Career development among women academicians: A case study in selected universities in Uganda

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Abstract

Women are still underrepresented in higher education in Uganda. Few women continue their studies to establish their career as academicians and occupy senior academic positions in Uganda universities. Therefore the purpose of the study is to understand the contributing factors towards career development of Ugandan women academicians in Universities in Uganda. The study contributes to the literature on the experience of women academics in sub Saharan Africa, Uganda in particular. Specifically, it provides the contributing factors towards the career development of Ugandan women academics. The findings will work as a guide to women who have the will to build their career to high academia, and higher education in general. Qualitative method of study was used. 14 women academics were purposely selected for the study. The primary sources of data collection are in-depth interviews and open ended questionnaire. Researcher's diary was used as the secondary data collection method. Data were coded and analyzed, while findings interpreted and organized according to research questions. The findings revealed that the informants have a positive attitude towards their teaching career. The contributing factors towards career development of Uganda women academics include the following. As for personal factors, these women have high career aspirations, interest, hard-work, determination, self-drive, sense of adventure, large networking base, and community service. The Support by important people comes from parents, teachers, mentors and spouses. The conducive institutional environment includes good schools, good working environment, sabbatical, and gender equity. Financial support comes in the form of scholarships and research funds.

INTRODUCTION

Women are still underrepresented in higher education in Uganda. Few women continue their studies to establish their career as academicians and occupy senior academic positions in Uganda Universities. Therefore this study will explore the experience of Ugandan women academicians in universities in Uganda. Specifically it seeks to understand the contributing factors towards their career development.

The total number of women academics in Ugandan tertiary institutions in 2006 was 8%, while universities in particular had 13% women academicians (The National Council for Higher Education, 2007, p 25). Namaganda (2010) reports there are only ten women professors in Uganda. Makere University the oldest and the biggest University in Uganda has the following numbers of women academicians (see the following table I).

Table I: Makerere University Academic staff and designation 2009/2010

	Professors	Assoc. professors	Senior Lecturers	Lecturers
Female	4	12	67	107
Male	50	82	143	277

Source: Makerere University Human resource office (2010)

So it is clear that Uganda is still far below the expectation in achieving gender parity in high academia.

The gender disparity in education in Uganda is rooted in the introduction of formal education in Uganda. When the missionaries came to Uganda in the late 1870's, they established primary schools to serve the mission. Yet, the first schools were created with only boys in mind.

However, after over twenty years of missionary arrivals in Uganda, a group of ladies met in Mengo district to discuss the founding of a boarding school for girls. In 1905 the school opened in Gayaza with five daughters of the local chiefs. The first priority was given to children of the chiefs (Evans and Schimmel, 1970). So, in addition to a late start, the majority of girls were not given the opportunity to education.

Gradually, educational opportunities were opened to limited number of women. In 1920 the first school for training women teachers was established, ten years later, the first domestic science class was organized. Finally in 1945, educational opportunities for women were opened to the highest level when it was decided that women as well as men could be considered as candidates for admission at Makerere College (Evans and Schimmel, 1970).

Women and higher education

Women's higher education has received considerable attention in the last decade. This is reflected in: the World Conference on Higher

Education (UNESCO 1998), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UN Millennium General Assembly 2000), and the World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO 2009). This concern aim to implement the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1949 which emphasize that higher education should be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit (UNESCO World Conference on higher education report, 2009).

Although efforts have been made to improve the access of women to higher education, the problem still remains. The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education report (2009) pointed out that although the enrolment rates in higher education has increased worldwide, the sub-Saharan Africa are by far the lowest in the world. In sub-Saharan Africa, only four out of every ten students in tertiary institutions were women in 2007.

The UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education report (2009) further indicate that there had been some slight improvement among senior academic women in Commonwealth countries. There were 9.9% women professors in 1997, and 15.3% in 2006.

It is against this background that one may ask: *What are the contributing factors towards career development of Ugandan women academicians in universities in Uganda?*

As noted earlier, this study will explore the experience of Ugandan women academicians in universities in Uganda. Specifically it seeks to understand the contributing factors towards their career development. The study focuses on the perception of women academics on their career of teaching. The goals and values those relevant to the career development of the women academics. The events and experiences those contribute to their career development.

Relevant literature

Two theories have been used to interpret the findings in this study. Patton (1990) observed that one can use different theoretical perspectives to look at the same data. The point of theory triangulation is to understand how findings are affected by different assumptions and fundamental premises (p. 470). Supper's (1990, as cited in Isaacson and Brown, 1997) theory was included because the theory indicates the personal and situational (environmental) determinants of career choice, development and coping. Another theory used is Hackett and Betz ((1981, as cited in Hackett, 1995)) Career Self-efficacy Theory. The theory is important because of its self-efficacy concept.

Super's life span career theory (1990)

Super (1990, as cited in Isaacson and Brown, 1997) generated fourteen propositions in his theory of career development.

Super believed that any given person possesses the potential for success and satisfaction in a variety of occupational settings. He elaborated on the trait-factor notions that people are differentially qualified for occupations by suggesting that interests and abilities are likely to fall into patterns more consistent with some occupations than others and that people are likely to be more satisfied if they are in an occupation that requires a pattern of interests and abilities closely corresponding to their own characteristics.

Self-concept is another important aspect in Super's theory. In this concept an individual recognizes self as a distinctive individual, yet at the same time includes awareness of the similarities between self and others. As an individual matures, there are many self tests, most of which have implications for educational and vocational

decisions. Self-concept changes with time and experience.

The nature of the career pattern- that is the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency, and duration of trial and stable jobs- is determined by the individual's parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, education, skills, personality characteristics (needs, values, interests, traits, and self-concepts) and career maturity and by the opportunities to which he or she is exposed.

The individual's mental ability is important factor in academic success which will open or close doors to many occupations. Factors in experiential background contribute to attitudes and behavior. The social economic level of the individual's parents may be one of these, since the individual's early contact with the world of work is largely brought about through parents, family and friends.

Work satisfactions and life satisfactions depend on the extent to which the individual finds adequate outlets for abilities, needy values, interests, personality traits, and self-concepts. They depend on establishment in a type of work, a work situation, and a way of life in which one can play the kind of role that growth and exploratory experiences have led one to consider congenial and appropriate.

Hackett and Betz (1981) Career Self-efficacy Theory

Hackett and Betz (1981, as cited in Hackett, 1995) hypothesized that career efficacy beliefs play a more powerful role than interests, values, and abilities in the restriction of women's career choices. Traditionally feminine sex-typed experiences in childhood often limit women's exposure to the sources of information necessary for the development of strong beliefs of efficacy in many occupational areas. Lowered perceived efficacy

along important career-related dimensions could, in turn, unduly restrict the types of occupations considered (such as traditionally male or female dominated) and affect performance and persistence in the pursuit of a chosen occupation. Thus, Hackett and Betz (1981) argued that self-efficacy theory provides a heuristic framework for understanding the cognitive and affective mediators of women's gender-role socialization experiences, and the resulting gender differences in career choice patterns that can still be observed in the workforce. Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations. Efficacy beliefs influence how people think, feel, motivate themselves, and act (Bandura, 1995, p. 2).

Bandura (1995) identified sources through which efficacy beliefs can be developed: Efficacy can be developed through mastery experiences. They provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can master whatever it takes to succeed.

The second influential way of creating and strengthening efficacy beliefs is through the vicarious experiences provided by social models. Seeing people similar to themselves succeed by perseverant effort raises observers' beliefs that they, too, possess the capabilities to master comparable activities (role models) and vice versa.

Social persuasion is a third way of strengthening people's beliefs that they have what it takes to succeed. People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given activities are likely to mobilize greater effort and sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when problems arise.

The fourth way of altering efficacy beliefs is to enhance physical status, reduce stress and negative emotional proclivities, and correct misinterpretations of bodily states.

Literature in Sub-Saharan Africa

In Sub- Saharan Africa the following have been studied: Rubagiza (2010) studied the role and impact of women academics in promoting gender equality and women's rights in great lakes region. Naledi (2009) investigated problem affecting women to participate in science in South Africa. Onsongo (2009) examined the outcomes of affirmative action policies in the three countries (Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania). Nienke and Federica (2009) found gender aggregated data in women participation in research and agriculture in South Africa, Ethiopia, Tanzania, and Uganda. Onsongo (2007) examined the implication of growth of private universities on gender equity in Kenya. Onsongo (2006) investigated strategies and challenges in implementing gender equality policies in Kenya. Lihamba, Mwaipopo and Shela (2006) carried out assessment of affirmative action in Tanzania. Oluruntoba, and Ajayi (2006) compared gender with research attainment in Nigeria. Morley (2006) studied how women are discriminated in institutions of higher learning (Uganda, Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa and Srilanka). Oanda (2005) studied how private universities promote marginalization in Kenya. Damian (2005) Examines perception of South African academics regarding work. Onsongo (2003) investigated access to research and publication in Kenya. Mirsky (2003) Address the issue of sexual violence in education (Global examples drawn from Tanzania, Nigeria, Uganda). Omale (2002) studied Relation between female underrepresentation and male domination in Kenya. Odejije (2003) studied access of females in Nigerian universities. Mabokela (2002) studied challenges black women academics face in advancing in South Africa. Leach and Little (1999) study Causes of gender gap in education in Cameroon. Ababentil and Adole (1998) studied barriers to women's access to higher education in Africa.

Uganda in particular has the following studies: Kavuma (2009) discussed barriers to access higher education in Uganda. Ezati (2004) explored the dynamics of gender equity and equality at Makerere University through analysis of women teachers' experiences. Kasente (2002) Describe the history, progress and future of Department of gender in Makerere Univaersity. Namirembe (2002) investigated gender imbalance at departmental headship levels of administration in institutions of higher learning in Uganda. Kayaga (2002) studied gender and affirmative action policies in the employment sector through the female senior staff at Makerere University. Kwesiga (2002) studied barriers to access higher education. Kasente (2001) discussed how to create gender awareness in university. Tumwebaze-Tushabe (2000) studied students' attitude towards one-point five admission scheme for female students at Makerere University.

Methodology

This study is qualitative in nature. The current study uses phenomenological philosophical stance. A phenomenology provides a deep understanding of a phenomenon as experienced by several individuals. 14 women academics were purposively selected for the study. They included three professors, three associate professors, and nine senior lecturers. They were selected from the list of academic staff of the academic year 2009/2010. The women academics were selected from three universities; Mkerere University, Islamic University in Uganda, and Kyambogo University. Three data collection techniques were used in the study. In-depth interviews and demographic questionnaire were used as primary techniques for data collection.

Research diary was used as secondary technique. Mask names were used to protect anonymity of informants.

Findings and discussions

The perception of Ugandan women academicians towards teaching career

Findings show that most of the informants have positive attitude towards their teaching career. This could be because of the job related benefits they got from their teaching job. Informants revealed that teaching is flexible, rewarding and keeps one's brain active. Because of the flexibility of the job one can do many other things besides teaching.

Anita said:

...I have applied to be associate professor and I enjoy teaching ...Ah it's rewarding, you feel you are making an impact ah especially when you see the students using the knowledge. Ah it is something that is not routine like. So it is not an eight to five job. You can do so many things and your brain keeps active.

Although most of the respondents had positive attitude towards their teaching job, a few did not express that positive attitude. Jackie explained that she does not know whether she liked the job of teaching but she found Makerere University a good employer which provided training to workers. Jane also wondered whether she liked teaching. It seems these two female academics were able to develop their career to high academia due to the good environment that promoted their career growth.
Jackie said:

... Do I like the job of lecturing? Let me — hahaha. I don't know- Makerere University as an employer-you should say what do I like about my job –I think Makerere University is a good

employer. I found Makerere University a good employer because one it builds capacity, it does train...

Goals and values those contribute to success of Ugandan women academics

Personal Internal factor
Data show that personal internal factors contribute to career development of women academics. They include high career aspiration, interest, hard work, self drive, determination, and adventure. This finding supports Supper's (1990) theory of career development. Supper believed that personal factors contribute to career choice, development and coping. Supper's personal factors included needs, values, interest, traits, and self concept.

Some of the informants revealed that they had *high career aspiration* which contributed to their career development. Aspiration refers to the level of education and occupation to which a person aspires. This high career aspiration was developed during their school days. Gottfredson (1981, as cited in Farmer, 1985) found that occupational aspiration level is fairly well established between grades 4 and 8. The responses revealed some of the careers that the women academics were interested in. Jenipher explained that there were only three important jobs during her years of schooling; to become a doctor, a lawyer or a teacher. So she decided to become a teacher because of the respect accorded to teachers during those days. She made this decision when she was in secondary school. Jane said: "When I was in school I wanted to become a professor because I thought that was the most credible work one could do".

All of the informants revealed that *hard work* contributed to their academic growth. The informants reveal that they have been hard working throughout their life that is why they have been able to progress to high academia. Such high response implies that hard work is significant towards career development of women academics.

So hard work, hard work pays... you know there is always this thing a woman is less appreciated as somebody said a woman has to work doubly or even ten times more than a man to be appreciated or to be recognized as somebody who is doing something. So we have to have like super human power to work and deliver and produce results to be appreciated" (Juliet).

Majority of the informants reveled that they are *self motivated* individuals. They don't need someone to push them around in order to work. Self motivation enabled them to fulfill their ambitions. Alisa explained that she is generally a kind of person who would like to accomplish something when she decides to do it. She believes that she is self-motivated as an individual.

Some informants revealed that they had *high determination* which contributed to their success. Judith Said: "You get determined and resilient in order to achieve what you want" Sarah explained that she had high determination from year one as an undergraduate.

One I think high determination ... We came here in university as undergrads on government scholarship...And then I learnt that actually for you to ascend to high degrees you have to have had a good degree. In our years a first class was unheard of but at least we all aimed to get uppers. At least in our discussion group with

exception of one all of us got uppers. So I can say like the determination I had right from year one undergrad ... is another factor (Sarah).

A few informants revealed that being adventurous contributed to their career development. Sarah explained that she was adventurous which led to her academic growth. In this case the willingness to try new ideas and take risks. The informant was able to respond to the advert on the internet and luckily she got the opportunity to be sponsored for her PhD.

But I think the other thing also being adventurous and taking out risks... in March that year there was an advert posted on the website of the queen Margret University which was promising full student ship...So I decided to run for it. It was advertized on the internet I applied on the internet. It went quiet until May when they asked "the interviews are tomorrow, can you come?" I said, of course I can't come, then I was interviewed on the phone. And then at the end of that day they told me, you had won can you report on September 12 (Sarah).

. Some informants revealed that interest also contributed to their career development. Because of their interest they were able to work hard. Isaacson and Brown (1997) assumed that if a person likes an activity, she will be more highly motivated, work harder and hence is more likely to succeed at the activity. Jane explained that academic career needs interest. Similarly Shakila explained that she was interested in academics and that gave her motivation to work harder. Therefore interest motivated the women academics to work hard and hence succeeded.

Events and activities those were relevant to career development

Four themes emerged out of this question. They are: supportive people, Institutional factor, economic factor, and personal factor.

Supportive people

Data shows that supportive people have contributed to the career development of women academics. They are parents, teachers, mentors and spouses. These important people have provided support in the form of encouragement, educational support, and social support. According to Hacket and Betz (1981) self-efficacy model to the career development of women, self efficacy expectations are acquired in four ways; one of them is verbal persuasion (the support and encouragement of important others). Similarly Bandura (1995) believed that people's belief concerning their efficacy can be developed by four main forms; among which is social persuasion. Farmer (1985) found out that the effect of important others on career motivation and achievement were found to be significant. The most important was the effect of parents and teachers.

Data revealed that *parental support* contributed to the career development of women academics. Parental support came in the form of encouragement, paying educational fees, assisting in academic work and offering guidance and counseling to their daughters. Informants explain how their parents supported them:

I had a father who was I think- who lived really ah-above his time. You remember those days when your bubu's (breast) came, the aspiration for your mother was to get married. And my father said you have to go to school"...Because my sisters the moment the breasts came, my mother would say you are too big to go to school

stay home--- But because of the influence of my father I really persisted" (Mary).

Then dad ... apart from coaching us at home, whenever you were going back to school, like when I went to boarding school he always gave you a very useful lecture...And then academically he always said always aim high. If you aim at getting fifty you will get forty or thirty. Just always aim at 100% then you will get nineties and eighties, never aim low (Juliet).

Sewell and Hauser (1975, as cited in Farmer (1985) findings of high school seniors indicated that parent's encouragement was a significant predictor of aspiration. Bledsoe (2005) found out that parents' opinion towards girls' education contributed a lot towards her education success.

Some informants revealed that their *spouses* supported them in their career development. Spouse support came in form of encouragement on professional growth, assistance in academic work, and child care. Jackie revealed that her husband took care of their young children when she went abroad to do her PhD.

Like I said ok my husband was very supportive because he himself is a professor already. So he knew if I am to remain in a university I have to move up from a master to PhD level. So he has always been cooperative even in- I used to give him my papers to read and see- for comments and so forth (Suzan).

Maimunah and Rozia-Mohd (2006) noted that husband support formed the major type of support to the flying women academics in Malaysia.
It seems that women who are supported by their spouses are likely to progress in their career.

Some informants revealed that *mentors* contributed to their career development. The mentors guided and encouraged the women academics in their career path. Some mentors advised the women academics to apply for promotion while others worked as role models. Alisa explained that she had male mentors who encouraged and guided her to further her studies. She adds that it is a bonus to have female mentors because they can be emulated. Jackie explained that she had mentors who encouraged her to do her PhD early because it would become difficult for her if she waits too long. Miria had her teachers who were role models to her. She said "I was interested because all along I would admire my teachers whenever they would teach I would understand".

Studies show that mentoring has been used to support women in their professional and academic development, increase their confidence, develop self esteem and to empower them (Funch and Kochan, 1999), (Wilson, 2001), and (Lindgren, 2006).

Some responses indicate that *supportive teachers* contributed to their academic growth. Teacher support came in form of guiding, nurturing, and role modeling.
Mary said:

> ...so after S4 I had passed well enough to go to HSC but I ran away to teacher training college. But they came and pulled me away that you have to go to secondary... The headmistress was serious with me so she came and picked me from the college...

Farmer (1980b, as cited in Farmer, 1985) found teacher support to be significantly related to career motivation.

Institutional factor

Data shows that conducive institutional environment has contributed to the career development of women academics. Conducive institutional environment come in the form of good schools, academic support, provision of sabbatical leave, and gender equity practice. These are explained below.

Most of the informants revealed that they went to *good schools* which built the foundation for their career development. These schools laid their foundation for hard work and independence. These schools also provided guidance and counseling which enabled them to be focused on their academic matters. The schools also had facilities which contributed to their good performance. Asha explained that the schools she went to offered career guidance and counseling and the expectations they should have regarding their career. Anita explained that she went to schools which offered holistic education, schools which helped one to act independently and think. She believed that these were what built her academic career. Jenipher explained:

> ... Secondly at the time when we studied a lot of- a lot of one's success depended on, one the schools you went to and excellence with which one performed. So I think those one's helped me because the school was helping us to focus on excellence and- so when we went to the university we actually excelled, I did excel (Jenipher).

Super believed that individuals can be helped to move towards a satisfying vocational choice through helping them to develop their abilities and interests and helping them to acquire an understanding of

their strengths and weaknesses so that they can make satisfying choices. Isaacson and Brown (1997) noted that both of these aspects can be achieved through guidance program in a school.

Data revealed that *academic support* contributed to career development of women academics. Under the academic factor we have support for excellent students, capacity building, and early exposure to do research.

Some of the informants revealed that they excelled during their degree courses and this gave them an opportunity to progress. Some got the opportunity to work as teaching assistant and others got the opportunity to get scholarship and further their studies. Such golden opportunity made the future of the women academics bright hence contributing to their progress.

Informants explain how they were supported. Alisa said: "So Alhamdulillah I was one of the best students in that academic year and after graduation we were requested to remain or we were recruited as teaching assistant in the faculty of education". Sarah said:

... When I got my masters I excelled at the masters. I did a good dissertation while everyone was collecting data from Kampala I went to the village to a very rural area on a topic which was not very interesting: community based health care. I excelled at it, analyzed it well and my dissertation was ranked the best. For that I got a three month scholarship to the University of Cape Town...Then from that I was able to get a PhD scholarship (Sarah).

The informants also revealed that the institutions provided various trainings in order to build capacity of the members in their institutions.

The institutions provide short term courses for the members for example latest Information Communication Technology (ICT) courses and Scholarly Writing, opportunities to attend conferences, seminars, and workshops for training. All these programs aim to build capacity of the members so that they can be modern, and as a result they can do better.

I had opportunity through Makerere to amm to go for conferences and to attend seminars and workshops for trainings. Makerere actually now offer short trainings within Makerere itself which wasn't there before but there are a lot of opportunities (Jackie)

A few responses indicate that *good working environment* enabled the women academics to grow in their career. They never went through bitter experiences like harassment which other female workers go through. Many times female workers go through bitter experiences in their work places. For example some women are harassed by their bosses; others are isolated to make them unworthy, and extra. Another respondent indicated that she was supported by colleagues in many ways. Some colleagues encouraged her to do her PhD, while others advised her to apply for promotion because she had attained the required qualification. This implies that if women get conducive work environment, they may gain the confidence to work towards progress. Informants explain:

Ah but also my space here in the department of women and gender studies I would say is a good environment. I don't feel- there are many things which female workers feel in many work places. Where you feel- either you are harassed or- so those kinds of stuff. I have not experienced that

in my work life. So I wouldn't have those bitter experiences of being subordinated or harassed or something like that. So it has been more in terms of my ability to use this environment to grow (Anita).

I also want to say that I have worked with people who are supportive-the people whom I found in the system were interested in helping us to move forward. When I joined adult education the values- the core values of the institution-at that time the center for continuing education was that every adult had the opportunity to continue learning. And they really acted out those (Jackie).

This finding is contrary to the literatures which show that work climate is problematic and less than welcoming for women: Green, Stockard, Lewis & Richmond, (2010) chilly academic environment. Wilson, Marks, Noone & Hamilton-Mackenzie (2010) discriminatory practice. And Morley (2006) gender discrimination.

A few informants revealed that the provision of *sabbatical leave* is another factor which enabled the women academics to rise to high academia. Sabbatical leave enables them to do their academic work peacefully without engaging in teaching activities. Sabbatical has enabled these women to produce a number of papers for publication and due to these publications; they have been promoted to high academia. Jane said: "...Then also there is provision for sabbatical leave. You get leave and do your research peacefully without any disturbance".

Some informants revealed that *gender equity* has enabled them to progress in their career development. The institutions provide equal opportunities for males and females to progress in their profession. They are considered equally for scholarship to pursue their postgraduate studies. Jane said: "This institution operates like gender neutral". Shakila also adds that there are no particular funds for women but when they are making selection for scholarship they consider both men and women. There is nothing like affirmative action. This implies that both men and women are given equal opportunity to further their education.

This gender equity could be as a result of the gender equity programmes established by African universities. Bannett (2002) observed that African universities have laid strategies to improve gender equity. The strategies include establishment of Women's Studies Unit, research on women, and journal for women. In Uganda, Makerere University in particular established gender mainstreaming process through the women and gender department. The process went through the establishment of Women and Gender studies, spreading out within the university through public lectures, seminars, and outreach programs including regional and national workshops (Kwesiga, 2002).

Economic factor

Informants revealed that financial support contributed to the career development of women academics. Under this there are provision of scholarship and search for research funds.

The availability of *scholarship* contributed to the career development of women academics. Most of these women received scholarships to pursue their masters and PhD which is a minimum requirement to teach in a University. Most of them obtained their scholarships through their institutional support. Some members obtained their scholarship from organizations while others, from their university as a way of staff development.

Shakila obtained her scholarship from commonwealth universities "Then PhD I also got a very generous scholarship for commonwealth which was funding everything even air tickets here and paying my tuition and giving me allowances".

Another source of scholarship is staff development. Jane explains staff development scholarship "There is support within staff development. Women can apply for funds to support them in doing PhD".

Most of the responses revealed that ability to obtain *research funds* has enabled the women academics to do their research and to publish. Publication is the major factor considered in order to be promoted. Research funds can be obtained from their institutions and other organizations outside the institutions. Informants explain their source of research funds: Sarah revealed that associating with research funders helped her to get research funds which enabled her to do research and publication therefore helped her to be promoted.

But I think largely promotion about academics bases on research and publications. More than fifty percent of the marks go there. And for me I have been able to do that because I have been able to associate with people who further, and finance research and that is what I can say has enabled me to be promoted (Sarah).

Jane explained that there is need to search for research funds. It cannot just find them there. She said: "You have to search for the funds. Many people think that money will come and find them there. No, you have to search for it. You have to write good proposals which will win funding". Judith is from the food science department. She explained that for their department money is not a problem. You can get it from the university and at international level. You need to write good proposal and then you get the money. "Actually for our field money is not a problem. You write proposals and they give you money. There is money both at the university level and international level. If you are keen, you write a good proposal and you are given the money".

The voices of the women indicate that scholarships have enabled them to pursue their graduate degrees. It seems that without such facilitation, the women academics would not have been able to acquire their postgraduate degrees given the fact that higher education is quite expensive. In addition to that it seems that the source of research funds is limited in these universities. It is likely that there is a tight competition for the funds. If research resources are widened then more women may get the opportunity to do research and thus grow to high academia.

Personal external factor

Findings show that personal effort has contributed to career development of women academics. Personal efforts are seen in terms of networking, community service and doing your best.

Some informants revealed that *networking* is also another important factor which contributed to the career development of women academics. Networking takes place in the form of associating with members who are expert, and associating with members who finance research. The women academics network both locally and internationally which has helped in their academic growth. Informants explain networking in the following words.

Networks are very important. In fact one of the things which have helped me I had net work. I

had network both with men and with women. When I go for conference I make sure I make friends with somebody. Somebody who will help me academically (Suzan).

Sarah explained that she maintained links with graduate university for research purpose. "So I had to work hard to prove that I am actually doing very well and I don't rubberstamp the stereotype people always have about blacks. So that enabled me to finish within three years and that has enabled me to maintain links with this university for research programs".

Todd and Bird (2000) observed that networks are critical in academia because it helps to accumulate merit through invitations to participate in research projects, to present guest lecturers or join a committee. Similarly networks can be influential in gaining publications and in seeking referees for the promotion process itself.

Some informants revealed that *community service* is also necessary for their career growth. Lecturers are expected to participate in the development of their community using their knowledge. It is counted as taking back the university to the community. Suzan explained that she did her research on rice which was sponsored by international food policy center. She specialized in rural development therefore by doing a study on rice this contributes to the development of the rural areas which grow rice in Uganda. Sarah explains about community service:

like for me I am a vice chairperson for the Uganda British alumni association which is an association of people who studied in the UK. So we have lots of meeting, lots of program. I am a member of the management forum... All those

things- because when you go to those things you are not going there as a university teacher. But the information you have may benefit the community and it is voluntary. And of course I belong to the women's guild of my church. So things like that. haa. So you list all those and that is what counts as community service (Sarah).

The voices of the women academics show that they contribute to the development of their society using their knowledge. This is one of the expectations of the universities from the learned members of society. Due to their contribution to society development they have been promoted.

Data show that personal effort to *do your best* contributes to career development of women academics. Jackie explained that you have to do your best in order to progress. She always strives to do her best in whatever work she does. She observed that your best may not be the overall best but at least you strive to maximize what you can do. Also many of the women academics explained that they were always among the best performers in their school days. This conforms to the saying that give the world the best you have the best will come to you.

Fig.1 illustrates the contributing factors towards career development of Ugandan women academicians.
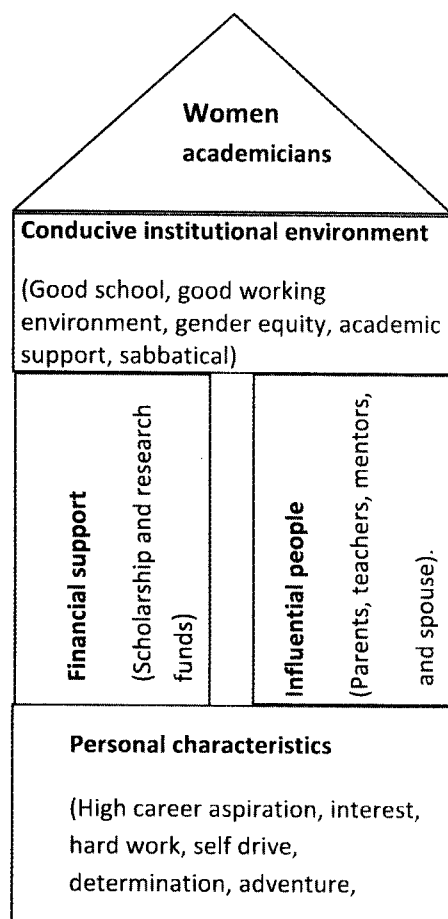

Fig 1: Contributing factors towards career development of Ugandan women academicians

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the findings which can help improve the status of women in high academia.

Creating conducive environment for female staff: Institutions should create conducive environment for women to work in. A nurturing, supportive, and reinforcing environment can assist teachers to progress in their career. While an environment that includes negative pressures and conflicts can hinder career progress of a teacher.

Increasing gender awareness: This can be done through meetings, workshops and seminars with different groups of people in the institutions. Women should provide their views in order to come up with practical solutions.

Provision of education loan scheme: Many Ugandans cannot attain higher education because of financial constraint. University education is provided by both private and public sector due to the privatization policy (Bisaso 2010). Over eighty percent of the students are self sponsored.

Raising and mobilizing funds for research: Universities need to raise their budget for research and development and to mobilize research funds in order to develop the culture of research in these universities and for members to appreciate research work.

Women should be dynamic: Women academics should be innovative and creative. They should be able to respond to personal and organizational environment.

Devising mentoring and role modeling strategies: Women need to devise mentoring and role modeling strategies in order to establish relationships with colleagues within their institutions and also outside their institutions that foster publication and professional advancement.

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