
GENDER AND PROMOTIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA, GHANA.

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ABSTRACT: *This study focuses on the experiences of faculty members about the systems of promotions at the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. Eight (8) senior members were interviewed comprising of four (4) female senior lecturers, two (2) male senior lecturers and two (2) senior administrative staff using a semi structured interview guide. Policy documents governing promotions, annual reports and other institutional publications were examined and analyzed as well as disaggregated statistics on promotions for senior members at the University of Education, Winneba. The findings reveal that even though there are no separate criteria for promotions for female senior members of the University, it seems that female faculty faces unparallel challenges more than the males when it comes to promotions, which the respondents attributed to existence of institutional policies/practices that works to disadvantage women. In effect there are variations in the experiences of female and male faculty members regarding promotions in academia. The study recommended that the criteria for promotion should be reviewed to give serious considerations to the weighting of teaching, vis-à-vis research, in promotion, merit increment, and tenure decisions.*

KEYWORDS: Gender Equality, Promotions, Higher Education

BACKGROUND

Academic Faculty rankings bring to the fore the importance of promotions for faculty members in institutions of higher education. This is because advancement in rank comes with additional salary, increased influence within the University, recognition, and leadership positions. In most Universities those promoted from Associate Professor to full Professors receive a more crucial reward which is tenure (Long, Allison & McGinnis, 1993). There are established modalities and procedures in Universities for assessing and making recommendations on the performance of senior members in promotion exercises. These modalities and procedures are available in promotion –related documents such as the University statutes, conditions of service for senior members, criteria for appointments and promotions, academic board decision booklets or

circulars and websites. In effect it is expected that universities will work within the confines of these procedures and modalities to help achieve institutional goals or mandates and to ensure equality, fairness and social justice with the systems of promotion.

Problem Statement

Controversies surrounding promotion and tenure can lead to legal troubles for departments and institutions of higher education (Kelly, Moen & Tranby, 2010). Promotion related conflicts ensue as a result of perceived unfair treatment, dissatisfaction by an applicant of his/her promotion decision, doubts about the promotion system, class, gender and in some cases race/ethnic orientation. (Bartos and Wehr, 2002).

The Scottish Council for Research in Education, in a study conducted in 2003, revealed that promotion procedures in institutions of higher education are “shrouded in secrecy” and lack transparency but the “benefit of transparency” depends on who is talking”(p.12). The lack of transparency raises questions about the system of promotion and brings to fore the problems and challenges associated with promotions. This could be in the context of the decision making processes, criteria, agents involved in the promotion processes or application of the rules and regulations and how members of the University community also perceive promotions (Brink, Benschop & Jansen, 2013). A study conducted by the National Science Foundation, Division of Science Resources Statistics (2003) found that gender bias can also reduce promotion possibilities. This statement further raises a lot of questions about faculty promotions and how men and women experience promotions differently.

Against this background, this pilot study seeks to explore some of the problems associated with faculty promotions in institutions of higher education in Ghana. The study aims to examine the disparities that have been identified by the gender groups and the factors that contribute to these disparities. The study focuses on the experiences of four (6) selected senior female and male faculty members, as well as two personnel (female and male) of the Human Resource Division in the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana.

Significance of Study

The paper seeks to address the gap in literature on promotions pertaining to female faculty in institutions of higher education in Africa. It is evident that most of the available literature reports on promotions in the Western World (Morleys 2004, Persell 1983). Even though universities in Africa have mostly been well established and a lot of effort put into research, promotion and expansion in higher education development, little is reported about promotions as pertaining to females in Africa in general and Ghana in particular. It is for this purpose that this research seeks to explore the gendered nature of promotion within an African context so as to add to existing knowledge on the topic. The results of the study will have direct policy implications for Ghanaian public universities on appointments and promotions. It is expected that the findings will be helpful to those who work on University promotions and those who apply for promotions in order to reduce the conflicts and de-motivations associated with promotions. The study will also add to existing literature on the gendered nature of promotions in institutions of higher education in Ghana.

Research Objectives

The objective of this research is to explore the structural arrangements and dynamics associated with the promotion processes in the University of Education, Winneba with specific reference to gender.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. How is the University of Education, Winneba gendered in terms of academic positions and promotion?
2. What are the formal rules/policies /practices for promotion adopted by the University?
3. How have female and male faculty members experienced the processes of appointments and promotions within the institution?

PROMOTIONS IN GHANAIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES

Public Universities in Ghana (the traditional universities) have significant similarities in their scheme for promotions. For instance, all of them have considerations for teaching, research and community service. This is also in line with universal principles and practices. Research in the context of promotions is the active pursuit of new ideas and knowledge and publishing in peer reviewed Journals whilst teaching is the contribution to curricular development, innovations in teaching strategies and incorporating them into the classroom. With community service, faculty members are expected to provide service to the University, its students, clients, and programmes, as well as the broader community (University College, London, Human Resource Homepage, and Promotions Annexure A, 2012-2013). In all of these three criteria, the greatest set of the weighting seems to be on research and publications. Though the relative weighting seems to change according to the level the person is applying to and the nature of the person's academic work such that those in research oriented departments (those who are designated research fellows) are required to produce more publications and less of teaching. For instance, in the University of Cape Coast the minimum number of publications required by research fellows is one and half of what is expected from teaching staff (University of Cape Coast Statutes, 2012). An examination of the criteria for promotions amongst the public universities in Ghana revealed variations in the requirements for promotion, although there were some common acceptable publication types that could be submitted for assessment. The commonest acceptable publication types include, book based on research, published creative work, refereed journal articles based on original research, book chapter, edited book and refereed published conference paper based on original research and technical publication series. In addition, publications should demonstrate independent research, sole authorship/Lead authorship as well as Team work. All works should be published by an independent academic publisher. (UCC Statutes 2012; UEW criteria for appointment and promotions; University of Ghana, Legon academic promotions vrs for appointments and promotions).

The differences in the requirements, however, can be seen in the number of publications required for promotions and in what constitutes acceptable publications. For example, whilst University of Ghana, Legon appears to have settled on six (6) peer-reviewed articles, as a minimum

benchmark for promotion from one rank to the next, the University of Education, Winneba requires a minimum of five (5) publications with at least one published in an international journal. (UEW criteria for promotion for senior members, Teaching; University of Ghana, Legon, Academic Staff Promotion Policy ver. Academic Board, 2012)

Again, at the University of Ghana, Legon, non-academic publications (Units of Distance Education course material, Musical compositions, Theatre performances, Exhibitions, Commissioned works) and electronic journals or publication are not acceptable materials for promotions but are acceptable at the University of Education, Winneba as long as they are accompanied by write-ups to be assessed by competent referees.

Currently, it is a requirement for all faculty members who do not hold a PhD to pursue their doctoral studies by 2015. Although obtaining a PhD is not a requirement for promotion it gives one an added advantage. (UEW criteria for promotion, n.d and statutes)

RELATED LITERATURE

Research and Promotions

For many years, institutions of higher education have rewarded their faculties in the form of incentives for excellence. These rewards, according to Roberts (2002) come in several different forms, the most important of which is the prospects for rank advancement in the form of promotions since promotion comes with greater job security and potentially higher salaries. The reward structure tends to award faculty members who are most successful in the areas of research, teaching and community service but with a higher premium on research. Promotion and tenure in academia are therefore, intrinsically linked to one's research productivity.

Some academic authors suggest that the idea of reward based on research instead of teaching is in contradiction to Universities' focus of "selling education" (Remler and Perma, 2009). They believe that for any faculty member to be rewarded the person must be measured based on what he/ she has been able to teach as the prerequisite for promotions. Hearn (1992) and Huber's (1992) position that institutions of higher education are neglecting their core function of teaching in favour of research and publication to the disadvantage of student's education is worthy of note. This is on the basis that whilst University staff members are recruited to teach courses, their reward must largely be based on their teaching output and efficiency and not on research and publications.

In agreement with Roberts (2002), he explains that academics choose their professions for a range of reasons including personal fulfillment and not all academics are research oriented. Thus he identifies four categories of people who pursue careers in academia. The first category are those who value the qualities of logical thought, research, and scholarship above all others, and gain satisfaction and status primarily through publication in journals and conference proceedings. The second categorizations are those whose primary focus is likely to be spent on the teaching of undergraduate students. To them satisfaction and status is gained by seeing students learn from the material presented, from direct expressions of appreciation, and from low attrition rates and high pass rate. The other category are those who are likely to have spent significant portions of

their career working for government or private industry. Their focus is on conveying practical skills and real-world expertise to students in the most effective and efficient manner, with less emphasis being placed on publication than would be the case of the first category. I believe academic promotions should be focused more on teaching than the laid emphasis on research. Some believe that the focus of promotions largely on research is a “joke” and in a “poor state” (Roberts, 2002). This explains that the process does not take into cognizance the motivating and fulfilling desires of the individuals or changing financial considerations of the University itself.

Gender in Research and Promotions

Astin and Davis (1985) studied the gender dimension to research publication and promotion and found that disparities exist in the publishing productivity of male and female faculty which has a direct correlation on promotions. This is confirmed by Creamer’s (1998) review of literature on research productivity. The literature confirmed that female faculty are less involved in conducting research and obtaining research grants and therefore, are disadvantaged with fewer publications than men. According to Creamer (1998) studies further proved that male faculty members are able to produce up to thirty-two (32) refereed articles, whereas female faculty produced nineteen (19) refereed articles in journals. In addition, the majority of female faculty members tends to be over represented as non-publishers, and under- represented among prolific authors. In subscribing to the discussions that teaching should be a core determinant of promotions, a study conducted by University of St. Thomas Luann Dummer Center for Women shows that women spend more time on teaching and service and less on research and writing.

The low publishing productivity of women affects their visibility and ability to rise faster in terms of promotion. As a result, majority of women who are hired in academia generally remain at the bottom of the progression ladder with just a minority climbing through the ranks to the highest echelons of the professorial grade (Fishel, 1977). According to Persell (1983), women are not only more likely to hold lower ranks than men but also experience differential accountability measures when being reviewed for tenure (McElrath, 1992). I believe that, should a clearly laid down institutional criteria for promotions be established, women out of the efforts placed on teaching and research would not be disadvantaged. Fox and Colatrella (2006), argue that there are ambiguities in the institution’s criteria for promotion and entrenched institutional practices which disadvantage women. These institutional practices, according to Fraser (1977), represent both cultural stereotyping, material and intellectual oppression and as a result the structures of many Universities remain deliberately masculine in terms of representation, decision making procedures and the culture of their members. In support of the above assertion, Carrol (1988) cited in Aisenburg and Harrington (1988) reiterates that the rules for entering into the academic profession are fairly straightforward and consist of the requirement fashioned by the various institutions, but the rules for professional advancement are harder to define, varying with the kind of institution and the time.

Some scholars also attribute the gender differences in research output to the diverse experiences of women and men in academia (Mama, 2004; Tamale & Olako-Onyango, 2000). According to the authors, women entered academia later than their male counterparts and experienced a systematic and deliberate colonial policy that ensured that African women were excluded from the various “ivory towers” that dotted the continent” (p. 2). The colonial policy introduced a

regime where men were given the option to further their education and to take up leadership roles and positions. This is a clear manifestation of colonial legacy which has affected an equal opportunity for both men and women. Instead of society recognizing women's actual functions and roles, their responsibilities were largely limited to nurturing and conserving society which in effect did not encourage most of them to pursue education.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This pilot study is underpinned by the philosophical standpoint that reality is a social construct which is experienced differently. An interpretive approach was chosen as the data was to be interpreted in the context of faculty members' perception and experience with the processes of promotions in UEW. Interacting with participants in a socio-cultural context was to enable me see the world through the eyes of the respondents and also understand the participants' construction of knowledge and social reality. According to Cohen et al (2011), in conducting research both the researcher and researched acquire active roles in this knowledge construction.

The study adopted the phenomenological approach to illuminate the lived experiences of the respondents. According to Lester (1999), phenomenological approaches are effective in bringing to the fore the experiences and perceptions of individuals from their own perspectives. This informed the choice of qualitative research methods for the study. Qualitative techniques are regarded as effective in obtaining insightful information as respondents participate in a semi structured interview (Stake, 2010). Its conduct requires using data collection instruments that are sensitive in bringing out underlying meanings during data collection and interpretation. In effect, the use of qualitative method in this study was aimed at facilitating the collection of adequate data.

The methods employed in this pilot study were analysis of secondary data and individual interviews. The range of documents consulted were the University of Education, Winneba Appointments and Promotions Policy, Gender Policy, UEW Corporate Strategic Plan (2009-2013) and Statistics on Staff Development/Promotion from the Division of Human Resource. Reference was also made to the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate's Quarterly Newsletter which contained information about the baseline study conducted in 2005 in UEW and the prevailing gender issues. Analysis of these documents and policies illuminated and provided explanations as to the promotion situation in the University, and further raised questions as to why are there very few female faculty and managers in UEW. Here the study was guided by Patton's (2002) recommendation that the use and study of documents and files are "part of the repertoire of skills needed for qualitative inquiry" (p. 295).

Interview

Interviews were used as the technique for data collection. Interviews, according to Dunne (2005) are flexible tools for gathering in-depth knowledge about a phenomenon. A semi-structured interview guide composed of nine (9) open-ended questions was used to provide flexibility and allow unanticipated responses. Each interview session lasted for a minimum of forty five minutes and a maximum of one hour. These were in-depth interviews which put emphasis on the richness of information from faculty members and administrators (Aaker, D.A; Day, G. S & Kumar, V.

(1995). According to Maykut and Morehouse (1994) using interviews as data collection strategies helps to move the respondent beyond the surface talk to a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings.

The rationale for choosing interview as the technique for data collection was because issues of promotions are very sensitive and people are not comfortable discussing it, and therefore I expected that interviewing the respondents would offer the necessary opportunity to probe further for the respondents to open up to the concerns and share in-depth, their academic experiences. The target population for the study was all male and female senior lecturers in the University of Education, Winneba. Eight (8) senior lecturers were purposively selected to participate in the study. These were four (4) female senior lecturers, two (2) male senior lecturers and two senior personnel (female and male) of the Human Resource Division. All the respondents were purposively selected based on the length of years of service in the University, the rank at the time of the study and duration in processing their applications for promotion. My bigger interest however, was in those who had suffered delays with the processing of their applications for promotion, because they would be able to bring out the problems. I had done my background checks on senior faculty members (Senior Lecturers) whose applications for promotions lasted for more than three years to share their experiences. I contacted a senior administrator at the Division of Human Resource who furnished me these names. I however assured the administrator of confidentiality and anonymity in the handling of the information given in reference to ethical requirements.

In the sample selection process, care was taken to ensure that all the respondents did not come from the same Faculty. The male respondents were identified through my personal rapport and interactions with them. They had also suffered delays in the processing of their applications for promotions. Sharing their experiences was to enable me compare differential experiences based on sex and to establish the gender issues associated with promotions.

Two senior administrators (female and male) involved in the processing of promotions applications were also selected for the interview. Their involvement in the study was to bring out the practices involved in the processing of promotions.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSES

For this study, six (6) members of faculty, comprising four (4) female senior lecturers, two (2) male senior lecturers and two (2) (female and male) senior administrators were interviewed. All respondents have been married. Three (3) of the female respondents were between the ages of 40 and 48 years and the other female respondent was above 50 years. The two (2) male senior lecturers were also PhD holders, and had served the University for a minimum of ten years each. Their ages were between the range of 44 and 52 years. At the time of the interview both male respondents had put in their applications for promotion to Associate Professors and awaiting response. For them, that was the second experience with the promotion process of the University of Education, Winneba and I expect this to have broadened their scope on the challenges in the system and how to work around them. The two administrators were also aged between 35 and 46 years. I must establish that all the respondents (lecturers and administrators) are full time staff of the University and were on contract.

The gendered nature of academic promotions and positions

The question in this study refers directly to UEW and part of this research sets out to explore the gendered nature of promotions and positions. Analysis of data reveals underrepresentation of women at the higher echelons of the academic rank and in academic leadership positions.

Table 1: Academic Posts by gender 2007-2012

| Year | PROFESSOR | | | | ASSOCIATE PROF. | | | | SENIOR LECTURERS | | | | LECTURERS | | | | TOTAL |
|------|-----------|---|------|-----|-----------------|---|------|-----|------------------|----|-----|-----|-----------|----|-----|-----|-------|
| | M | F | % M | % F | M | F | % M | % F | M | F | % M | % F | M | F | % M | % F | |
| 2007 | 7 | 2 | 78% | 22% | 17 | 1 | 95% | 5% | 57 | 11 | 86% | 16% | 15 | 35 | 82% | 18% | 287 |
| 2008 | 8 | 0 | 100% | 0% | 19 | 2 | 91% | 9% | 61 | 11 | 85% | 15% | 14 | 36 | 80% | 20% | 281 |
| 2009 | 9 | 1 | 90% | 10% | 20 | 0 | 100% | 0% | 64 | 10 | 87% | 13% | 17 | 51 | 78% | 22% | 329 |
| 2010 | 16 | 1 | 94% | 6% | 14 | 0 | 100% | 0% | 74 | 9 | 90% | 10% | 17 | 58 | 76% | 24% | 349 |
| 2011 | 19 | 1 | 95% | 5% | 17 | 0 | 100% | 0% | 76 | 12 | 87% | 13% | 18 | 66 | 74% | 26% | 373 |
| 2012 | 10 | 1 | 91% | 9% | 16 | 0 | 100% | 0% | 57 | 10 | 86% | 14% | 19 | 61 | 76% | 24% | 347 |

Source: Vice Chancellor's Annual Reports and Basic Statistics from 2007-2012, University of Education, Winneba

From Table 1 above, it is clear that the highest proportions of females are at the lecturer rank. Over time this proportion of female has increased from 18% in 2007 to 26% in 2011 as compared to 82% in 2007 to 74% in 2011 for males. This growth decreased to 24% in 2012 as against an increase in the male category to 76%. The increase of two percent (2%) between 2007- 2011 for female lecturers is because, it is particularly not too difficult to attain the lecturer level once one enters the system. Generally after two years, assistant lecturers on probation get confirmed as lecturers and do not require the stringent criteria and processes compared to the other stages of promotion (Prah, 2002). In the year 2012, there was a decrease of 2% for female lecturers. This decrease has come about as a result of the fact that there is a new policy for recruiting new lecturers which allows only PhD at entry (UEW Criteria for Appointments and Promotions 2010). Since most females do not have PhD's this affected their entry in the year 2012.

The gender differences in promoted posts are evident at the Senior Lecturers, Associate Professors and full Professorial grades. From table one, the data points to the fact that within a period of five years no woman had been promoted to the rank of Professor or Associate Professor. In fact, the increase from 5% in 2007 to 9% in 2008 of female Associate Professors as compared to 95% to 91% for the male Associate Professors in 2007 and 2008, this according to reports by the Gender Mainstreaming Directorate, was a special effort by the University to attract

experienced female Associate Professors on sabbatical from other institutions to support work at the School of Graduate Studies (UEW Gender Newsletter, 2006). Beyond 2009, female representation on the Associate Professorial rank has been zero (0) representing zero percent (0%). Within the same period, male representation on the Associate Professorial grade had not been stable. In the year 2009 male Associate Professors were twenty (20), in 2010 fourteen (14), in 2011 seventeen (17) and in 2012 sixteen (16) but represents 100% of the male Associate Professorial grade. Between 2009 and 2012, table 1 indicates that UEW had no female Associate Professors. The initial two recorded for 2008 were outside staff on sabbatical at UEW. The unstable representation of male Associate Professors between 2009 and 2012, though still representing 100% owes to the fact that, most of them either went on retirement, ill health or death. In the interview one of the administrators said, reasons such as retirement, deaths and resignation due to ill health could be possible cause for the unstable progress amongst the professoriate adding that the data presented in table 1 may also not capture very recent promotions.

A similar trend affects the full professorial statistics, between 2009 and 2012 UEW had one female professor throughout but had zero (0), representing zero percent (0%) in 2008 and two (2) in 2007 representing twenty two percent (22%). Early retirements, and ill health contributed to this development. To further buttress this, a study by Mama (2004) suggests that women typically take longer than men to reach the rank of professor; compared to male colleagues. According to Wilson 2012, women spend more time on teaching and service and less on research and writing and this also deprives them from attaining higher academic positions.

An administrator referred that most of the applications received from the faculties to the Human

Resource Division confirmed the findings in table 1 above. It reveals that more applications for promotions are received from male faculty members than from female faculty members. According to the administrator, female faculty applications account for less than 2% of total annual applications received for promotions for all the various categories.

The proportion of ratio in percentage varied significantly between the female and male full professors between 2007 and 2012. The male category had an unstable statistics although they had the highest percentage. The most significant was 22% for the female group in 2007 and 100% for the male group in 2008.

Gender and positions

Table two gives a fair representation of gendered positions in UEW. Three key academic posts were considered (Deans, Heads of Department and Directors). Out of the sixty six (66) key academic positions, only nine (9) females occupied positions. This represents 14% (9) of the total against 86% (57) male positions. It should be noted that all these positions are given to the rank of Senior Lecturers, Associate Professors and full Professors.

Table 2: Distribution of Post by Gender

| Position | M | F | % | % | Total |
|----------|---|---|---|---|-------|
|----------|---|---|---|---|-------|

| | | | M | F | |
|----------------------------|----|---|----------|----------|----|
| Deans | 9 | 1 | 90% | 10% | 10 |
| Heads of Department | 40 | 5 | 89% | 11% | 45 |
| Directors | 8 | 3 | 73% | 27% | 11 |

Source: UEW Vice Chancellors Annual Report 2012

These data on the gendered nature of promotions and positions in the University of Education, Winneba mirrors what persists in the wider context of higher education in Ghana and Africa. In Ghana's premier University-University of Ghana, Legon, women account for 26% of the working population but only 3.4% of the professoriate (Morleys, 2006). In Nigerian Universities for example, women hold less than 35% of academic posts, and are mainly represented at the lower and middle level academic positions with their participation relative to men decreasing at successive level (Ogbogu, 2011). In South Africa, as indicated by Adusah-Karikari (2008), women comprise 37% of all academics but just 9% of senior management. There is evidently a problem with the appointments, promotions and positions of women in UEW and more broadly in Ghana and in many Higher Education Institutions in Africa

Experiences of female and male faculty members of Appointments and Promotions

The study shows that all the six faculty members interacted with in the study had gone through the processes and procedures for promotion at least once to earn their various academic ranks. Regardless of the disparity in time to promotion, female faculty members, reported a larger allocation of time to child and elder care than their male counterparts and as a result were unable to make time to develop on their publication capacity. The general experience shared by faculty members are that sometimes applications submitted are substandard and do not meet the criteria for promotion. As a result, this delays the processing of the application.

The study reveals that the absence of mentors also affects promotions. As explained by one of the female respondents, I had no one to advise me on the quality of the set of papers I was submitting to support my application for promotions. In 2008 my application for promotion to senior lecturer position was rejected because it was substandard. Honestly I was demoralized. I lost my confidence and decided not to write again until a colleague who had returned from further studies abroad encouraged me and jointly worked on another paper with me. Even with this, it took me two years to build my confidence level to be able to come out with sole authored papers. I wasn't confident that all my papers were of quality enough to apply for promotions, until I was assured by my Head of Department that the research papers I had were good to qualify for the promotion I sought for. The task of combining motherhood with academic life was challenging for most women and militates against their career development but rather favours male career trajectories. All the female respondents indicated how academic career is incompatible with motherhood and other domestic responsibilities. They explained that rising to the top means that one has to work extra hard to get there at the expense of the family. According to a female respondent, I am expected to write and research, present papers at conferences in order to be promoted. All these require sacrifices beyond the working hours; it is difficult for me to forge ahead because I am confronted with the challenge of being a mother, a wife and a career woman. I am expected to manage my academic life and family life.

Commenting on the criteria for promotion, the general impression obtained from the female respondents was that the criteria for promotion was not too gender friendly. In further explanation, the female respondents noted that the criterion for promotion places a lot of emphasis on research and publication which tends to disadvantage women. This is further compounded by the current institutional focus on the acquisition of PhD's by all faculty members by 2015.

Evidence from this research shows that the respondents describe delays in processing promotions, gender imbalance in the appointment and promotions Board and an overriding emphasis on research despite reference in the criteria to teaching as some of the institutional practices that hinder promotions at UEW.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Analysis of the interviews data indicated that there were three key factors being: Gendered promotion – men tend to have an advantaged edge over women faculty, this emanated from institutional practices in the university and cultural traditions outside it. More specifically women described their lack of interest in research as a setback to their career progression. Family responsibilities accounted for the observed lack of interest in research and publication coupled with the lack of mentors who otherwise will guide and support the research activity to maximize productivity. The implication of this is the low status of women in academia, less female contribution to research scholarship and lack of visibility.

The study also observed that the gender parity in academia in relation to promotions is likely to be compounded by current institutional focus on educational credentials such as the acquisition of doctoral degrees as criteria for promotions. This is because on the average, women are less likely to have a doctorate degree and those who have it are underrepresented (UEW statistics, 2012).

Institutional cultures, structures of governance and power dynamics were also identified as a challenge. Inadequate information and poor feedback between Human Resource and Faculty members has led to the submission of sub standard applications which has resulted in delays in the processing of applications. Compounding this is the existence of undocumented practices as revealed by faculty members which hinders promotions.

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations are made:

The findings and assumptions of the study suggest some themes for further research. It would be interesting to conduct further research on the same topic in some selected public universities so as to make generalizations. In addition to the fact that the number of public Universities in Ghana has increased in recent times, comparative study of the promotion processes in public and private universities will broaden the scope of the studies. The study should also utilize a mixed method approach in the data collection and a bigger sampling size. The population should encompass faculty, administrators and committee members on the appointment and promotions board from all the other public universities in Ghana.

Also, it is recommended that the criteria for promotion should be reviewed to give equal considerations to teaching, vis-à-vis research. This will ensure fairness and balance in the scope of work that qualifies one for promotion, merit increment and tenure decisions.

Furthermore institutional efforts should be geared towards improving communication between the Human Resource Division and applicants before and after the submission of applications for promotions. It is recommended that a data base of all publications, teaching evaluation and research work be developed. The system should be enabled to send periodic update to faculty members on their work/publication output. This should come with clearly stated criterion for appointment and promotion devoid of ambiguities that will help make the process more transparent and fair. In addition to these the University of Education, Winneba should organize yearly workshops and seminars to educate staff members who are due for tenure, or contemplating promotion.

Mentoring and scholarship schemes should be institutionalized for new members who join faculty to motivate, guide and support them through their career trajectories.

Finally, the university should provide adequate support structures such as crèche facility which will provide after school services for faculty members to free them time to pursue further work on research and study. This is because most of the crèche facilities close at 3pm by which time faculty is expected to be at work. It is expected these provisions would help female faculty with families to balance career and family life more effectively and efficiently without necessarily being at a disadvantage.

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