden in terms of support. It also indicated that the female staffs indulge in family issues earlier than the male. Figure 1 shows the trend of students who graduate with PhD and Master's programmes at Makerere University by year from 2008 to 2016.

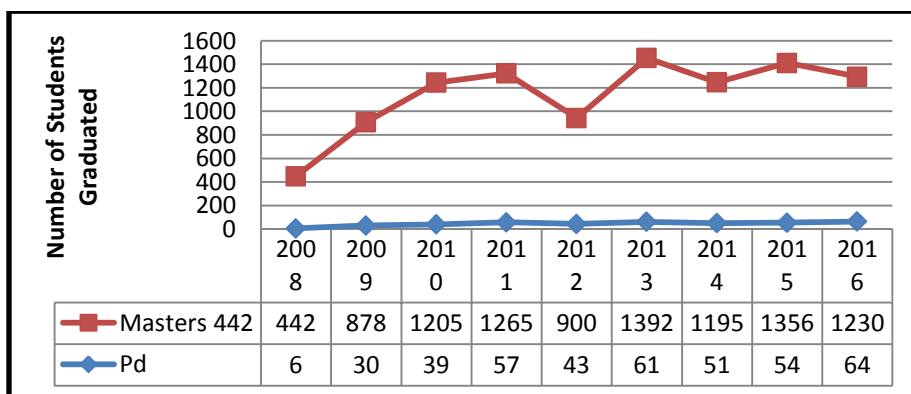


Figure 1 Trend of Students Graduated by Level and Year of Graduation.
Source: Makerere University Fact Book 2015/2016. Special Edition, 2016

The graduate trend for master’s level graduates steadily rose from 442 in 2008 to 1265 in 2011 before it dipped to 900 in 2012 and peaked off at 1392 in 2013 when it took a downward trend. The PhD gradation figures over the period show a low growth trend, rising from 6 PhDs in 2008 to 64 PhDs in 2016. One must have a PhD qualification to qualify for tenure-ship as a lecturer. It was observed that Makerere University graduated more master’s students than doctoral student.

Trends and Number of Male and Female Full-time Academic Staff by Year at Makerere University

Figure 2 shows that the trends of male and female fulltime academic staff by numbers and year. In general, the male statistics increased from 993 in 2008 to 1044 in 2016, representing an increase of male staff by 51. The female trend remained almost static from 369 in 2008 falling to 312 in 2009 and picking up in 2010 at 342 until 2015 when it peaked at 400 before it dropped to 388 the following year. This is an increase of 19 staff for the females during the same period.

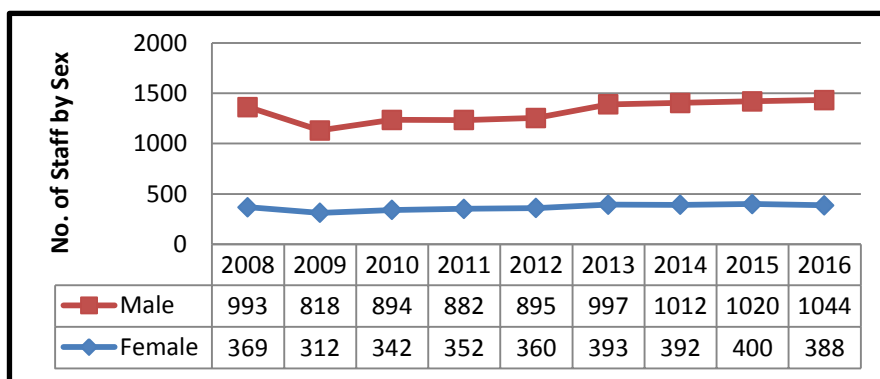


Figure 2 Trend of Full time Academic Staff by Gender and Year
 Source: Makerere University Fact Book 2015/2016. Special Edition, 2016

Trend of Graduation of Staff by Sex and Percentage of Female and Senior Academic Staff

Figure 3 shows total male and female academic staff, percentage of female and senior academic staff by year at Makerere University.

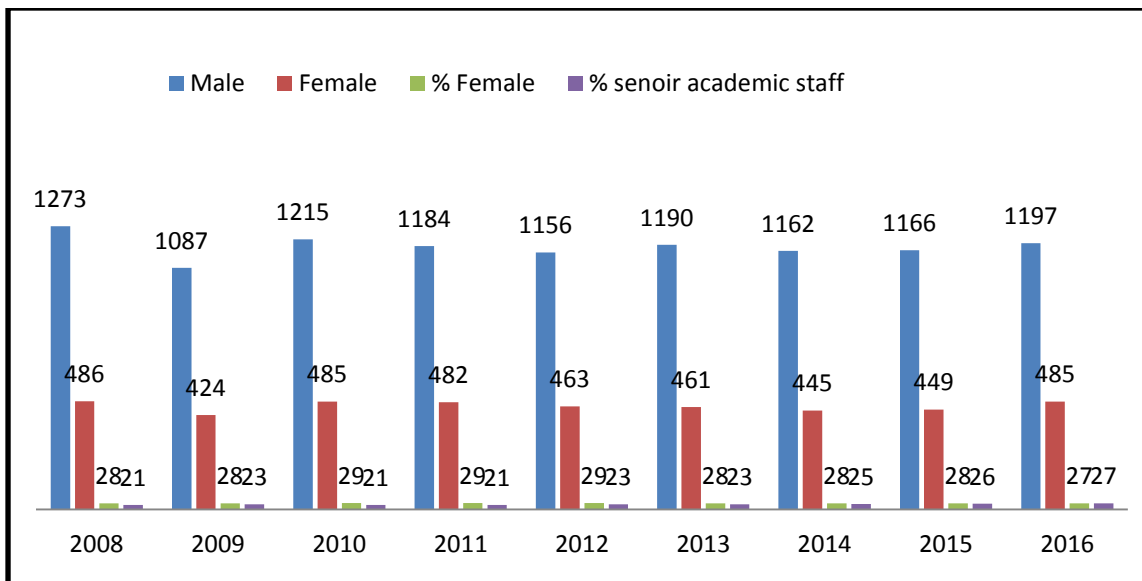


Figure 3 Trend of Total Male and Female Academic Staff, Percentage of female and senior academic staff by Year.

Source: Makerere University Fact Book 2015/2016. Special Edition, 2016

The percentage of female academic staff to total academic staff ranged between 27 and 29 per cent during the period 2008-2016. This was less than 1/3 of the academe at the University. The percentage of senior female academic staff to senior academic staff showed a similar trend. Senior academic staff at Makerere University constituted the professors, associate professors, senior lecturers and lecturers. This was a dismal performance on the part of female academic staff.

Working Environmental Factors that Explain Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University

Table 1 shows the results of the academic staff perceptions of the working environmental factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment by attribute, degree of agreement, and sex by level of significance. From this table the following attributes significantly point out to gender inequity in academic employment: the existence of more qualifying men for academic tenure-ship than women; the age at which staff gain access to funds to pursue PhD Programmes of study; the teaching load for both male and female staff; the existence of more male role models than female role models; a lower number of females seeking academic tenure ship. The results further indicate the family formation by academics before being tenured in academic service; the nurturing nature of women compared to men; the independence, competitiveness, and ambitious nature of men compared to women; gender inequity in academic employment as a female choice were insignificant pointers to gender inequity in academic employment.

Table 1: Environmental factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere university

Attributes Tested	No. of Resp	Sex		Strongly Agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree Strongly		Disagree		Result
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
		Existence of more qualifying men for academic tenure-ship than females	61	35	26	10	9	15	7			4	8	
The age staff access to funds to pursue PhD Programmes of study is the same for male and female staff.	59	34	25	7	6	13	3	3	5	5	1	7	8	Significant
The teaching load for both male and female staff is the same.	62	36	26	13	5	16	12	1	1	1	5	4	4	Significant
There are more male role models than female role models.	62	36	26	5	6	15	12	6	2	4	1	5	6	Significant
There are fewer females seeking academic tenure ship.	62	35	27	1	5	10	7	4	1	6	5	14	7	Indeterminate
There are enough female role models in academic tenure ship.	58	33	25	1	2	7	5	8	2	5	4	14	10	Significant
Female engagement in family formation by academic before being tenured in academic service.	60	35	25	0	2	3	1	12	3	12	10	6	8	Insignificant
The nurturing nature of women compared to men.	60	34	26	1	5	7	9	8	7	8	3	11	2	Insignificant
The independence, competitiveness, and ambitious nature of men.	61	34	27	1	4	5	7	8	2	9	4	13	9	Insignificant
Gender inequity in academic employment as a female choice.	63	35	28		3	1	6	9	3	17	5	9	9	Insignificant
Gender inequity in academic employment as a male agenda	63	35	28	2	3	4	13	8	2	14	2	7	6	Indeterminate

However, the fact that there were fewer women seeking academic employment and gender inequity in academic employment being a male agenda were indeterminate. This implied that individual based factors disadvantage women compared to men some of them very difficult to explain without considering the family in the background.

Factors that Maintain Gender Inequity in Academic Employment from an Institutional Viewpoint

Table 2 shows the result of the academic staff perceptions of the factors that maintain gender inequity in academic employment by attribute, degree of agreement, sex and level of significance from the institutional point of view.

Table 2: Factors that maintain gender inequity in academic employment from an Institutional Viewpoint

Attributes Tested	No. of Resp.	Sex		Strongly Agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree Strongly		Disagree		Result
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
		Universities preference to employ male to female academic staff.	64	37	27	2	5	6	5	10	5	9	4	
Cost of Employing Female compared to male academic staff was high.	64	35	29	5	4	17	17	7	0	2	3	3	3	Significant
Cost of employing male compared to female academic staff is not different.	64	37	27	1	1	2	2	7	5	10	9	17	8	Significant

Existence of deliberate Gender efforts at the Makerere University.	63	36	27	3	0	6	8	12	8	5	4	8	6	Indeterminate
Existence of deliberate Gender Equity measures and guideline at the Makerere University.	64	37	27	7	1	13	14	9	6	2	1	6	1	Significant
Implementation of Gender Equity Regulations	64	37	27	3	3	7	5	12	9	9	4	7	4	Indeterminate
Female representation at university top management is observed.	62	35	27	4	1	7	5	10	4	7	6	10	8	Significant
Absence of female representation on staff development, appointments and promotion board / committees.	63	35	28	4	2	17	11	11	6	1	3	2	5	Significant
Commitment of University Management towards Gender Responsive Recruitment.	64	37	27	4	0	14	11	13	6	2		3	7	Significant
Need for more affirmative action towards gender inequity.	63	36	27	13	15	16	10	4	0	1	1	2	0	Significant
Implementation of affirmative action in academic employment.	63	37	26	3	1	10	4	12	2	3	6	9	13	Indeterminate
Existence of a female friendly academic environment at the University.	64	36	28	2	1	7	3	8	2	7	1	11	9	Significant
Support for a policy of optional delayed retirement for women.	63	35	28	7	11	9	10	6	2	4	2	7	2	Significant

The institutionally based perceptions that significantly maintain gender inequity in academic employment included: high cost of employing female staff; existence of deliberate gender equity measures and guideline; female representation at top management; absence of female representation on staff development, appointments and promotion board/committees; inadequate commitment of University management towards gender responsive recruitment; lack of more affirmative action towards gender inequity; absence of a female friendly environment at the University; support for a policy of optional delayed retirement for women. One could deduce that institutionally based factors were significant pointers to gender inequity, highlighting the lukewarm nature of the institution towards gender mainstream or policy evaporation. On the other hand, the university preference to employing male compared to female academic staff; existence of deliberate gender efforts at the Makerere University; implementation of gender equity regulations were indeterminate in explaining the persistent gender inequity. This could be interpreted as a lukewarm attitude/reception of the institution towards implementing the gender agenda, and that gender inequity in academic employment was a structural challenge at Makerere University.

Individually Based Perceptions that Explain Gender Inequity in Academic Employment at Makerere University

Table 3 shows the individually based perceptions of the factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere University from an institutional point of view, by attribute, sex and level of significance.

Table 3: Individual perceptions of factors that explain gender inequity in academic employment at makerere university

Attributes Tested	No of Resp	Sex		Strongly Agree		Agree		Indifferent		Disagree Strongly		Disagree		Result
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	
Women prefer to have children first before they embark on academic career	63	34	29	3	6	12	11	6	2	4	3	9	8	Significant
Men prefer to have children first before they embark on academic career	62	34	28	1	4	3	3	9	7	9	4	10	13	Insignificant
Men try to avoid family issues before they are tenured in employment	60	32	28	7	6	9	6	5	7	8	1	4	7	Significant
Women try to avoid family issues before they are tenured in employment.	61	33	28	0	4	10	4	5	3	6	10	11	7	Insignificant
It is prudent for women to embark on academic career before they get families.	61	33	28	10	7	11	14	5	2	5	1	2	5	Significant
Family commitments hinder one's ability to do research.	63	34	29	5	13	18	11	2	1	5	2	4	2	Significant
The title "Professor" is more represented by men than women	61	34	27	7	15	13	5	5	1	4	2	6	4	Significant
Conflict amongst women is responsible for the gender inequity.	62	34	28	1	1	6	7	9	5	5	5	14	10	Insignificant
Women are irrational in decision making	61	34	27	2	2	3	3	5	3	13	12	10	7	Insignificant
Men make more rational decisions than women in academia	62	34	28	2	5	4	3	6	3	11	9	11	7	Insignificant
It is all about self-created virtual walls by the female staff	61	33	28	3	1	7	7	10	1	6	10	6	9	Insignificant

From Table 3 the following individual perceptions were significant in explaining gender inequity at Makerere University: women's preference to have children first before they embarked on an academic career; men's avoidance of family issues before they were tenured in employment. It was prudent for women to embark on an academic career before they got families. Family commitments hinder a woman's ability to do research as an important factor in academic engagement and the individual perception that the title "Professor" was more represented by men than women models. On the other hand, individual based perception including men's preference to have children first before they embark on academic career; women avoidance of family issues before they were tenured in employment; conflict amongst women; the perception that women were irrational in decision making and men were more rational decisions than women; and the perception that it was all about one's choice were insignificant. This meant the family related factors, mental models of one's self and of the job titles explained gender inequity in academic employment but these factors.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

This study investigated the gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere University, Uganda. It aimed to establish if gender inequity in academic employment was a gendered agenda. It investigated the effect of individual, working environment and institutional based

perceptions and how they impacted on gender inequity in academic employment at Makerere University. The general result indicated that individual based factors disadvantage women more compared to men. Some of these factors are very difficult to explain without knowing the family background. There was a lukewarm attitude/reception towards implementing the gender agenda and gender inequity in academic employment was a structural challenge at Makerere University.

Household characteristics revealed that on average, female households have a higher number of dependants than their male counterparts. This puts more stress on female as compared to male staff. Female staffs have to handle family formation issues earlier than their male counterparts. Women graduate at the age of between 23 - 27 years which is the female prime reproductive age. This could explain their late entry into academic tenure-ship. This result concurred with what Mason and Goulden (2004) called the baby gap, and Cobb-Clark's (1999) observation that the gender gap was insignificant among younger workers aged 18–25years. Cobb-Clark contends that the baby gap predisposes women to family responsibility before they were tenured in any employment, robbing them of time for academic development. Misra et. al. (2011) posit that family responsibility and academic career growth compete for time that would otherwise be for academic development and hence tenure-ship. This could explain the gender inequity in academic employment.

The results further showed that the teaching load for female and male academic staff was not different but women spend more time on other services at the university while men spend more time on research. This finding concurs with the argument of Misra et. al. (2011) that the disproportionate time male and female staff spent in teaching and service was a significant obstacle for women associate professors and therefore a predator to tenure-ship of female staff. Mason and Marc (2004) acknowledge this in a related argument that the life trajectories of tenured women differed from those of tenured men. This implies that Makerere University did not recognize the gender differential responsibilities of staff when allotting the teaching load. The opportunity cost of this was a slow academic growth of women and their tenure-ship, a result that was similar to the findings of other scholars including Bradburn and Sikora, (2002); Toutkoushian and Bellas, (1999); Park, (1996); Blackburn, et al., (1991). These scholars underscored the significance of the family and balancing of time among the three basic components of faculty tasks: teaching, research and services to community and family as predators to academic tenure-ship.

Evidence showed that there are fewer female senior academic staff as compared to the male staff at Makerere University. In addition, although there is a very slow growth of PhD graduates from Makerere University, the female rate of growth was far lower than that of the male academe. The slow growth rate of PhD graduates and the small number of females compared to the male academic staff was likely to be a recipe for gender inequity in academic employment as this provided small space for recruitment. These results concur with the observation by Knapp, et al., (2011) that although by 2011 women were in the majority of

students in American colleges and universities, the progress for women into the most prestigious and well-paid positions in academia has lagged far behind the advances experienced by their male counterparts.

At Makerere University this is reinforced by fewer women seeking academic employment, a factor that could explain gender inequity against females. These fewer numbers of females seeking academic tenure-ship was likely to translate into less female representation on strategic committees. These small numbers of females on the strategic committees is likely to lead to an inability of the female staff to push the gender inequity agenda, for instance to ensure that women will receive the 40% proportion of opportunities for women's slots when awarding grants for academic development and/or advocate for an even higher proportion. This is in agreement with what The Modern Language Association (2009) and Misra, et al., (2011) posited, that is, that women are less likely to be promoted than men, and when they are promoted, the process takes longer, probably due to their age when they qualify. By that age they are likely to be competing with young and energetic men and hence less likely to get tenure-ship. Besides, the big numbers of junior male academic staff employed on contract as mentees, which is unlikely for female academic staff, puts them in a position to take advantage of any opportunity before the opportunities are advertised.

The cost of employing female staff was perceived to be higher than that of male staff. This could be attributed to the intermittent breaks women may from time to time demand such as maternity leave, caring for their families and any other social roles they may need to perform which will force the institution to incur extra costs for temporary staff when female academics are away. This appears to rhyme with Rimsky and Johnson's (1996) position that organizations may wish to respond to the gender inequities, but this may not be possible since the organization needs to maximize its organizational efficiency and functions that may be at odds with gender equity initiatives. It is observed that this could only be possible in public institutions where efficiency is not the main goal, unlike in private institutions. Institutions are bound by their visions and missions to engage staffs who are less encumbered by their family issues.

Staff observed that the existence of deliberate gender equity measures and guidelines at the Makerere University was in itself a pointer for gender inequity in academic employment. A case in point was the practice that when the female staff constituency failed to raise the required number of candidates to take up the 40% proportion of funds for academic development, the female slot was given away to the male candidate, but the reverse was not true when there were more females vying for other positions, they were not compensated. However, the result that gender inequity was a male agenda was indeterminate. The male academic staff took advantage of their numbers on strategic committees of the University. Men were better represented on most committees of the University, except for the Gender Mainstreaming Committee. Men use their numbers to participate in policy development and

implementation, and award themselves grants for research for PhD training, flouting policy and regulations in their favour. Through policies and regulations, male staff was likely to push their masculine agenda in academic employment although not directly. This was contrary to the argument held by Gappa, Austin, & Trice (2007) that the rationale for policies pertaining to work arrangements was that recruitment, retention, and succession of women was enhanced when formal policies accommodate both personal and professional responsibilities.

Results showed no significant difference between male and female staff in terms of competitiveness, ambition and independence of mind when it comes to academic ability. This suggests that gender inequity in academic employment lies in other factors. Nurturing was neither a significant predator of gender inequity suggesting that both men and women could play the nurturing role. Besides, there was no conclusive evidence that implementation of the gender equity measure was a predator to gender inequity in academic employment; rather it was observed that the gender mainstreaming committee's activities were lukewarm about implementing the gender policies and guidelines for gender equity. Establishing the status of gender policies and guidelines and their effectiveness in both academic and administrative functions was rarely done and when it was, rarely was any feedback given. Female academic staffs are not fairly represented at top management committees, suggesting the lack of commitment and moral will of University management to guide the process towards gender equity.

Results further showed that the Makerere University academic environment was not friendly to female academic employees as it prioritized academic excellence without providing a platform for an equally conducive social environment for academic excellence to thrive for both gender. This was reinforced by the evidence of mental models that individuals built and the perception towards certain positions – the title “professor”, for example, is seen as a male image, highlighting the issues of stereotyping of positions in the employment structure. There was no evidence that conflict among women was a predator to gender inequity, neither was there evidence that men were more rational or competitive in decision making than women nor was there evidence that women were irrational in decision making. Lastly, and most importantly, there was evidence that both male and female academic staffs were supportive of a policy for delayed retirement of female academic staff. This could be a reflection that the University community is realising the benefit of gender equity within employment in general and academic employment in particular.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigated the persistent gender inequity in academic employment to specifically establish what explains and maintains gender inequity and what can be done to close the gender inequity gap at Makerere University in Uganda. Secondary and primary data were used. Analysis was descriptive and analytical with support of tables and simple statistics. The

general finding was that the individual's social background; the number of females who graduate with PhD degrees; institutional structures; and individual factors such as mental models and stereotypes that the staff formulate about themselves and about the profession as well as the institutional structures, environment and commitment to addressing gender inequity in academic employment were all pointers to gender inequity.

In light of the above, there is need for education and training to change the mind-set of individuals about the mental models and stereotypes about professions that are appropriate or inappropriate for women and to recognize that women and men are equal partners and are equally accountable for the gender inequity. Female staff should be proactive to adapt to masculine trends that govern academic tenure-ship by creating time for research, being more assertive and taking on opportunities on strategic committees when such opportunities come. Male staffs should encourage and support their spouses to upgrade themselves academically if the gender inequity gap at the work place and the academic tenure-ship is to close.

Affirmative action in recruitment policies should only be a temporary measure as more capacity for gender mainstreaming is built at secondary and primary schools. Female staff should create working teams, lobbying groups to put the gender agenda, mentor and support fellow women to apply for available positions and engage the University on the gender equity agenda. From an institutional point of view, deliberate policy on equal 50/50 per cent female/male employment should be pursued, implemented and frequently monitored and reviewed to assess progress. The University should encourage mentorship programmes for both men and women with a view to building the capacity of women to gain confidence and a belief that they are equally capable to take on different roles in both their academic areas and administration and proactively present themselves for career development opportunities as well as engage in policy making processes at the University. The University should create an enabling environment for equality for all, by providing facilities that encourage both men and women in family formation stages to progress academically. The University should adhere, implement and monitor the University gender policies and guidelines and listen to their feedback. Lastly, the University should consider reviewing the policy on retirement with a view to allow optional retirement for women, as these provide a critical mass of role models which other women can emulate. Beyond the University, The Uganda Equal Opportunity Commission (EOC) should monitor institutions with a view to address the gender inequities that exist in employment. The Ministry of Education and Sports should address the gender stereotypes early enough in the education cycle.

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