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The impact of domestic chores on the career progression of women in higher education: the case of the Durban University of Technology

Abstract

Recent research has shown that even though women have made some progress as compared to where they were twenty years ago, this progress has proven to be resistant to change in terms of higher level and rewarding positions (Turner, 2012; Hofmeyr and Mzobe, 2012; Botool and Sajid, 2013; Mouley, 2013). According to Boushey and Farrell (2013, p. 6), this lack of progress results from a lack of flexibility and unpredictable scheduling at the workplace. Others argue that career interruption for childbirth and rearing; domestic responsibilities; gender parities at the work place; organizational structures; and policies that do not meet the needs of female employees affect career progress (Wallace and Smith, 2011, p. 3 and Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010, p. 6). The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to examine the nature of the progress of female employees of the Durban University of Technology, and the extent to which domestic responsibilities may be an impediment to such progress. Through a survey of the female employees' perceptions of their progression, the study adopts a feminist theoretical framework to argue that domestic chores are an obstacle to the career progression of women in higher education. The study then recommends that more policies need to be put in place in order to improve the working conditions of women, and to ensure that there is effective monitoring and evaluation of the policies in place.

Keywords: domestic chores, career progression and higher education.
JEL Classification: 015, R23, J8.

Introduction

In the past, paid work was predominantly the sphere of men. However, today the situation has changed drastically in today's society. The number of women pursuing managerial and professional careers has increased in comparison to the past (Jha and Jha, 2013, p. 14).Women have succeeded in questioning the traditional notions about sex roles and cultural expectations. This prompted institutions worldwide to make it a priority to come up with policies that eliminate all gender stereotyping at the work place (Stromquist, 2013, p. 5). In the case of South Africa, for instance, an important breakthrough was made in 1996 with the Bill of Rights guaranteeing all citizens equal treatment. The Basic Conditions of Employment Act No 75 of 1997 (BCEA) was also introduced to enhance the position of women in workplaces. Also, the declaration of this Act (Basic Conditions of Employment Act No 75 of 1997 (BCEA) by the government South Africa 1997 was aimed to advance economic development and social justice by regulating the right to fair labor practices such as work time, leave, employment and remuneration, termination of employment and variation of basic conditions of employment for all employees and employers.

Moreover, Affirmative Action was introduced through the Employment Equity Act No 55 of(South Africa (1998) to ensure that employment and pro-

motion of black people, women and people with disabilities should be equal in the work place. In addition, to those policies, the Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment Act (2003) and the Labor Relations Act (1995) were introduced to redress the past injustice of colonialism and apartheid that discriminated against blacks, colour and disabled people especially women. With all these policies in place, one may think that the position of women in South Africa and DUT in particular would be equal by now, but the study revealed that it is not the case. Women are still faced with different barriers that continue to impede on their career performance and advancement. Domestic chores constitute one of these barriers (Homeryr and Mzobe, 2011, p. 1), which continues to adversely affect the output of women at the workplace. It is within this context that this paper intends to look at the effect of domestic chores on the career progression of women in higher education in general and the Durban University in particular.

Context of the study: the case of Durban University of Technology. The Durban University of Technology was formed as a result of the merger in April 2002 of two prestigious technikons, ML Sultan and Technikon Natal. It was named the Durban Institute of Technology and later became the Durban University of Technology in line with the rest of the universities of technology (DUT Website, 2006, p. 16). The Durban University of Technology is a growing institution, striving to meet the needs of the nation through quality teaching and learning and by ensuring that their academic staffs possess the highest possible qualifications that they can obtain. The Durban University of Technology is a member of the International Association of Universities. It is a

multi-campus university of technology at the cutting edge of higher education, technological training and research. The university aspires to be a "preferred university for developing leadership in technology and productive citizenship", and to "making knowledge useful" (DUT Website, 2006, p. 16).

With the case study of the Durban University of Technology, this study examines the factors influencing the career progression of women within higher education. It also analyzes DUT's current policies in relation to staff development, employment equity, appointment and promotion of staff at the university, and how these policies affect the progress of women at the university. It is important to note that the Durban University of Technology recognizes the Affirmative Action and Employment Equity Legislation in South Africa as an important part of the transformation from apartheid. It therefore commits itself to transform and eradicate this discriminatory past by setting up a constitution to ensure that the Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998 achieves its goal (Durban University of Technology Employment Equity policy, 2007, pp. 2-3).

The Durban University of Technology Employment Equity policy (2007, pp. 2-3) addresses the issues of equity in the workplace; overcoming discrimination through training and development; ensuring that employment equity becomes integral to strategic staff development; and ensuring that DUT achieves realistic targets. The policy also provides for specific strategies and measures to be implemented to achieve equity amongst designated groups (Africans, Coloureds, Indians, women and persons with disabilities) in the areas of recruitment, remuneration/benefits, work evaluations and promotions amongst others, in accordance with the University's employment equity plan.

Apart from the Employment Equity policy, the Durban University of Technology also has a sexual harassment policy for the well-being of its staff. It commits to providing a safe and secure environment free of sexual harassment for all members of the DUT community. The purpose of this policy is to preserve the fundamental rights, dignity, integrity and privacy of all individuals and does not tolerate any threat or act that directly or indirectly interferes with an individual's performance at work (Durban University of Technology Sexual Harassment policy 2007, p. 2). It also has the Gender Forum at the institution that is responsible for women's issues.

However, the question that arises is whether these policies are adequate to promote the progress of women in their careers, and whether they are well implemented and monitored. The findings of this research revealed that these policies have not achieved its objectives. The reason is because, the DUT Department of Labor workforce profile (2013, p. 3) statistics revealed that, the occupational levels of male and females in top management level is 2 while males are 2; in senior management position the number of females is 4 while males are 14; in professionally qualified and experienced specialists and mid-management, the number of females is 278 while males are 322. Lastly, in skilled technical and academically qualified workers, junior management, supervisors, foremen and superintendents, the number of females is 354, while males are 265. This implies that the progress of women as compared to their male counterparts is not at the same level, implying that the policy is not achieving its objectives. Therefore, the study seeks to identify factors hindering the career progress of women at the DUT and women in general, so that steps may be taken to address them. Secondly, the study will contribute toward raising awareness to policy makers for the inclusion of gender consideration when assessing the progress of women in the workplace in general, and higher education in particular.

1. Review of literature

1.1. Career women and domestic responsibilities.
Research has shown that domestic chores are one of the main hindrances on the career progression of women (Botool and Sajid, 2013, p. 375). Historically, domestic responsibilities such as childcare, housework and care for the elderly were considered to be the duties of women only. Contemporary research has shown that some men have started having "father time" with their children (Valerio, 2009, p. 23). Although the time that fathers spend with their children has increased, women do more than double what men do. Also, the fact that men are not willing to share household and child care responsibilities with women equally hamper the progress of women. According to Valerio (2009, p. 23), married women with children are more likely to work double shifts, one at their paid job and one at home. According to Morley (2014, p. 2) the following ideas can be drawn.

Traditionally, males are supposed to be responsible for external affairs, females are supposed to be responsible for internal affairs, and males are assumed to be superior to females. Because of the cultural discrimination and stereotypes, it is believed that the characteristics of females make them not rational enough in making decisions, and so they are not suitable for assuming the duty of managers and administrators.

Dealing with the competing demands of work and home life is a struggle for women. This often leads

to stress and frustration for many women who are unable to work towards their promotions. Valerio (2009, p. 23) asserts that most women complain that they are caught between those early morning meetings at 7:00 am and the family time of preparing kids for school and breakfast. Some women who are highly affected by this often resign from their jobs due to the dilemma that they face.

According to Alvesson and Billing (2009, p. 149), the work-family connection disadvantages women because they are often less mobile, as family priorities make them abstain from taking a position that requires longer work days, more travel or moving geographically to a new site of employment. This is a serious problem for women because they do not have the time to stay back and work like their male counterparts after work. As such, women have little time to socialize with colleagues to build up a relationship, network and to prove on their commitment to the social side of the organization (Alvesson and Billing's, 2009, p. 149) Botool and Sajid (2013, p. 13) further explain this view by stating that educational promotion largely depends on publication records, conference presentations and research that sometimes require academics to travel for some days. However, some traditions and cultures still restrain the movement of women and, as such, put women in a disadvantaged position in this regard. This implies that some women do not exercise their freedom of movement as men do.

According to Tosca (2012, p. 12), the past experiences of women have made them believe that there are jobs that are traditionally designated for women such as child nurturing and cooking. This fact is quite true because, even today, there are many women who still believe domestic or household responsibilities are meant for women only. Some of our traditions, especially in Africa, still believe that it is taboo for a man to undertake these responsibilities because it is regarded as him going against culture and tradition. This view is also true in South Africa, as many people still consider that a woman's place is at home raising children (Tsoka, 2012, p. 12).

These have continued to shape women's progress and leadership experiences in the sense that women have become more scarce to go in for leadership positions, but are more visible in other positions or areas in organizations (Odhaiambo, 2011, p. 9). This has also reduced the self-confidence of women in the workplace. Hofmeyr and Ndobe (2012, p. 8) argue that in South Africa, this lack of self-image has hindered the career progression of women in higher education. They reveal that most women lose self-confidence as a result of gender discrimination and lack of mentoring and leadership development

programs. In the same light, Davidson and Burke (2011, p. 1) assert that some women believe that just making their way into the workplace is an achievement because in the past women were not allowed to work.

Studies have shown that these gender roles are carried into the workplace because, at work, there are some men who still believe that a woman is supposed to be a subordinate and not the boss. With these factors in mind, the progress of women will always be impeded because they are blocked by tradition and cultural practices that make them to do double work at workload and at home, while the man does one. Consequently, there is a need for change because men can also do the things that were previously set aside for women to do such as household chores and nurturing children. It was in this light that this research was conducted to investigate if women at DUT faced challenges like this.

1.2. Higher education and women. Higher education is defined as post-secondary education, advanced third level learning at diploma and degree level at a university and university of technology (Gumede, 2014, p. 68). In a South African context, higher education means all learning programs leading to qualifications higher than grade 12 as expected by the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Act No. 58 of 1995); and South Africa Higher Education Qualifications Framework (2008, p. 2). It can be full time, part time or distance learning. There are two types of higher education, namely public and private higher education. Public and private higher education differ in the roles they play in society. Public higher education is more likely than private higher education to emphasize its role in providing services to the community, economic development, and preparing graduates for the local and regional workforce, while private higher education is more likely to highlight the importance of students' development and the liberal arts (Saichaie and Morphew, 2014, p. 3).

With the increasing demand for education and increased employment requirements, government and the private sector demand that it is the responsibility of universities to solve societal problems and accelerate knowledge (Ursin et al., 2010, pp. 2-3). Globally, this expansion of knowledge in society has been seen as a very effective means to improve society. Ursin et al. (2010, p. 2) believe that it is necessary for universities to improve the quality of their institutions. This implies that the progress of women in higher education is supposed to be an issue of concern for all higher education institutions, since their progress is slower when compared to their male counterparts.

According to Labaree (1997), cited in Saichaie and Morphew (2014, p. 3), modern education in the United States is characterized by three challenging goals which are democratic equality, social efficiency and social mobility. Democratic equality focuses on the production of engaging citizens, while social efficiency emphasizes the school's role in educating productive workers. Finally, social mobility highlights the value of education for the individual consumer of education. In Australian universities, academic advancement is largely determined by the combination of research outputs and teaching performance (Dobele, Rundle-Thiele, Kopanidis and Steel, 2010, p. 2). This implies that academic advancement varies depending on the university.

In South Africa, there has been a great change in most higher education institutions compared to the apartheid era. Badat (2010, p. 2) notes that the main aim of this change has been to get rid of inequalities amongst classes, races, genders and the institutional and geographical locations of South Africa. Similarly, De La Ray (2009, p. 8) notes that, the transformation of higher education in South Africa was aimed at enhancing responsiveness to social needs, capacity building, encouraging the collaboration between institutions and leveling the higher education field for equity and equality of all. This has been achieved through the mobilization of considerable financial, material and human resources from a large list of corporate donors (Raufflet, 2009, p. 1). However, despite the significant investment on the part of government to resolve these issues, persistent problems still remain in the area of cultural transformation of people, work-life balance, stereotypes and academic structures. These have affected the progress of women to move to a higher level or position at work (Shay, 2014; Valerio, 2009, p. 3; Taylor, 2011, p. 8; Gouws, 2012, p. 10).

1.3. Women in higher education. Looking at the historical background and status of women in higher education in general, there has been more progress mostly in lower position and less progress in the senior and top levels of organizations. According to Gabriela, Dan and Antonia (2013, p. 3), this is based on the fact that recruitment procedures have improved as compared to the past. Unlike the past decades, it is very common today to find women serving as chancellors, vice chancellors, deans, heads of department and other high-level officials in many universities worldwide. However, the problem that arises is that the proportion of the women in such positions is small as compared to men (Gabriela, Dan and Antonia, 2013, p. 3). Scholars and policy-makers point out that enhancing the representation of women across types of institutions and levels

of academia will help create more inclusive and hospitable climates for both men and women (Bhandare, 2008, p. 266; Alvesson and Billing, 2009, p. 236). Moreover, one may expect that, since universities are at the forefront row of higher learning, critical analysis and innovation, they would be more rational when it comes to gender equity, which does not appear to be the case (Wallace and Merchant, 2011, p. 2). Wallace and Merchant (2011, p. 2) believe that equity has not been attained in universities, even with a critical mass of senior women, because of workload increases and the greed of the organizations.

A study conducted by Silander, Haarke and Linderberg (2012, p. 4) in the Swedish higher education system shows that the total number of women who are professors and senior lecturers in the humanities, in veterinary medicine and in Odontology, are very few compared to the total number of female lecturers in the same fields. This implies that women are underrepresented in advanced positions in higher education in Sweden. Another study conducted by Yinhan, Qi and Kai (2013, p. 5) in China reveal that the proportion of women who are in higher positions in Chinese higher education is still very small as compared to other countries, despite the fact that women have managed to break through the glass ceiling and enter the ranks of the elite. Findings by Harris and Leberman (2012, p. 6) in New Zealand also show that this under-representation of women applies to New Zealand's universities, despite the country holding on to the fifth position in the 2009 global gender gap ratings score card published by the World Economic Forum.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Feminist perspectives on gender and the workplace. The progress of women cannot be discussed without looking at feminist viewpoints because feminists were the first to focus on injustices that started in our society in the 19th century. Gray (2007, p. 212) argues that feminism is out to liberate women from practices that oppress them. Hence, it is out to reject all the scientific knowledge or views that are patriarchal in nature. It is important to use the feminist theory in this study because it would give a better understanding of the study and the basis of gender equity. It would also shed light on things that have been overlooked or not noticed and which are very important to women's progress at the workplace. Williamson and Dalphin (2007, p. 21) support this view by asserting that using the feminist approach in research gives greater chances of having valid findings and a broad spectrum of social experiences. Feminism argues that women and men have equal potential to develop themselves in all domains

of life, but that women's potential is hindered by externally required restrictions and influences of social institutions and values. It also asserts that since women experience oppression as a group, they have often been unable to develop their full potential or reap the rewards of their full participation in society. Feminism thus advocates that women should organize in order to achieve change, expand human choices, eliminate gender stratification, end sexual violence and promote labor and women's rights so as to help prevent inequality at the workplace and in society as a whole, because women have something valuable to contribute to every aspect of our world (Maciounis and Plummer, 2012, p. 406; Roper-Huilman and Winter, 2011, p. 3).

Feminism can be viewed from liberal, socialist or radical perspectives. Liberal feminists advocate for the improvement of women's status by pressurizing for reforms in legal, social and other institutions (Wolfe, 2012, p. 2). Liberal feminists believe that human beings were created equally and should not deny equality of opportunities because of their gender. They seek to expand the rights and opportunities of women. They support equal rights and oppose prejudice and discrimination that block the aspirations of women. Liberal feminists also fight for reproductive freedom for all women by calling for widely available maternity leave and child care for women who wish to work. For them, both men and women's lives will be improved if society puts an end to legal and cultural barriers fixed in gender, and this can be achieved individually by women and not as a whole (Maciounis and Plumber, 2012, p. 408). Furthermore, the role that women play in their educational career success has been an issue in the debate surrounding the career progression of women. Liberal feminists believe that there is a need to improve women's individual qualities so that they are able to compete on an equal level with men at the workplace (Wolfe 2012, p. 12). They also believe that if there are policies to enhance personal qualities such as education, management skills and changed discriminatory corporate practices against women at work-places, then there will be greater equity in gender representation at the top.

Socialist feminism evolved from the Marxist conflict theory. It views the liberal feminist reforms as inadequate. Social/Marxist feminism believes which the challenge is capitalism that has intensified patriarchy by concentrating wealth and power in the hands of men (Maciounis and Plumber, 2012, p. 409). Socialist feminists argue that, historically, women were kept out of the labor force due to childbirth and thus believe that both gender roles and class oppress women (Bruckmuller, Ryan Haslam,

2014, p. 4; Riberro, Bosch and Becker, 2013, p. 35). Therefore, arguing that the bourgeois family must be restructured to end the domestic slavery of women and that the only way to achieve this basic transformation of society is for women and men to pursue their personal liberation together as opposed to the liberal feminists' idea of individuality. They believe that there is division of labor when it comes to gender role expectations. They believe that two classes of people exist: the bourgeoisie, which is made up of men and the proletariat, which is made up of women.

The radical feminists argue that liberal feminist and socialist feminist reforms are inadequate. They look at the liberal feminist reforms as shallow and the socialist feminist revolution as insufficient to end patriarchy (Maciounis and Plumber, 2012, p. 409). Radical feminists focus on patriarchal forms of power that are fixed in the bureaucratic organization such as norms and values that prescribe women's subordination. Radical feminists believe that gender equality can be achieved only by eliminating the cultural notion of gender and can be achieved by raising women's consciousness of their domination rather than reforming legal, social and other institutions.

Feminist theory is one of the theories that have contributed significantly to creating an awareness of women's problems around the world. Ideally, a unanimous view of gender equality would have been the best option to enhance women's progress. The fact that Liberal, Socialist/Marxist and Radical feminists look at gender inequality in different ways is problem because there is disagreement amongst them about suitable political action. For instance, Liberal feminism is interested in equal opportunities and access to resources, while Social feminism advocates for economic and gender transformation. Lastly, radical feminism argues that transformation can be achieved by raising women's consciousness of their domination rather than reforming legal, social, and other institutions. The researcher believes that rather than adopting such different views on the issue, an unanimous approach to gender equity would be the ideal way to help address gender inequality in the workplace.

3. Research methodology

The study was conducted at the Durban University of Technology. The sampling technique used for this study was probability sampling. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2013, p. 254), probability sampling is when all the elements (i.e. each person) in the population have an equal chance of being chosen as a subject. The fact that each subject has an equal opportunity of being chosen without any kind of bias from the various groups gives a high

generalizability to the findings. A stratified random sampling procedure was used to group the population into the academic and administrative groups and a random sample was taken from each stratum. Tracing the parameters of different subgroups within a population would not be possible without stratified random sampling procedures (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013, p. 249). The stratified random sampling technique is a method whereby the population is first divided into common selected groups that are relevant, appropriate and meaningful in the context of the study. In other words, it involves stratifying the elements along meaningful levels and strata (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013, p. 249-250).

The sample size for the study was 250 out of a target population of 693. The study used both quantitative and qualitative research designs (mixed method), whereby self-administered questionnaires were used to collect the data. The questionnaire consisted of open-ended and closed ended questions. The closed-ended questions were quantitative, while the open ended questions were qualitative. The closed-ended responses were then analyzed using SPSS, while the open ended responses used the inductive approach to highlight the factors influencing the career progression of women in higher education.

The rights of human subjects and their freedom were taken into account. Their confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and voluntary participation were clearly explained to them in the letter of informed consent before the research was conducted. As such, no names of any sort were required in the questionnaires. Respondents who failed to answer the questionnaires or were not willing to participate in the research were not forced to do so. No harm was incurred. Ethical approval was sought as per DUT's research protocol.

The limitation of this study was that the population under study was female academic and administrative staff only. The study did not include male and support staff viewpoint which is required in a broader study on the same topic. Secondly, the fact that the study was limited to the Durban University of Technology means that, the results can only describe the career progression of women at the DUT and no other institution. The fact that only a sample of 276 out of 693 women in academic and administrative staff (Human Resource statistic, 2013, p. 3) was used implies that a bigger sample of this same study may provide a comprehensive result of women's progress at DUT. Lastly, the results of the findings were limited to the period in which the study was conducted.

4. Findings

This chapter presents the results and discusses the findings obtained from the questionnaire in this study.

The questionnaire was the primary tool that was used to collect data and was distributed to women in various support departments at DUT. The data collected from the responses were analyzed with SPSS version 22.0. The results will present the descriptive statistics in the form of graphs, cross tabulations and other figures for the data that were collected. Inferential techniques include the use of correlations and chisquare test values, which are interpreted using p-values.

The sample

In total, 276 questionnaires were dispatched and 250 were returned, which gave a 90.6% response rate.

4.1. The research instrument. The research instrument comprised 50 items, with a level of measurement at a nominal and ordinal level. The questionnaire was divided into 5 sections which measured various themes, as illustrated below:

Section A – Biographical informations;

Section B – Perceptions of career progression of women at DUT;

Section C – Policies and career motivation at DUT;

Section D – Factors affecting/impeding the progress of women at DUT.

However, this paper will focus more on the findings that revealed the impact of domestic chores on the career progression of women in higher education.

4.2. The age of the respondents.
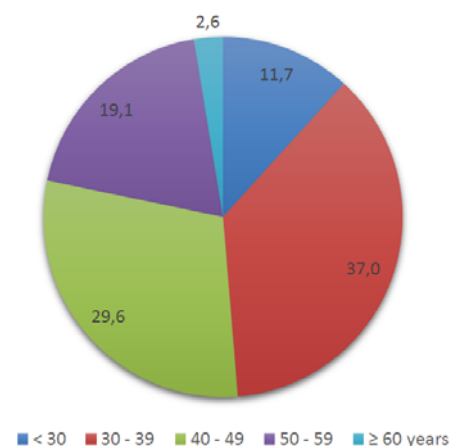
Approximately two-thirds of the samples (66.5%) were between the ages of 30 to 50 years. There were nearly twice as many respondents who were older than 50 years as well there were as those who were younger than 30 years. The constitution of the sample indicated a mature and experienced grouping of respondents. This is useful as the responses derived would have been from an informed opinion. This is also borne out in terms of the consistent scoring as observed for the reasonably high reliability values.

4.3. Marital status of women. The marital status of the respondents is shown in the Figure below:
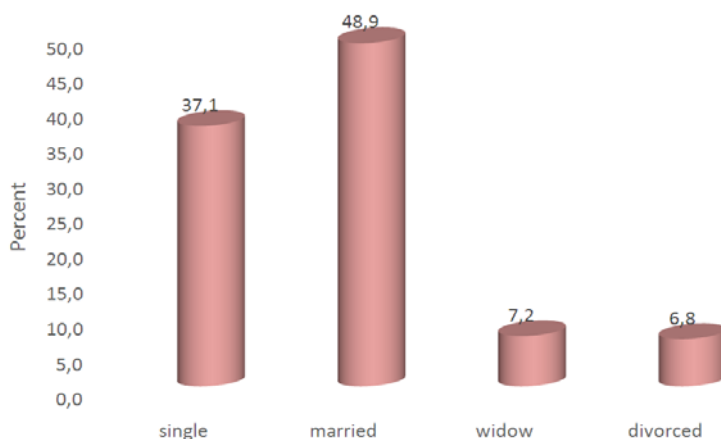
Nearly half of the respondents (48.9%) were married, followed by single women (37.1%) and then the least were divorced (7.2%) and widowed (6.8%). The fact that the majority of the career women at DUT are married can possibly place women in disadvantaged position. Research has shown that some cultures and traditions restrain the movement of women from travelling to places to attend conference presentations and research, and promotion largely depends on publication records (Botool and Sadjid, 2013, p. 13).

4.4. Types of position held at work.

Instructional/research professionals	
Professor	2.7
Associate professor	8.0
Senior lecturer	28.3
Lecturer	37.2
Faculty research coordinator	3.7
Associate directors	.9
HTC counsellors	1.8
Junior lecturer	15.0
HoD/dean	2.7
Total	100.0
Occupational position for non-instructional professionals	
Senior management	34.7
Junior management	65.3
Total	100.0

The response rate was very low for the instructional/research professionals and they were as follows: Lecturer (37.2%); Senior lecturer (28.3%); junior lecturer (15.0%); Associate professor (8.0%); HoD/Deans (2.7%); Professor (2.7%); HTC Counsellor (1.8%) and Associate directors (9%). As for the occupational position for non-instructional professionals, the findings showed that senior management was 34.7% while junior management was 65.3%. This indicates that there are fewer women in top positions at DUT.

4.5. Highlighted the factors attributing to the lack of progress of women.

	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree
	22.6	13.4	64.0
Inflexible work schedules at the department	47.3	12.4	40.2
Childbearing, domestic responsibilities and family commitments	64.1	12.2	23.6

Research has shown that inflexible work schedules at the departments are one of the major reasons that hinder women from progressing to the top position (Moley, 2014, p. 6). From the responses collected, 47.3% agreed to this fact, followed by 40.2% who disagreed and 12.4% neither agreed nor disagreed. Even though the percentage difference between the women who were for and the ones who were against is not much, one can conclude that, this might be one of the factors that hinders the progress of women to higher positions at DUT.

Another question related to this finding was about childbearing, domestic responsibilities and family commitments. This question was posed because most researchers have indicated that childbearing, domestic responsibilities and family commitments is the main reason why women are underrepresented in their career (Boushey and Farell, 2009; and Alvesson and Billing, 2009, p. 149). The study revealed that 64.1% agreed with this question, 23.6% disagreed while 12.2% neither agreed nor disagreed with the view. This implies that childbearing, domestic responsibilities and family commitments are still a major problem for the progress of women to rise to higher positions.

4.6. Summary of the findings. One of the objectives of this study was to investigate the perceptions of women staff at DUT concerning the factors that promote or retard their progress. Based on the ques-

tions asked, the study revealed that one of the main factors that retard their progress is domestic responsibilities and family commitments. Also, it was confirmed that women do find it difficult to balance their work and family responsibilities because of the lack of inflexible work schedule in the departments; excessive workload for staff and childbearing. Moreover, it is important to note that the Durban University of Technology recognizes the Affirmative Action and Employment Equity Legislation of South Africa as an important part of transformation from apartheid. It therefore commits itself to transform and eradicate this discriminatory past by setting up a constitution to ensure that the Employment Equity Act No 55 of 1998 achieves its goal (Durban University of Technology Employment Equity policy, 2007, p. 2-3). It also has the Gender Forum at the institution that is responsible for women's issues. However, the question that arises is whether these policies are adequate to promote the progress of women in their careers, and whether they are well implemented and monitored. The findings of this research revealed that, there are inadequate policies in place to motivate women in their careers, especially policy regarding work and domestic responsibilities. In summary, it is clear that DUT policies have not achieved their objectives since women are still under-represented.

Conclusion

This paper has highlighted the challenges faced by career women in higher education. It also looked at the status of women in higher education and women at DUT. The study found out that, one of the major barriers to the career progression of women to higher positions is domestic chores, and until equality is achieved at home the position of women at the workplace will be difficult to be the same as for men. However, in order for women to overcome this challenge, there is a need for more policies, regulation and infrastructure to help women resolve the tension between personal and professional roles. This can be done through reasonable provision of maternity leave and childcare centres within the institution. There is also a need to make management positions more flexible by finishing meetings on time and within working hours. Moreover, there is a need for managers to offer programs such as family – focused program, internal social network forum that will provide women with mentors and coaches on how to overcome this challenge. Lastly, the researcher will like to encourage all career women that despite the challenges that women are facing, they should continue to strive to reach positions of influence and power in the university in order to be part of the social change and economic advancement in the country.

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