An investigation into the attraction, retention, and engagement of women in higher educational institutions in selected universities in South Africa

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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis entitled *An investigation into the attraction, retention, and engagement of women in higher educational institutions in selected universities in South Africa* is my own work, that it has not been submitted for any degree or examination in any other university, and that all the sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

Claudia K. T. Mukong   Date.................................

Signed......................................

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ABSTRACT

The primary aim of this study was to investigate the attraction retention and engagement of female lecturers in two selected Universities in South Africa UWC and UCT. A qualitative research design was applied in order to achieve this aim. The data collection techniques that were utilised to collect information comprised interviews and document analysis. A total of thirty (30) participants were interviewed ranging from professors, associate professors, senior lecturers and lecturers selected from both universities across faculties and departments. Data was obtained and analysed through qualitative thematic content analysis. This study goes beyond the issue of women 's entry into higher institutions and raises questions such as: what happens to these women after they enter the system and or the institution? What are the chances for them staying on and progressing from one level to another? Effective implementation of the recruitment and selection practices is crucial in any organisation and or institution. Therefore, findings of this study indicate that flexibility in working hours, institutional history, teamwork are some of the factors that attract female lecturers to higher institutions. Also, a sense of belonging, support systems, working environment, being valued and recognised, opportunities to grow are factors that retain them and lastly, committee meetings, research, supervision, community engagement, teaching and learning, collaborative projects with other universities, active role in decision-making at departmental and faculty levels promotes their level of engagement and participation. The findings show the necessity of putting in place measures and mechanisms that would ensure effective recruitment policies and practices while taking into consideration gender equality and equity and also the dual responsibilities on the academic and domestic front that female lecturers face.

Keywords: higher institution, attraction, retention, engagement, recruitment, gender, equity, equality, South Africa?

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this PhD to my lovely children Claire and Jolly. You are the motivation behind my success. My brothers and sisters, my mum who have all been very supportive throughout my PhD journey.

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Affirmative Action
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
EE	Employment Equity
EEA	Employment Equity Act
EEP	Employment Equity Plan
HEIs	Higher Educational Institutions
HERS	Higher Education resources services
HR	Human Resource
HRM	Human Resource management
IOP	Institutional Operation Plan
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
UTAC	University Transformation Advisory Committee
UWC	University of the Western Cape
UCT	University of Cape Town
WSA	Workplace Skills Act

Chapter One

1.1 Introduction: Background and context of the study

This study focuses on women in academia through the lens of attraction, retention and engagement. Although significant progress has been made towards the attainment of gender parity across higher education sector over the past decades Breetzke & Hedding (2018), Bell, Berry, Leopold & Nkomo (2021) posist that women are still under-represented especially in the higher education institutions particularly universities. Socially women are categorised into specific gender roles, and this is further entrenched in higher educational institutions and universities. This can be seen in the study of Moodly & Toni (2019), Chan, Mazzucchelli & Rees (2021) where the culture of exclusion mostly affects women especially those in leadership positions in the form of male dominance, women's voices are silenced and this may have an effect on their engagement, attraction and possibly retention in a particular work environment. These variables may determine one's wish to be attracted to a particular work environment based on the conditions of service and also how Employment Equity Policy is implemented Bell et al.,2021). However, there are noticeable challenges because of the absence of and lack of formal structure for supporting women to progress and advance to leadership positions. This therefore slows how the transformation of gender equity process in higher institutions in critical (Moodly & Toni, 2019).

More so, discrimination is also highlighted as one of the issues impeding the advancement of women to top management positions in universities in South Africa (Akala & Divala, 2016; Aiston & Yang, 2017; Barkhuizen, Masakane & van der Sluis, 2022) this includes being seen as inefficient and weak simply because of their gendered nature. As a result, women are expected to proof their ability and capacity to be twice as much as their male colleagues. Owing to the fact that majority of leaders in South African universities are men according to Mankayi

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& Cheteni (2021) they have authority to determine what is right or wrong which to a large extent puts women in a disadvantaged position especially those who aspire to become leaders. As a result, women are demotivated to take up leadership position because of gender and racial discrimination (ibid.).

Furthermore, issues of power and gender sterotypes are some of the factors listed as barriers and challenges women undergo in leadership positions and which they have to endure to succeed in these positions (Ellemers, 2018; Dean, 2017; Fontanini, Joshi & Paivandi, 2020). This shows that some of the institutional policies, practices and structures that are in place do not provide women with much needed support in order to succeed in leadership positions. This can be seen as reasons why they do not stay longer in positions of authority or in leadership positions which therefore impacts their representation in academic and senior positions (Ramohai, 2019). Within South Africa in particular, work life balance and other caring activities associated with women, deter the progression of women to leadership and top management positions. Therefore, women prefer taking up roles and jobs that will enable them cope and balance family responsibilities and their jobs/work (Mankayi & Cheteni, 2021). This pattern of women underrepresentation in higher institutions can be seen globally not only within South Africa. Research at the global level indicates these patterns are visible both in advanced and developed countries such as the UK, the United States of America (USA) France and developing country contexts (Dean, 2017; Fontanini, Joshi & Paivandi, 2020).

The underrepresentation of women can be further seen in the study of Aiston & Yang (2017) which provides some important findings regarding women who are underrepresented in the most senior leadership roles especially at the level of Dean and above. Although academic women are underrepresented in most leadership roles, however within these roles we see a gendered dimension where women are more heavily involved in teaching and mentoring tasks rather than research as their male colleagues (Aiston & Yang, 2017). The study of Aiston &

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Yang (2017) further explains that women are making slow progress through the academic hierarchy and despite their underrepresentation across all ranks in the Engineering and Mathematics, Science and Technology (STEM) subjects, there is still a drop in the number of women at more senior ranks like Associate and full Professor. Women are less represented in managerial positions in academia especially in the level of Dean and above (Aiston & Yang, 2017).

O'Connor (2020) uses a Feminist Institutional perspective to identify structural and cultural factors that dominates and promotes aspects of gender inequality in higher educational institutions. This is reflected at structural level where the underrepresentation of women is seen at senior positions. Cultural values and practices particularly in Africa values men more than women which inhibit women's access to leadership positions. Transformative policies which would have protected women seem to have little success in reducing gender inequality. O'Connor's study further argues that due to an increasing level of male dominance in HEIs, gender equality has been very slow, in addition structural and cultural organisations aimed at addressing issues on gender inequality has effectively worked against initiated interventions projects which aim at promoting gender equality (ibid.).

In the same light as seen in the United States, women of colour are underrepresented in academia and are also noticeably absent in different disciplines at senior positions, their absence has an impact on future young scholars who perhaps do not see themselves remaining or staying in academy. Such scenarios are common at research-intensive universities. Tree & Vaid (2022) argue that the barriers and challenges to advance and retain women of color in academia is based on certain biases that arise as a result of teaching and research assessment. People and women of colour in particular were more likely to create a unique bond in their research work however, they were less likely to be rewarded and appreciated for their innovative ideas in research. Tree & Vaid (2022) conclude that faced with these barriers, people

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and women of colour feel discriminated in their workplace most especially in their academic jobs.

For the purpose of this study, I focus specifically on South Africa although contextual references will be made to other developing countries such as Ghana, Kenya, and the more developed countries such as the UK and USA. Three aspects of women in academia are considered 1) what attract them in the first place 2) what retains them and 3) their level of engagement or participation at different levels. The ability not only to attract and retain women in higher education but also to nurture of their engagement at all levels in higher educational institutions has become a real challenge in terms of representation in general and gender equality in particular. Although, women seem to be represented in higher institutions this does not imply the absence of gender inequality Maqubela (2019) and despite an increase in the number of women at the executive level, the ratio between women and men is still in adequate and unequal (Kele, 2015). Maqubela (2019) state that despite extensive efforts to fight and reduce gender inequality in higher educational institutions, the challenge keeps increasing and the level of the representation of women in academia is still low. Sebola (2015) argues that gender equality in higher institutions of learning in South Africa such as universities is far from being achieved unless a strong support base for women in leadership positions is put in place. The patriarchal nature of South African society is reflected in universities and this culture in a many ways shape women's experiences in higher education (Maqubela, 2019).

Socially, prior to formal education women were categorized into gender-specific roles and this has consequences and effects in the way in which they are presented in higher education institutions. This is attributed to cultural and traditional factors embedded in patriarchal societies which in essence shows an unequal gender representation to the society. This therefore gives positive stereotype towards men and a negative gender stereotype towards women (Sekhar & Parameswari, 2020). These attributes -gender stereotype, patriarchal system

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and culture plays a critical role in fostering gender disparity in education. At the same time, the gender stereotypes and misconception about women's education prevailing in society restricts women from attaining higher education (Sekhar & Parameswari, 2020).

Similarly, Neculăesei (2015) adds that a gender stereotype is coined by the opposite sex which invariably devalues women as being inferior to men. However, Neculăesei fails to explain how this applies to higher education institutions. Unquestionably cultural influences, language, human behaviour, and social environment in which individuals are born and live, shapes attitudes, emotional behavioural reactions, and perceptions about what is happening around them. This also reflects in the way society assigns and/or assumes certain roles in society based on gender (Neculăesei, 2015). As a result, the decision to be man or woman is not necessarily by choice because societal structures dictate who is a man or women by instituting cultural norms and roles in ways that certainly constructs a person's gender (Ellemers, 2018).

Hentschel, Heilman & Peus (2019) reiterate the traditional gender stereotypes in particular men's image of seeing women as incapable or deficient in areas considered to be a success for traditionally male fields, this image portrays some kind of gender bias. Women on the other hand are not exempted from the impact of gender stereotypes although they see themselves as equal to men in many areas and key qualities (Hentschel, Heilman & Peus, 2019).

Traditionally, women are seen only as housewives while men are focused on work and maintaining the family (Sekścińska, Trzcińska, & Maison, 2016). This has not only create gender imbalance but also social and cultural disparity in communities. Thus, as the discussion above indicates, society has been shaped and constructed in a way that cultural and traditional norms shapes and determine gender roles in the society. This can be seen even in households where men and women are not allowed equal roles and duties (Wood, 2019). Society expects the role of a woman should be in the family, at home where her time should be devoted to supporting her husband's career. When one looks at social values and gender roles within South

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Africa, the role of women in society is different from that of men Cerrato & Cifre (2018) even though there are changes that are occurring in the social role of women and men.

Despite entrenched differences and clear persistent gender skews, over the years the role of women have been changing, women now occupy leadership positions in areas such as academia, business, law, and parliament (Muberekwa & Nkomo, 2016). This can be further exemplified in the enthusiasm shown by women for personal growth, leadership development as well as their readiness to impact their environment. This in turn shapes the development of Women in Leadership Programme designed by Higher Education Leadership and Management with the support of universities in South Africa (Seale, Fish, & Schreiber, 2021).

A study carried out by Motale (2018) contributes a positive story about women in higher education, a divergence from the normal variances reported across the world. Despite being poorly represented, women do form a significant proportion of staff in Higher educational institutions and there is the recognition that within the higher educational intuitions where they are located, their representation cannot be ignored.(ibid.). Motale's (2018) study shows something quite different to what could be expected and that is black women in particular seem to buffer the blows of patriarchal and gender-related supremacy and that despite extraordinary obstacles on many fronts, they are not deterred from climbing the academic ladder. These women represent a major blow that all the masculine, patriarchal, and gender-related dominance were channelled against their success, these odds could not stop them from rising to the top.

This study seeks to better understand the low representation of female academics, their roles and functions in higher education in particular. Despite the claims of Motale (2018), Mama (2011), Dahal (2022) and Rosa & Clavero (2022) state that universities in Africa became spots for reproducing patriarchal patterns, especially in formal education which was never intended that women and men would pursue knowledge equally. As we have also shown in the

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discussion above, the pattern of female underrepresentation in higher education is global (Mama, 2011; Yousaf & Schmeide 2017). According to Moodly & Toni (2017), universities were created to prepare African men as future leaders, while education for women was never recognised as is clear from the studies cited above, their roles were geared towards being wives and mothers. Furthermore Hejase et al. (2013) highlight that it is from a very young age that men were prepared to assume these elite or leadership positions, whereas women were trained and nurtured to be obedient followers. In Africa, the role of patriarchy is reflected within social institutions and is very strong in most African societies (Hejase et al. 2013) it is therefore unsurprising that the gendered division of labour also seem to reflect in higher educational institutions (HEIs) and universities. The study by Obeke-Ihejirika (2017) indicates the many ways women creatively interact and navigate different patriarchal power structures in a public space pattern where their presence remains a transgression to establish social norms. Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) remain steeped in doing things the male way and women who are not in support of these divisions are scorned. Many scholars have indicated that HEIs are designed hierarchically all over the world which results in women being marginalized globally (Andela et al., 2008; Kele & Pietersen, 2015; White & O'Connor, 2017).

The year 1948 is important in South Africa, it was the year racial separation was enacted, became law and rolled out in certain cultures, communities and in educational systems. However, the lived experiences of women in the context of higher education still echoes this policy of separation which dates back to the forces of apartheid. The higher education system which stemmed from the previous apartheid regime was instituted mainly to produce white, predominantly male educational privilege on the one hand and female subordination in all spheres of South African society (Adonis, & Silinda, 2021).

Studies globally indicate that women in the academic environment are disadvantaged since the history of patriarchy is still dominant in academia (Ogbogu, 2011; Mama, 2011; Akala, 2016;

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Rosa & Clavero, 2022) therefore the ability to attract, retain and engage with women in academic institutions - where gender equality and representation still persist - remains a real challenge.

1.2 Global trends in the employment of women

Globally, studies show that since the 1960s, women have exceeded men in attaining levels of higher education, gender differences in educational attainment have been a concern as well (Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006; Buchmann, DiPrete & McDaniel, 2008; OECD, 2012; Van Hek, Kraaykamp & Wolbers, 2016). According to Burkinshaw (2015) sexism in higher education is increasingly visible and there is an unconscious bias against women that persists. This is confirmed in the study of Evangelista (2017) on sexism in higher education, who defines sexism as a prejudice especially against women and girls and even today it is faced by all gender. Through descriptive-correlational-comparative design, the study of Evangelista (2017) states that women experience gender bias in the workplace despite government's effort in promoting gender equality. Meanwhile, Mansoor & Bano (2022) examines the relationship between Pakistani women academic leaders with their female colleagues. It shows a controversial assumption that female academic leaders exhibit patriarchal traits which involves replicating masculinity practices of exclusion against women described as **"Big Bad Wolf"** for their women co-workers. It further shows a degree of contradictions in women academics' attitudes toward their colleagues in leadership positions as well as challenges framing their working relationships vis-à-vis retention.

Although most studies as discussed above concentrated on the disadvantaged position of women, especially in higher education, women's educational prospects around the globe have changed considerably (Burkinshaw, 2015). Studies indicate that in most Western countries especially, women are now a par with men in terms of education (Van Hek et al. 2016;

Longman, 2018; UNESCO-IESALC, 2021). Over the years, the Nordic countries have ranked highest in terms of a minimal gender gap in areas such as economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and political empowerment with Iceland, Norway and Finland achieving the most favourable ratings (Longman, 2018; Janoris & Prela, 2019; Husu, 2019).

Studies have shown different dimensions related to the status of women within and outside South Africa. In particular, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) established by the United Nations 2000–2015 defined eight specific areas aimed to increase gender equality, empowerment of women, including improved access to education (United Nations New Millennial Goals, 2017). The UN later established 17 sustainable development goals for the period of 2016–2030 of which Goal 5 aimed at providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, representation in political and economic decision-making processes (United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 2017). Similarly, World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report (World Economic Forum, 2017) serves as a framework for noting the importance of gender-based disparities and tracking their progress over time. Consistent with the importance of increasing the rates of educational access and school completion by girls, as reflected in the UN's New Millennium Goals 2000–2015 and a follow-up on UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2016–2030 access to higher education for women is critical as is the importance of having role models for women in higher education (González-Pérez, Mateos de Cabo & Sáinz, 2020; Agurto, Bazan, Hari & Sarangi, 2021).

1.3 Local trends in the employment of women
Historically, the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in South African higher educational institutions is low (Ramohai & Marumo, 2016; Mankayi & Cheteni, 2021). In the late 1970s to 1980s, the need to transform knowledge production within academia was also a powerful call for gender equity. Strategies were put in place to increase gender equity in

universities with more emphasis on research and teaching, the establishment of women and gender studies programmes, centres and departments (Bennett, 2002). As we have now seen from the above discussion, clearly social and cultural identity place women in a subordinate position to men. Women because of their gendered nature have been negatively affected and are faced with a lot of discrimination, this results in them being marginalised and poorly recognised simply because they are women (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015; Bader, Stoermer, Bader & Schuster, 2018; Casad, Franks, Garasky, Kittleman, Roesler, Hall & Petzel, 2021). The shortage of female representation in decision-making organs in higher education sector has reinforced gender bias in government policymaking which, in turn, creates a vicious cycle because new policies are being implemented by men and not by women themselves (Shaheen, 2013;Yousaf & Schmiede, 2017).

Earlier study by Chisholm (2012) argues that gender inequality in higher educational institutions in South Africa is part of a framework system in post-apartheid South Africa. These institutions followed regulations that aligned with the country's constitution, eliminates various legislated discrimination including race, gender and physical disabilities (Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996). The Constitution underlying principles intended to refute apartheid's legacy which include gender inequality.

In the 1960s, women became visible in the workforce (Bennett & Horwath, 2013) but it was not until the year 1994 that a positive change was ushered in by the South African government, especially where women were concerned. Although internationally women continue to enter universities in large numbers both as students and staff (Drakich & Stewart, 2007; Bilton, 2018) their numbers have not yet resulted in a shift in gender hierarchies within academic institutions in South Africa. Studies show that, the continuous setback for women in South Africa especially black women who are employed in tertiary institutions, are considered outsiders within their academic environment (Naicker, 2013; Ramohai, 2019; Bell, Berry, Leopold &

Nkomo, 2021). Furthermore, female academics are often invisible and voiceless owing to the fact that they are small in number (Naicker, 2013; Mahabeer, Nzimande, & Shoba, 2018; Westoby, Dyson, Cowdell, & Buescher, 2021). However, some institutions are advancing, a number of women who are steadily rising and represented in top rank executive management (Drakich & Stewart, 2017; Coetzee & Moosa, 2020). Although there has been a slight increase in women at the executive level at universities in South Africa the ratio between men and women at this level remains disproportionate. Nonetheless, Kele & Petersen (2015) argue that while South Africa's higher education has undergone various changes over the past 28 years, several polices that advocated for equity and redress the past have not fully been addressed and therefore, gender imbalance particularly at executive management level in universities remains problematic. Hence the underrepresentation of women in executive and senior management positions in South African universities persists regardless of progressive (Moodly & Toni, 2019).

Overall, the shortage of academic staff, failure of universities to attract and retain quality academic staff continues to be crucial to the changing expectations of women and the potential to acquire new knowledge. The experience of women in higher education is often a journey of negotiation and construction of identities. We believe that for all these reasons, this study is critical as it examines factors that influence attraction, retention, engagement of women, in higher institutions, at two selected universities in South Africa and how women construct and negotiate their identifies within academic contexts.

1.4 Background to the study

The available literature according to De la Ray (1997) explores the apartheid-designed education systems on women and black women in particular, although historical, societal, and cultural factor seem to silence Black women, recent study indicates that there is a need for

their voices to be heard in academia and to describe their experiences (Farmer, 2021). The study of Ramaiah (2019) echoes the voices of black women in the changing higher education landscape in an effort to provide an understanding of prevailing gender inequalities , this draws on black women perspectives in academia exploring the concepts of transformation and diversity (ibid). Based on a Report from the South African Gender Equity Task Team 1997, the idea of "transformation" processes and policies focused mainly on transforming racial demography of staff, students, management, especially at "white" universities. Although South Africa implemented its Employment Equity Act to monitor appointments in order to redress "imbalances" of race and gender (Timothy, 2013; Espi, Francis & Valodia, 2019; Carrim, Scheepers & Moolman, 2022) not much attention was placed on policy and affirmative action, and on issues that concerns employment of female academics especially at senior level positions within the universities, is inadequate.

Despite the implementation of legislation such as the Affirmative Action (AA), Employment Equity Act (EEA) and the Workplace Skills Act (WSA) there is very little change in gender skews in the workplace and the invisible barriers that women have to overcome remain intact. In South Africa, social, political, economic discrimination and inequality based on race and gender dominates, embedded social inequalities reflected in all spheres of social life, higher educational institutions are not left out (Divala, 2016; Akala, 2018; Burnett, 2018; Adonis & Silinda, 2021). It was against this background that the new democratic South African government committed itself in 1994 to redress the inherited apartheid economic and social structures and to establish a new social order, committed to transform higher education. The next section examines the background history of both UWC and UCT.

1.5 Background context to previously disadvantaged institution: University of the Western Cape (UWC)

This section examines a background history of UWC- University of the Western Cape to understand issues of gender equality within the university since its inception. With the fall of apartheid, dynamics in South Africa's higher education system changed after 1994 when the democratic government embarked on transformation that was reinforced by reconciliation and reconstruction of the aftermath of apartheid policies (Wolpe, 1995). Although the fight against apartheid as a system of governance is over, racial segregation remains an ingrained reality in higher education contexts. In its role and stance in opposition to apartheid, UWC as an institution played an important role in the configuration of democratic South Africa. UWC was recognised in 1959 as a university for coloured people (Wolpe, 1995; Gerhart, 1978) within the context of the apartheid government's Separate University Education Act of 1957. It provided specific function in building human resources to meet the needs of the coloured people as defined by the apartheid state, in accordance with the racial stratification system of the prevailing social order (Wolpe, 1995) it offered manual labour and clerical services for whites .The idea at UWC was not to simply provide these services for whites but to reverse this trend and build real capacity for coloureds. In the beginning, this was the case but as the discussion unravels, the reality is now different.

In 1970, UWC gained its status and was able to award degrees. In 1982 its mission statement rejected the apartheid ideology and with the passing of the UWC Act the following year, the university gained autonomy and designated itself "the intellectual home of the left."(Gerhart, 1978).As a result, the institution attracted increasing numbers of students from disadvantaged communities. Being at the forefront of South Africa's historic change, the University of the Western Cape played a distinctive academic role to build an equitable and dynamic nation.[1]It

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[1] https://www.uwc.ac.za/Pages/History.aspx

has a history of struggle against oppression, discrimination among disadvantage groups and academic institutions, UWC's concerns about access to equity and quality in higher education arose from its extensive practical engagement in helping historically disadvantage groups to participate fully in the life and growth of the nation.

Although UWC is considered a previously disadvantaged institution, it has continuously expressed commitment in the pursuit of employment equity goals "beyond compliance" together with the Employment Equity Act yet it experienced an uncertain progress in this regard. The Employment Equity Plan was criticised in that it included both numerical goals and targets set by departments and faculties as well as the affirmative action measures prescribed. It failed to identify the extent to which specific designated groups within the university workforce was under represented.[2] Also, the affirmative action measures which was identified and described by the plan were not sufficiently justified or motivated.[3] Following the overrepresentation of coloured staff and their recruitment, there was a measure of uncertainty in the statistics for the period under review, and the failure to address imbalances and the underrepresentation of other groups like Africans and women (Macewen et al., (2006).

Earlier study, Naris & Ukpere (2010) indicates that every higher educational institution wants to be top lead in order to attract potential employees and students. It is through the retention of academic staff that educational institutions are be able to achieve competitiveness by ensuring continuity in the provision of quality services and products. Tertiary education institutions must attract and retain skilled and competent employees to be able to grapple effectively with the progressive and constantly changing working environment. Meeting these needs has become difficult for most tertiary institutions, especially because of skills shortage, low salaries, high

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[2] https://www.uwc.ac.za/SO/HR/Documents/UWC%20EE%20Plan%2020162020.pdf

[3] https://www.uwc.ac.za/SO/HR/Documents/UWC%20EE%20Plan%202016-2020.pdf

rate of staff and student ratios, heavy workloads and exclusion from decision-making concerning institutions and their constituents (Ngambi, 2011). This is further highlighted in the study of   Hoque & Tshutsha (2022) which states that, flexible working hours, equipment and resources, job satisfaction, mentorship and training, challenging jobs are factors that affect and impacts retention of academic staffs in higher institutions. Therefore, universities are not putting many efforts to attract and retain academic talent (Yameen, Bharadwaj & Ahmad, 2020).

University of the Western Cape Institutional Operational Plan (IOP) of 2009 provided a very broad framework of action across the institution over the following five years (2010–2014). The Recruitment and Selection Strategy was established to support the IOP whose aim was to address some of these challenges such as attracting, retaining, diversifying and developing outstanding talent to achieve UWC's vision and strategic goals.[4] Based on a report from UWC website, its mission statement commits to promote and encourage diversity in a distinctive academic environment in South Africa. This can be achieved and realised through critical and creative ways which seeks to build an equitable and dynamic society, promote gender equality in order to redress past inequality and reshape a society by enhancing UWC.s capacity

As an academic institution, UWC is constantly striving to be "a place of quality, a place to grow" a place where both students and employees have equal access to opportunities for work growth, live and learn in a supportive and enabling environment, void from any form of harassment, intimidation, or prejudice. [5]

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[4] https://www.uwc.ac.za › Documents › IOP- the now

[5] https://www.uwc.ac.za › Documents › IOP- the now

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1.6 Gender Equity Unit at UWC

In terms of gender equality at UWC and based on a policy report available on the university's website,[6] the Gender Equity Unit (established in 1993), strives to promote gender equity and equality amongst staff and students. The unit monitors gender equity policies and provides gender awareness training. In the mid-1980s women and gender issues where of lesser concern than issues on human rights, this was a period when the country was still embedded in its liberation struggle. However, "a small group of feminists were deeply concerned about the structural inequities that existed between women and men on campus" some of these inequalities could be seen in salaries between women and men, where men earned more than women. Women never benefitted from housing subsidies, at the time there was no maternity leave for women, no sabbaticals, no promotion opportunities whereas all professors were male with whites as senior professors.[7] As a result of this, the institution became more concerned on issues around women, the management and leadership structures at the university became more supportive of women and gender sensitive in their interactions and dealings with women. Therefore, concerns about women were made a priority and became part of a broader social political transformative agenda at UWC.

Gender Equity Unit was formally established in 1993 after it came to realisation that the broader national liberation movement failed to factor in the liberation of women under the auspices of mass democratic movement. This imbalance became a concern on campus as many of these activist organisations were based at UWC during the height of apartheid. There was keen political awareness regarding the marginalisation of women in higher education institution as a whole. Whilst, pressure from students and staff compelled the university to be more inclusive in relation to women's rights. Thus, GEU unit held numerous sessions,

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[6] https://www.uwc.ac.za › GEU › Pages › About-Us

[7] https://www.uwc.ac.za › GEU › Pages › History

workshops, and awareness campaigns to educate student leadership on campus residences in efforts to transform gender from a hostile climate on campus.[8]

1.7 Background context of a previously advantaged institution: University of Cape Town (UCT)

This section discussed the background history of University of Cape Town (UCT) to provide a better understanding around issues of gender equality. Initially UCT was a college for white boys founded in 1829. However, it became a "white" university in 1918 based on generous gifts coupled with state grants from Julius Wenher, Otto Beit and Alfred Beit inheritance, Cape Town society (Gerhart, 1978). Though it was for whites only a policy was enacted that allowed non-whites access into the institution though in limited number. While the policy was constantly contested most especially with the implementation of Extension of University Education Act in 1959, it highlights barriers to entry, growth and staff development and incorporates corrective measures for example, the review of employment policies, practices and the institutional culture (Gerhart, 1978; Bonti-Ankomah, 2020). UCT developed a well-consistent record of policy formulation regarding transformation and the promotion of employment equity.[9] However, the most recent UCT' EE policy (2022–2026) was based on extensive consultation, including, the Institutional Reconciliation and Transformation Commission Report, Institutional Culture Survey all of which entailed exhaustive, institution-wide consultation and provided informative feedback on affirmative action measures that should enable the university to determine realistic EE targets and produce progressive actions (Bonti-Ankomah, 2020). Furthermore , the Employment Equity Plan Act 55 of 1998 alongside a new approach of decentralised target setting, coupled with an increased in line management

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[8] https://www.uwc.ac.za › GEU › Pages › History

[9] https://www.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/328/about/policies/Policy_Employment_Equity_2006.pdf

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accountability for Employment Equity has shown a lack of drive and determination in respect of the EE process (Kola & Pretorius, 2014). That having been said, Morrell, Patel and Jaga (2022) underscores that EE as a transformative entity usually depends on elements that are not easily quantifiable. These authors [….] add that devoting policies to achieve the goal of demographic transformation such as retention and attraction for example, are no guarantee for success. What does this therefore, means? This could be understood from the premise of belonging which unlocks the full potential of transformation (transformation means an attempt to change higher education institutions so that they can no longer reflect the values embodied in SA's 1996 Constitution)) and the concepts of attraction, retention and engagement are central.

Nonetheless, the University Equity planning process is governed by the university policy, and equity plan. In order to implement the policy and plans, equity training is provided for. These governing documents and training opportunities are listed below. There appears to have been an uninformed, unorganised, unrealistic nature of targets set in preparation of the 1999–2002 plan but the proposed new approach may not have predicted a more rapid transformation of staff profile but rather may have experienced a lower target from 2004 onwards. UCT has prioritized recruitment of non-South African citizens as an EE strategy to promote the representation of designated groups particularly Africans (UCT Policy on Employment Equity, 2021). This is further echoed through the transformation of universities including the structure of academic staff. Issues of staff demographics was addressed by government in its 1997 Education White Paper which aimed to improve "proportion of blacks and women on academic and executive staff of institutions" (Cloete & Bunting 2000). However, according to a study carried out by (Sadiq et al., 2019) average times for promotion at UCT is shorter and quicker for South Africans than non-South Africans this is possibly because the recruitment policy reflects the country's labour laws which gives more privileges to South Africans than non- South Africans. Based on South Africa's Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998), it is required of every employer to develop employment equity (EE) plans, these plans must not be

less than one year and not exceed five years. The purpose of the act is to assist employers achieve equity by promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment. The act seeks to eliminate unfair discrimination and promote affirmative action. Therefore, UCT developed and implemented EE Plans at the time this Act was implemented. The current EE plan is from April 2015 to March 2020, it was compiled using information from individual EE plans put together by all faculties and departments.

According to a report presented by the former Vice-Chancellor of UCT, Dr Max Price, to the Gender Commission on 30 November 2016, the Vice-Chancellor stated that the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (DVC) for Transformation and Student Affairs is responsible for implementing, overseeing gender transformation at UCT, this forms part of a broader employment equity goal. The responsibility of the University Transformation Advisory Committee (UTAC) and the transformation committee in each unit oversee the implementation of employment equity. The recruitment policies target employment equity in general and women are one of the designated groups prioritized. The selection committee must decide whether or not to use the targeted employment equity statement. In terms of retention, the Vice-Chancellor stated that there is no difference between male and female retention rates (Price, 2016). "UCT has a high staff retention rate which demonstrates loyalty and continuity for the university. But in terms of transformation, this challenges the ability of the university to achieve employment equity through shifting the demographic profile of its staff. High retention rates restrict movement and a change in the number of staff of all race groups within the university. According to Morrell, Patel and Jaga (2022), UCT has a high staff retention rate which demonstrates loyalty and continuity for the university. However, in terms of transformation, this challenges the ability of the university to achieve employment equity through shifting the demographic profile of its staff (ibid). Furthermore, high retention rates restrict movement and a change in the

number of staff of all race groups within the university.[10] It is therefore, not clear how females are among the retained staff. This statement suggests that retention is not a gendered issue at UCT therefore in the context of this study, I will investigate what informs female lecturers to stay in a particular institution. However, the following section briefly looks at gender transformation in higher learning institutions in South Africa.

1.8 Gender, transformation at institutions of higher learning

Transformation of gender in higher educational institutions in South Africa means they were obliged to enact policies that focused on promoting gender equality, recognising the rights of women and also policies that will attract women to higher institutions. The challenges of achieving government objectives remain entrenched and more than twenty years into the new democracy, universities are still not making inroads in this regard. In South Africa, despite efforts to intensify opportunities for women to study, promotion at workplace is still hindered by educational inequalities, this is also evident in higher institutions (Mama, 2003; Klasen & Lamanna, 2009; Leibbrandt, Woolard, McEwen & Koep, 2010; Leibowitz, Van Schalkwyk, Bozalek &   Winberg, 2015; Moodley, 2018; Walker, Pearce, Boe & Lawson, 2019). As a result, legislative reforms were enacted to promote gender transformation in South Africa.

1.9 Legislative reforms and gender transformation in South Africa

Earlier study according to Davidson & Burke (2004) posits that women constituted 54 per cent of the South African population, just two-thirds in service sector, more than half of them hold clerical and sales personnel jobs. Prior to 1994, South Africa were dominated by a segregated society in terms of gender and race. However, the new democratic government brought about new political, social and economic transformation as a means to promote equality which in essence allows women's participation in public sphere, and redress the past inequalities caused

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[10]https://www.news.uct.ac.za › 2016-12-06_GenderCommissionPresentation

by apartheid. As a result, the rights and empowerment of women, equity and an end to sexual discrimination surfaced (ibid.) whereas according to Clarke& Bassett, (2016), Rustin (2021) twenty years later this is still the case.

Furthermore, after 1994 several interventions were put in place to promote and increase the number of women in higher education (Naicker, 2013). Interventions such as research grants, positions for female academics and mentoring projects were put in place to empower and encourage women. Higher Education Resource Services (HERS) for instance offered support programs to female educators to train and prepare them with the necessary skills and confidence to advance within the university structure (Moodie, 2010). Despite these interventions there was little improvement especially for female educators and academics as a result women continue to remain the minority as compared to male colleagues in most universities in South Africa, especially at senior levels faced with disparities across race and gender. Post-apartheid political dispensation instigated employment equity, affirmative action policies, as well as national policy frameworks to address gender equality in the workplace. Despite progressive legislative reforms, sociocultural perceptions societal values such as patriarchy continued to oppress women, thus contributing to their vulnerability (Chiloane-Tsoka, 2010).

Previous study according to Mathipa & Tsoka (2001) indicates that the problem of few women in leadership positions in South Africa emanates after the advent of a new political dispensation in 1994. It became more visible and intense as the country's political landscape gradually normalised. As a result, Commission for Gender Equality was created to promote the representation of women in leadership positions. It became one of the ways through which the problem of underrepresentation could be officially tackled (ibid.). This study further argues that, to formulate effective policies regarding women's emancipation in South Africa's institutions of higher learning, it is critical to capture and understand experiences of women,

how they are attracted and retained in the workplace. Currently, according to Masenya (2023) males occupy most senior management positions and middle management positions. The same can said to HEIs (Chidi, 2022). Masenya (2023 affirms that the composition of senior management positions ranged from 58, 4% in 2018 to 56, 2% in 2021, while their female counterparts occupied 41, 6% in 2018 and increased slightly to 43, 8% in 2021.

1.10 Problem statement

Higher education in post-apartheid South Africa in 1994 continue to grapple with transformation and the adoption of new pathways of teaching and learning. To this end there is no clear statistics to locate the concepts of attraction, retention, and engagement of females in South Africa's HEI landscape. While HEIs have tried so hard to absorb females into their systems, there is no clear research carried out to measure the achievements or on the concepts attraction, retention, and engagement.   It is noteworthy to state that these concepts are key to determine or informs people's choices of to stay in a particular work place or not. However, it is argued that academics are incompetently remunerated comparative to other occupations   in the public sectors and this scenario make attraction a challenge and problematic for HEIs (Musakuro & de Klerk (2021). As a result, retention becomes a concern. Musakuro and de Klerk (2021), adds that retention a growing concern and presents a unique set of challenges in HEI system. In context retention should be understood from talent which needs to be managed effectively and efficiently but unfortunately, it requires academic staff to improve productivity for job satisfaction which in this case is problematic for female academics who have other multiples roles between work and in their families. Therefore, meeting their values and engaging them is likely to keep them around for a long-haul.

However, the available literature speaks generally about gender but does not explicitly mention issues on attraction, retention, and engagement of female lecturers in HEIs. Even after the transformation to a democratic regime in 1994 when opportunities were opening up, factors on

attraction, retention of female lecturers within HEIs as well as their level of engagement remains a challenge and problematic, hence the need for this study.

1.11 Significance of the study

Analysis of available scholarly research on gender issues does not provide a comprehensive understanding of how institutions, particularly those of higher learning, attract, retain and engage women (Clavero & Galligan, 2021; Yousaf & Schmiede, 2017). The ability to attract and retain women in higher institutions has become a real challenge in terms of their representation and gender equality. The significance of this study is based on the premise that despite the recognition of gender equality in Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action in 2000 and the Commission for Gender equality in 1996, inequality still persists within South African society in general and institutions of higher learning in particular. Women in South Africa comprise more than half of the population and their participation both in public and private sectors is central to the development of the economy. At national level, the Employment Equity (EE) Acts of 1997, the Affirmative Action (AA) were legislated to redress imbalances of the past and include previously disadvantaged individuals, especially black women, and youth in the socioeconomic area. Despite a supposedly enabling policy environment, those who continue to benefit most are men and white women (Sobehart, 2009; Ramohai, 2019; Zvavahera, Dikito-Wachtmeister, Pasipanodya, Mwenda & Achar, 2021).

Although several measures to promote women in various domains are in place, there are limited policies to attract, retain and recognise their inclusion as employees and decision-makers. This study fills a gap in the literature as it examines the position of women in higher institutions in terms of attraction, retention and engagement. In so doing, it examines the extent to which the selected higher institutions have addressed issues of inequalities, imbalances of the past in relation to female representativeness with a view of making recommendations that will facilitate their engagement. It is hoped that findings from this study will provide important

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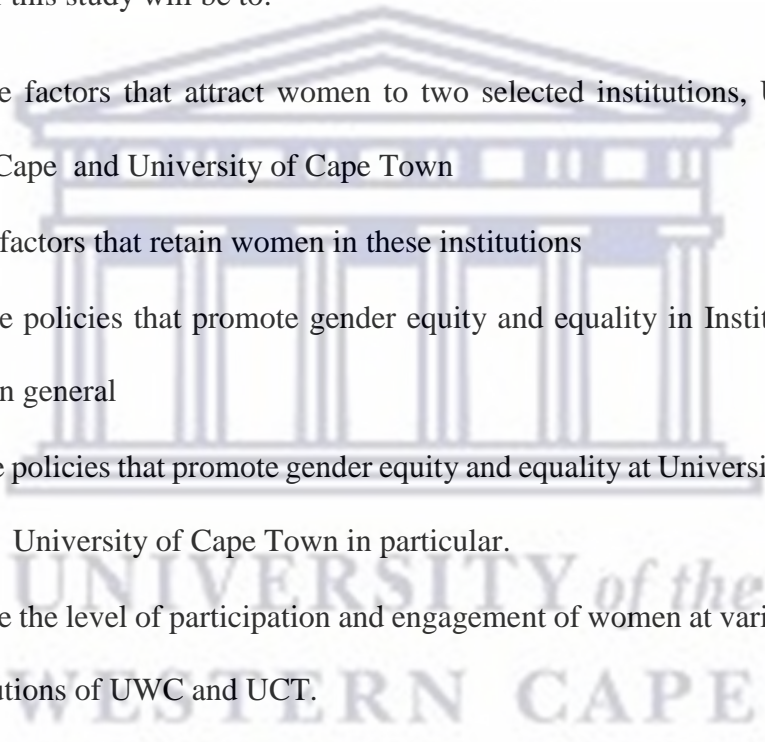
information for developing workable strategies and gender policies designed to ensure the success and sustainability of women and men coexisting in higher institutions without discrimination. The study contributes to existing body of knowledge by collecting and analysing qualitative data that captures direct experiences of women in higher institutions.

1.12 The study aim
The aim of this study is to investigate attraction, retention and engagement of women working in institutions of higher learning in particular at University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town.

1.13 Specific objectives
The objectives of this study will be to:

- Determine factors that attract women to two selected institutions, University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town

- Examine factors that retain women in these institutions

- Scrutinise policies that promote gender equity and equality in Institutions of Higher learning in general

- Scrutinise policies that promote gender equity and equality at University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town in particular.

- Determine the level of participation and engagement of women at various levels within the institutions of UWC and UCT.

1.14 Research questions
This study ask the following questions:

- What factors attract women to UWC and UCT?

- What are the retention factors for women at UWC and UCT ?

- What is their level of engagement/involvement at various levels within UWC and UCT

- What informs the promotion of women?

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1.15 Conceptual and theoretical framework

This section provides a brief discussion on the conceptual and theatrical framework of the study. According to Miles & Huberman, (1994), Jacard & Jacoby, (2010), Ravitch & Riggan, (2017) conceptual framework is a graphical representation of the study's key concepts which appears in the form of graphical or schematic diagram. The identified concepts are often used to indicate relationship between existing concepts or drown from the study objectives. Similarly, 'conceptualisation' is defined as a mental process of organising one's observations and experiences into a meaningful and coherent whole (Sequeira, 2015). Ravitch and Riggan (2017) on the other hand, claim that conceptual framework is "the identification of presumed relationships among key factors or constructs to be studied, and the justification for these presumptions may come from multiple sources such as one's own prior research or 'tentative theories' as well as established theoretical or empirical work found in the literature". In this study conceptual framework was required to identify and describe key concepts related to the study objectives. These key concepts are attraction, retention, and engagement and are discussed in depth in chapter two of this study.

This study was investigative in nature; however, it was analysed alongside relevant theories to support the main concepts and arguments. Kumar (2005) postulates that most issues researchers wish to investigate are rooted in a number of theories, and these theories have been developed based on different perspectives. This study adopts amongst others social constructionism as a theoretical framework because it aims to investigate and analyse issues around women in higher institutions in terms of attraction, retention, and engagement. A more in-depth discussion of this framework and other related theories that speaks to this study is provided in the literature review section.

1.16 Research method and design

This study explores a qualitative research approach, according to Patton (2002) this approach is orientated towards exploration and investigation. Creswell (1994) also argues that in qualitative research data is arbitrated through a human method focusing more on descriptive data that is analysed and reported. In this study using a qualitative research approach as explained in the study of Cohen, Manion & Morrison, (2007) the researcher is able to 'see' the world from the participants' perspectives. This form of research (qualitative) "aims to understand peoples experiences of their social and everyday activities and therefore embraces peoples' beliefs, viewpoints and values" (McRoy, 1995:209-215). I have explored the use of qualitative design in order to gain valuable insight into investigating and understanding factors that attract and retain women in higher institutions (UWC and UCT) and how they engage in different capacities in their various institutions. This approach further helps to answer the research question as it permits and allow the researcher to understand the real-life experiences of those taking part in the study while at the same time taking into consideration their context (Cohen et al., 2007; Hennink, Hutter & Bailey, 2020).

In addition, this study used a non-probability sampling which consist of a semi-structured interview with female lecturers from UWC and UCT with the view to understand the practical realities regarding retention, attraction and engagement from the study participants. Due to countrywide lockdowns imposed due to COVID-19 pandemic, it was difficulty having face to face interviews as previously planned, I had them to make to schedule appoints for via zoom sessions. The proceeding chapter will focus on conceptual framework and also by Feminist/feminist standpoint theory, Herzberg's two-factor theory and Job embeddedness respectively. The purpose of these is to extract testable assumptions that answers the research equations and objectives of the study. Theories in this context are carefully thought-out explanation for observations of the natural world that has been constructed using the scientific method, and

which brings together many facts and hypotheses. This provides reasons why I chose the three theories to measure the study findings and respond to gaps in the existing literature.

1.17 Chapter Outline

Chapter One introduced the study, putting forward the idea of retention, engagement, attraction of women in higher institutions in South Africa. It then presents the background of the study based on the main concepts of retention, attraction, engagement of women in relation to the 1998 Employment Equity Act. This chapter also discussed statement of the problem, overall aim , objectives of the study, research questions, significance, and limitations of the study. It further looked at a brief summary of the conceptual and theoretical frameworks- to be discussed in detail in chapter two.

Chapter Two focuses on the literature review relevant to this study. A number of related theories are also considered. The strengths and weaknesses of existing literature are considered and gaps in current literature are identified.

Chapter Three provides a discussion of the research setting, methodology and a detailed description of the research design, selection of participants, source of data collection and procedures, and data analysis employed in this study. The chapter further provides a description and explanation of the study population, sample size and how it was determined and selected from the study population. The chapter explains and describes the research instruments used to collect data. It also presents the positionality of the researcher and ethical considerations.

Chapter four discusses the main objective of this study which is analysing factors that attract and retain females in higher institutions and their level of engagement within these institutions. It provides a discussion, analyses, and outcomes in relation to the objectives of the study, it further looks at how major themes that emerged from the participants relates to the concepts of attraction, retention, and engagement. This is analysed using the conceptual and thematic framework presented in chapter three.

Chapter Five presents the conclusion drawn directly from the findings and results of this study. It gives recommendations for further research and reiterates the importance of this study on women in higher institutions in South Africa in terms of their attraction, retention, and engagement.

Chapter Two

2.1 Introduction: Literature review conceptual and theoretical framework

Previous chapter introduced the study which focused on investigating retention, attraction, and engagement of women in higher institutions. As earlier mentioned, the aim of this study was to investigate factors that retain and attract female lecturers specifically at UWC and UCT. This chapter present literature review, conceptual framework relevant to this study. The first section of this chapter begins by conceptualising the terms attraction, retention, and engagement, it moves on to present the literature review to ensure continuity in light of the global and local trends introduced in Chapter One. Chapter two will explore the literature and demonstrate how the theories help to better understand attraction, retention, and engagement issues within the global, African, and local contexts. It is also focus on how feminist scholars have theorised attraction, retention, and engagement of women in different contexts that is globally, on the continent and locally (in South Africa) particularly in higher institutions. In a nutshell, this chapter focuses on the conceptual frameworks, empirical literature and the theoretical arguments and how they apply to the study in question.

2.2 Description of concepts used in the study

I retaliate here that, there is a co-relationship between the concepts of engagement, attraction and retention in the context of this study**.** For instance, attraction and retention are about recruiting highly qualified staff critical for the growth of any higher education institution while retaining them based on the research output and contribution made. Therefore, Employment Equity Act (1998) in South Africa was instituted   to redress the historical imbalances in terms of gender, race, and disability among others. The purpose of this act in terms of recruitment

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and selection process is to ensure fairness, though, there seem to be a disjuncture between what is prescribed by the Act and the practical realities on ground despite the fact that employers in South Africa are obliged to adhere to this Act. In alignment with the Constitution and within the context of South African higher education system of recruitment – like any other institution, privileges (such as pay or/and status for instance) are supposed to be enjoyed by all regardless of race or gender.

2.3 The concept of attraction

The concept of attraction is vital to any organisation as it considers different ways employees might be attracted to an organisation in the first place. This concept may be understood through various definitions. For example, earlier studies according to Holcombe Ehrhart and Ziegert (2005) defines attraction as employing potential candidates who see the organisation as an attractive place to work, these qualities of attractiveness include having a positive and affective attitude towards the organisation and seeing it as a place to achieve personal and organisational growth. Attraction in the context of this study is defined from the lens of work place conditions such as flexibility for academic growth, research capacity development and good working environment.

Furthermore, Åteg et al. (2009) state that attractive work is the ability of any organisation to recruit competent employees who demonstrate high degree of job stability to foster commitment and productivity. These aspects are supported in the study of Marks & Huzzard (2008) and Hedlund (2006) in the specific context of creative professional employment. However, recent study according to Dauth, Schmid, Baldermann & Orban, (2021) indicates that, organisations are expected to formulate and implement strategies, promote diversity that will attract and retain job seekers to an organization. Employers must adopt certain practices by spending considerable amount of its resources on becoming the best choice for employees (Ahmad, Khan & Haque, 2020).

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To better understand the concept of attraction expectancy theory according to Vroom (1964) suggests that individuals are attracted to jobs or organisations they perceived offers valued characteristics. This theory predicts attraction and job choice based on the degree of consistency between perceptions of the environment and individual's desires, needs and goals—that is, an organisation is attractive if one perceives that personal desire can be achieved (Holcombe, Ehrhart & Ziegert , 2005). With Vroom's expectancy theory (Lloyd & Mertens, 2018) states that specific consideration is given to social context as it relates to employee's work environment, social context in essence necessitates effective workplace motivations which focuses on the interaction of social environment within and across the organization and different sectors. Bearing in mind that the concept of attraction depends on individuals' perception of the correspondence between personality and organisation, for instance, goals, processes, structures and culture, individuals are expected to experience varying degrees of attraction to different organisations. This describes how an individual with personalities correspond with the organisation he/she is attracted to (Highhouse & Hoffman, 2001).Through selection, organisations tend to recruit individuals whose interest are similar to those already employed. Over time, individuals with personality features who do not correspond with the organisation or other employees are more likely to exit the organisation voluntarily or involuntarily (Schneider & Goldstein, 1996; Schneider, 2001; Slaughter et al., 2005; Lee, Park, Back,Hyun & Lee, 2020). For instance the UCT employment equity (EE) plan highlights barriers to entry, growth and development for staff and incorporates corrective measures, such as, the review of employment policies, practices and procedures, the working environment and the institutional culture. This underscores how UCT has used employment equity as a mechanism for attraction since it lays the expectations for staff.

Amundson (2007) identified attractors such as EE as a significant component for any workplace attraction since it responds to people's life circumstances, personal development,

financial security, wage benefits, physical safety, and position. Although the significance of each attractor varies from person to person it can change over time. These attractors help to describe some of the factors that people consider when making career choices. However, these factors are not fixed as each person at any given time creates his or her own collection of workplace influences. Amundson (2007) further states that location is paramount in careers, and this can be important for many reasons such as the need for proximity to others like family or friends, the desire to be close to a place that is interesting and of course, the convenience of getting to and from work. However, recent study according to Mamun & Khan (2020) states that human resources and their motivation to work are an essential component to the success of an organisation. Therefore, the interest of the company's employees is shown in the results of their work, couple with appropriate working conditions which increase labour productivity, as a result improves the economic and financial performance of the company. The study further states that high staff productivity is not possible without a system of rewards and motivation (Mamun & Khan, 2020). Vo, Tuliao & Chen (2022) on the other hand looks at work attraction and motivation as an important factor in the growth of any organization, it increases employee productivity and efficiency. This study further examines how individuals' competence, autonomy, social relatedness in their work, motivation, autonomy and social relatedness impacts work motivation positively. In terms of relationship there are many forms associated with work this include connection with co-workers, supervisors or managers, clients or customers and family or friends, and these interpersonal connections play an important role in determining workplace attachments. This package can attract a person to work for a particular organisation. Paakkanen, Martela,& Pessi (2021) adds that it is important for co-workers to respond to each other's positive emotions in a constructive and valid way. This can be possible if workers focus on positive emotions at work by building a high-quality interpersonal relationships and psychological safety. Empathy is also advanced as a critical predictor of

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prosocial behaviour and effectiveness in the workplace which are positive attributes for work attraction (Clark, Robertson & Young, 2019).

In addition, Amundson (2007) and Vasquez et al (2020) agree that a person has to be appreciated and valued by others at work, and the need to feel that their work matters. In an environment where people stive to balance life and work there is a need to provide flexibility and they must be able to negotiate ways of fitting their personal needs into the existing work structure, this can affect hours of work, opportunities for leave and professional development. Furthermore, this study asserts that Amundson (2007), Garrido Vásquez, Kälin, Otto, Sadlowski & Kottwitz, (2019) that people want intellectual motivation, participation and engagement in different ways and the emphasis with regard to workplace attraction is also based on training and involvement in new and challenging activities to develop new skills. Job insecurity impacts an individual's well-being, Vásquez, Garrido-Vásquez & Otto (2020) and when a person is appreciated at work it motivates retention, appreciation is an important factor in the relationship between job security and its outcomes which in turn shapes the relationship between job security, job satisfaction, engagement, and dedication to the job (ibid.).

In a nutshell, one of the most important activities for the success of an organization is the attraction of high-quality applicants. In seeking to understand the concept of attraction in higher institutions, more emphasis should be placed on the procedures and selection processes. The necessity to attract and retain suitable employees is both a concern and a challenge for organisations in general. In light of the above discussion, and in the context of this study one of the objectives of this research was to investigate factors that attract female lectures to higher institution. The motivation behind this study was the fact that little research has been conducted on female lecturers especially at UWC and UCT with emphasis on factors that attract them to higher institution. Therefore, in this study and grounded on existing literature I would define

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attraction as those factors that motivate or push female lectures to want to be in a particular institution and this can be understood based on responses from participants.

2.4 Retention

The term retention is identified and defined by several authors, most importantly the retention of employees in any organisation is important to that organisation as it provides several benefits (Hong et al., 2012) such as retaining knowledgeable workers which helps to save recruitment cost of training of new candidates; improves productivity, performance, and profits. Retaining workers also helps to fulfil organisational goals and objectives (Hong et al., 2012). The success of an organisation highly depends on retention of valued employees (Das & Baruah, 2013; Kyndt, Dochy, Michielsen & Moeyaert, 2009; Silva, de Amorim Carvalho & Dias, 2019; Kurdi & Alshurideh, 2020).

According to Cascio (2003) and Hong et al. (2012) retention is an initiative taken by an organisation based on its policies to retain and prevent employees from leaving the organisation. Browell (2003) and Johnson (2000) support this view and adds that retention is the ability of an organisation to retain valuable and skilled employees who contribute to the growth and success of the organisation (Kurdi & Alshurideh, 2020; Ekhsan, Sudiro, Mugiono & Hussein, 2022). McKeown (2002) believes that employee retention should aimed at high-performing individuals who add value to the organisation . More so, retention according to Werner et al., (2012), Das & Baruah (2013) is a process during which employees are motivated to remain with an organisation for a maximum period of time (ibid.) and the ability of an organisation to keep its valuable staff longer or until retirement (Maheswari & Krishnan, 2014).

While recent study according to Barkhuizen et al. (2020) consider retention from early career academics, they provide important cues that speak to the objectives of this study. For example, these authors argue that support from institutional management and practices, research support

and infrastructure, passion for profession and loyalty for the institution are some of the factors that have resulted to earlier career retention. This could as well be said to UWC and UCT respectively as indicated in the findings in chapter five. In the context of this study, retention is defined from the perspective of female lecturers from both UWC and UCT. Thus, the study by Barkhuizen et al. (2020) only focused on early career academics whose results cannot be generalised.

That said, Mushemeza (2016) argues that productivity in research output, support from institutional management and passion for professionalism are all realised only when the university recruits, retains and trains qualify academic staff. This study further highlights the fact that, retaining quality academic staff is vital in building, promoting, and maintaining a well-functioning university. Therefore, recruiting and promoting staffs must be done in a professional and ethical manner. Onah & Anikwe (2016) posits that staff training enhances career opportunity, improved work environment, performance management, remuneration and other areas that have an effect on attraction and retention of staff.

While different definitions exist, in the context of this study retention is defined based on the different opportunities that exist to motivate female lecturers such as academic recognition, loyalty, research output, staff development and academic growth to name but few. However, Kanyumba & Lourens (2021) posit that staff training and development are some of the key factors that inform retention. Our own definition of retention draws on Christeen (2005), Mathimaran & Kumar (2017) and George (2015) who looks at retention through the lens of investigating and understanding why professional workers actually remain in their organisations. Mathimaran & Kumar (2017) further defines retention as securing and retaining skilled employees who are knowledgeable and have the ability to be economically competitive though considering the importance and sensitivity of the issue of retention.

2.5 Engagement

The concept of engagement has yielded different definitions, there is no universal definition of the term. However, engagement aims to create space for an open exchange of ideas that will help initiate collaborative discussion in any organisation. Knight, Patterson & Dawson (2017) stress the importance of engagement which is for evaluating, boosting and sustaining an organisation. Although Ngobeni and Bezuidenhout (2011) propose that retaining and engaging skilled employees could be a challenge faced by South African universities, this is based on research carried out at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), the study claim that employee engagement and turnover provides line managers and human resource practitioners with a vision into specific workplace practices that will have a positive effect on the engagement levels of the entire staff component (Ngobeni & Bezuidenhout, 2011). Recent study by Wasilowski (2017) indicates that employee engagement is a critical issue across many sectors and this has had dramatic impacts on organisations. Furthermore, Ramoiah (2014) explains engagement in specific contexts and how different social, cultural and institutional barriers hinder the successful participation and engagement of women, especially black female academics in South African institutions of higher education. While the concept might be useful Ramoiah's (2014) study does not speak directly to the overall participation and/or engagement of women in higher institutions. However, the study looks at possible factors that hinder the participation of black women in particular. It reflects on white male dominance, biased epistemic evaluation and inconsiderate promotion criteria that threaten progress toward the goal of quality access and the successful participation of black female academics. The idea of engagement is thus implicit but not made explicit.

Despite several understandings and scholarly analysis with regards to engagement, in the context of this study engagement is seen as an individual's involvement in institutional activities such as committee meetings, research, supervision, teaching and learning amongst

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others. Barkhuizen, Rothmann & Vivjer (2014) suggest that these are important factors that promotes and encourage engagement in academic institutions. The next section investigates women in higher education from an international, Africa and national perspectives.

2.6 International perspective of women in higher institutions

Considering a global increase on inequality and gender parity, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was established by United Nations to promote gender equality, empower women and also improve women's access to education (United Nations New Millennium Goals, 2017). Globally, gender stereotypes have been well-documented which create resistance to women's influence and authority (Carli & Eagly, 2011; Lipton, 2017). The contribution of women to research output in academia is measured against male norms which creates barriers for women with different styles and career patterns (Obers, 2015). In the past gender inequality was described as obstinate because it was incorporated into the work structure of an organisations (Acker, 1990). Recently, the work of (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015; Stewart, Wright, Smith, Roberts & Russell, 2021) confirms that unequal gender practices at the workplace is as a result of organizational structures, processes, practices and sexism and further looks at factors that aim to address gender stereotypes and norms. Furthermore, practical evidence on gender inequality at work shows cultural, relational and structural mechanism are some of the factors that reproduce gender inequality in organisations (Stamarski & Son Hing, 2015; Kalev & Deutsch, 2018; Padavic, Ely& Reid, 2020).

Kaley & Deutsch (2018) suggests that more theory and research should focus on redressing inequality, the study went on to suggests an institutional theory of remedy, that is, examining ways that institutional environments, actors, policies can weaken gendered organisations; secondly, political theory focusing on the means and conditions for women to act as agents of organisational change. There is a transition from MDGs to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) whereby that same narrative to achieve gender equality and equity continues. SDGs

replaced Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that started as a global effort to tackle the indignity of poverty with the aim of achieving full gender equality. Nevertheless, years later, after the introduction of the SDGs, the situation is a bit different as cultural norms continue to hinder women's career and leadership aspirations, affecting women's progression towards academic leadership roles (Morley, 2014; Tabassum & Nayak, 2021;Barkhuizen, Masakane & van der Sluis, 2022). It is, therefore, crucial to identify different ways to empower women for career growth within and outside academic institutions.

Universally, the issue of gender equality has received considerable global policy recognition and also scholarly attention, especially with regards to equality in general and in higher institutions in particular. This is relevant when considering all three concepts that are pivotal to our own study as one can argue that in the absence of qualified and committed academic staff, academic institution can hardly ensure long-term sustainability and effective contributions (Žalėnienė & Pereira, 2021). According to Robyn & Du Preez (2013), Veldman, van Laar & Toman (2021) women are still very much under-represented in the STEM field and more recently in higher educational institutions (HEIs) who mostly depend on the intellectual, innovative abilities and commitment of their academic staff than most organisations (Vdlman, van Laar & Thoman 2021; Bravo, Nistor, Ramírez, Soto, Contreras, Vives & Robles, 2022). Nonetheless, for an institution to realise a firm and continuous pattern of research and teaching excellence, retaining newly recruited academic staff must be crucial and remains a priority (Savanevicien & Vilciauskaite 2017) . However, recent studies shows that higher education plays a pivotal role in producing and promoting a knowledge-driven global economy, such as achieving knowledge through the attainment of institutional goals and performance of its academic staff (Alkhasawneh, 2018; Valero & van Reenen 2019;Watermeyer 2019; Zapp 2022). Also, through building and creating a rightful regulatory environment for engaging faculties at institutions to set university goals and strategies, and to

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adopt job performance practices that helps to achieve organizational objectives of the institution. Higher education institutions (HEIs) depend on the professional skills of its academic faculties and the quality of teaching (Khan et al., 2017, Prakash 2018). Although the performance of academic staff is shaped by academic culture, incentives and values, much also depends upon the level of support, communication and collaboration provided by dynamic academic leaders and institutional policies (Wahab et al., 2016, Puaca 2021) to better shape the institutional objectives.

Although higher education plays a key role in knowledge production, gender differences that were not evident in the past, have emerged (Grebennikov & Skaines, 2009). According to Van Hek, Kraaykamp & Wolbers (2016) women have improved in educational attainment compared to men and, according to these authors, female students are now choosing fields of studies in which they were previously underrepresented, although as we see from the work of Veldman, van Laar & Thoman (2021) they are still very under-represented when it comes to STEM. However, women take higher education seriously than men (Saadat et al. 2022). To support this argument Grebennikov & Skaines, (2009) further state that the rate of female student gaining access to higher institution is more as compared to male counterparts. The disparity could possibly be that women obtain lower salaries and less prestigious positions than men in comparable jobs, educational levels, and work experiences (Auspurg, Hinz, & Sauer, 2017; Blau & Kahn, 2020). Therefore, to match men in remuneration and career expectations, women feel they need to be educated to outperform their male fellow students academically (Valero & van Reenen 2019;Watermeyer 2019; Zapp 2022).

Although earlier discussions have shown an increase in female representation in higher education, noticeably these studies failed to look at factors that attract and retain them nor examined the level of engagement within a particular university system as a whole. This is pertinent in this section here as the issue of gender inequality and the representation of women

within education appears to be a universal phenomenon. For instance, in India, the educational policy, together with the Constitution of India, provides for equality for everyone, including women. To buttress this, the Indian National Policy of Education (1986) in an effort to overcome inequalities and disparities, took a clearer dimension in promoting the roles of women in the society (Chanana, 2000). Chanana's study indicates that multiple factors inhibit women's access to higher education such as, non-availability of colleges for women, the absence of basic physical facilities necessary for women to feel comfortable in their working environments, women are not sent to coeducational schools and colleges or/and in terms of the curriculum itself, the introduction of certain educational subjects that are suitable only for men, gender stereotyping in course content and subject choices, lack of role models for career options or academic leadership positions at the university, and the absence of female teachers. Furthermore, Chanana (2000) states that, the Committee on Women's' Education of 1959 highlights regional imbalances as the major reason in women's education. For example, women enrolment in higher education differs from state to state, within states and also varies between urban and rural areas. This therefore reduces and affects their overall representation country wide. Although Chanana (2002) states that there is a need to understand some of the factors that retain women in higher institutions, the author fails to elaborate further on these factors. Recent study according to Ravindran (2020) indicates that the Gross Enrolment Ratio [GER] of Indian women has shown an increase in the past two decades and women have surpassed men in the age group of 18 to 23 between 2018-2019. The study further looks at the relationship between the enrolment level of women in Higher Education with their representation in governance and workforce in India, which has steadily increased (ibid).

Similarly, in Australia, concerns around gender equality in academia have been a key issue over the past years (Winchester & Browning, 2015). Operating within a regulatory framework specific to higher education in Australia, universities were obliged to integrate equity strategies

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into their institutional plans, to increase the representation of women in senior roles and monitor patterns of entry by women into academia (ibid.). In spite of this, Winchester & Browning (2015) claim that the majority of academic staff were men and instances where women are represented, they were concentrated at the lower level. Overall, the study reiterates the fact that despite the implementation of the regulatory framework, many challenges still exist to attain real gender equity in Australian universities, whereby women remain underrepresented in certain disciplines like teaching and research (Winchester & Browning, 2015). Therefore, there is need to improve the representation of women in higher education in Australia to reflect its diversity, yet the study did not address the process of how women are recruited to these universities, although the authors examined representation, they did not consider factors that attract and retain women within the university environment.

Patitu & Hinton (2003) looks at the experiences of women who are hired at the faculty level and as administrators in higher institution with specific reference to African American women. The study and other recent study highlight the scarcity of African American women in academic affairs, claiming that these women feel devalued because of their race and sex and that they are mistreated because they are black women (Woldai, 2021; Truehil, 2021). According to Patitu & Hinton (2003) these women (African American) feel that the institutional policies do not favour them and when it comes to opportunities for promotion, the rules applicable for promotion favour men and are often met with prejudicial treatment by both white females and males (Truehil, 2021). Although the study of (Patitu & Hinton, 2003; Woldai, 2021; Truehil, 2021) highlight academic challenges encountered by women hired by the faculty and as administrators, the study fails to examine what attracts these women to higher education in the first place and despite the challenges, what motivates them to stay.

International perspective of women and gender in higher institution of course has been discussed and documented however, further analysis in this same section examines this

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perspective in higher institutions particularly ways in which attraction, retention and engagement impacts their productivity.

Metcalf et al. (2005) defines recruitment and retention based on a study conducted in a British higher education sector in United Kingdom (UK) in general though not in any specific university. The study states that the more attractive the pay package in a particular institution the more applicants it will attract and retain. This supports Kinnear & Sutherland (2001), Chiboiwa et al. (2010) as well as Ahmed & Ali (2021)'s argument that salary and financial benefits positively relate to employee retention. However, according to Mabaso & Dlamini (2017) individual salaries and other financial fringe benefits does not necessarily influence academic staff to leave their previous employment. On another note, Metcalf et al., 2005, Woldai, 2021; Truehil, 2021; Tabassum & Nayak, 2021;Barkhuizen, Masakane & van der Sluis, 2022) state that women are highly discriminated against as they face particular difficulty in getting promotions due to a lack in research output, which is a criterion for promotion, this further affects or reduce women's career opportunities given that women in academia - being both mother and wife - are less likely to have less research output; another factor put forth is women are less mobile than men, married women especially, are less mobile than unmarried women. Restrictions to women's promotion in academia are not only pertinent in South Africa but also elsewhere this can be seen in the study of (Francis, & Stulz, 2020) where multiple barriers still affect women when applying for promotions in universities such barriers include structural, individual and organisational barriers (Murphy, Callander, Dohan & Grandis, 2021). Similarly, Chaacha & Botha (2021), Pieters, van Zyl & Nel, (2022) outlines factors that encourage a staff to stay or leave the university such as salaries and other benefits. This study further states that in most cases there is more to consider than "fat salaries"—such as free education for the children of employees, subsidised meals, a favourable working environment, flexible working hours, good working relationships among staffs, opportunities for promotion;

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training and development, especially for the younger employees—are all factors that determine whether an employee will leave or stay in an institution (ibid).

Sverke, Hellgren & Naswall (2006) and Klehe et al. (2011) claim that insecurity and limited opportunities for promotion are some of the reasons individuals seek opportunities elsewhere. As a result, Ghosh et al. (2013) states that it is important for every organisation to ensure proper measures are put in place to prevent employees from leaving to look for alternate opportunities. Meanwhile, Werner et al. (2012) stressed on effective recruitment and retention which improves productivity, reduce cost and helps organisation to remain competitive (Singh, 2019). Therefore, recruitment and retention must be consistent with the organisation's strategy, vision, and values. Furthermore, De Vos & Cambré (2016) state investing in human capital increase retention and the performance of an organisation. The study of Mathieu et al. (2015) asserts that the retention of talented staff should be a priority for HR organisation and professionals (Sawaneh & Kamara, 2019; Ahmad, Khan & Haque, 2020).

The concept of attraction , retention and engagement is discussed in the study of Rutledge (2007), Mashaba (2022) and Pandita & Ray (2018) in the workplace in general though not in an educational or higher institutional environment. These studies state that an employee should be fully attracted to and inspired by their work and that an engaged employee promotes the success of the company and urges managers to implement retention policies to keep their top management staff, this assertion is further echoed in the study of (Pandita & Ray,2018; Rameshkumar, 2020). This is supported by the studies of Mbhele & de Beer (2021) and Nagaria & Nerissa Vowles (2021) who state that employees are more engaged and work with more vigour, dedication and more absorbed when they work in teams and forms good working relationships to achieve the overall objectives and goals of a company or organisation.

Similarly, Ngobani & Bezuidenhout (2011), Chaacha & Botha (2021), Alharbi (2022) state there is a connection between employee's engagement and intention to leave, the more

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engaged employees are the longer they will remain committed to the organisation. Furthermore, the most important factor that contributes to employee retention and satisfaction is the need for that employee to understand how their involvement and participation contributes to the success and growth of the organisation as a whole. The study further asserts that managers must identify any skills that are missing whether and in what ways staff might require further training (Ngobani & Bezuidenhout, 2011). In the same light, Selesho & Naile (2014) suggest job satisfaction, salary, promotion and leadership skills are factors that keep staff with their current employer in higher institution.

According to Mushemeza (2016) academia requires trained and experienced staff to promote and build a strong and well-functioning university. Once again, recruiting appointing and promoting qualified candidates must be in a professional way. Academic staff attraction, retention and engagement are common concerns, not only in South African universities but globally. The following section examines literature that reflects on the gender aspect of higher institutions in the African context in terms of attraction, retention, and engagement.

2.7 African perspective of women in higher institution

Women's access and entry into African universities has been slow due to gender inequalities and different forms of extreme patriarchal system. This has been a major concern in African universities and in their institutional profiles, cultures, teaching and research (Martin & Barnard, 2013; Bassey & Bubu 2019; Sougou, Ndiaye, Nabil, Folayan, Sarr, Mbaye, & Martínez-Pérez, 2022). Due to persistence inequality in higher education, it has been argued that unequal provision of educational opportunities especially in Africa results to deliberate isolationist policies of the colonial state and the influence of missionary expansion (Aboagye, 2021; Baten, De Haas, Kempter & Meier zu Selhausen, 2021).

Africa's academic cultures and institutions have remained deeply patriarchal with men far outnumbering women, this can be seen across faculties with many scholars remaining conservative in their gender politics and behaviour (Amina, 2015, Kessi, Marks and Ramugondo 2020, Youssef 2022). As a result, women continue to experience different forms of discrimination, ranging from overt harassment, discriminatory assumptions about women's intellectual capacity and availability for professional careers. Therefore, pursuing gender equality in African universities means changing perception on personal practices on sexuality, institutional measures, and culture (Madsen 2019). This can only be achieved through the development of strategies within the organisation to help fight gender inequality (Martin & Barnard, 2013). Even though gender inequality has mainly been tackled through various affirmative strategies implemented in a small number in most African universities, it has limited effect on the number of female students who enrolled in university and the number of females hired as academic staffs (Akala, 2019). Way back in the 1990s, women have been lobbying Universities to adopt measures to advance gender equality such as increasing admission of women into different programs, appointing women in academic and administrative positions, introducing capacity-building training programs, establishing mentorship and career development programs to empower women and develop strategies for nurturing them (Davis & Maldonado,2015; Carr, Gunn, Raj, Kaplan, & Freund, 2017). Despite efforts by universities to develop strategies to enhance gender equality, its implementation has not been a success.

While Ng'ethe (2014) looks at factors that determine staff retention in selected universities in Kenya, Naris & Ukpere (2010) analyse reasons why staff members resign after attending development programs aimed at retention, this is due to the fact that they see the disadvantage of being in an academic environment or they get disheartened as they realise that they will not be promoted (ibid.). These authors state that there are no retention strategies put in place to

reward staff that attend such development programs. Despite attending courses or workshops that could enhance their positions and improve performance in the workplace, once they have attended these learning programmes, they are not given any credit for attending and their chances of retention or promotion remain the same. In the same light, universities lack sufficient funding by government to retain their staff. Despite the numerous factors outlined as reasons for staff retention Ng'ethe (2014) and Naris & Ukpere (2010) do not highlight factors that attract these staff to the university in the first place, and their level of participation and engagement at various levels.

The relatively low representation of women in universities and those employed as faculty members provide an understanding of a patriarchal university cultures in Africa (Rathgeber, 2013; Kessi, Marks & Ramugondo 2020, Youssef 2022) the limited number of qualified female candidates is based on; inadequate places; unfriendly environments for women; not enough female role models; societal values, beliefs and practices that mitigate against females. All these factors count as some of the reasons that have contributed to the low enrolment of women in African universities (Rathgeber, 2013).

According to Jayachandran (2015), Kessi, Marks & Ramugondo (2020), Youssef (2022) gender imbalance in Africa is a common phenomenon in higher educational institutions and is severe in almost all African countries and across most disciplines. This is as a result of cultural, sociological, economical, psychological, historical, and political factors. In Africa, cultural beliefs regard men as better leaders than women and that men lead while women follow, thus women were deprived of the opportunity to go to school (Eboiyehi et al., 2016). While efforts are underway to rectify gender imbalances, much still remains to be done across all educational sectors. Durrani & Halai (2020) explains that most countries in Sub-Saharan Africa were colonized by European countries therefore many of the laws that were created fail to support women in attaining educational heights and qualifications. The reason for this is caused by

failures by institutions of higher learning to recruit, retain and promote females in academia (Report from UNESCO, 2020). Another visible challenge faced by Sub-Saharan African higher education is male dominance and patriarchy system. For instance, in Ghana Liani, Nyamongo & Tolhurst (2020) indicate that females fail to progress in higher education due to heavy workloads embedded on them such as administration, lecturing, mentorship and counselling, as compared to men who exclusively focus on research and publication, therefore men are placed in an advantaged position which causes dissatisfaction and disillusionment amongst female academics, resulting in higher turnover rates (Boateng, 2018).

Earlier studies indicate that some academics are underpaid, over-burdened and those aspects that once made their profession attractive are no longer in place (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999). Academic employees are burdened by increasing workloads and bureaucratic working conditions; employees who have the feeling of being underpaid or not getting appropriate training or promotions are likely to leave the organisation (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999). This is due to existing principles for retaining or firing highly qualified academic in higher education are in many cases ambiguous and not clearly outlined (Coaldrake & Stedman, 1999). Furthermore, Adusah-Karikari (2008) looks at experiences of women in Higher Education, though limited to women at faculty level as well as administrators, examines the possible challenges these women encounter, these challenges can also be seen in the study of (Mankayi & Cheteni, 2021; Okeke-Ihejirika, Moyo & Van Den Berg, 2019). These factors include the underrepresentation of women in senior and academic positions which prevents their voices from being heard, undermining women's authority, a lack of mentoring and a lack of access to social networks (Adusah-Karikari, 2008).

However, over the years research study on experiences of female academics in Ghana, demonstrates strengths and strategies such resilience, determination, personal responsibility, and self-confidence, as qualities academic women have navigated to make their way to the top

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and to overcome challenges that often serve as a hindrance to women's career advancement in patriarchal societies (Boateng, 2018). Furthermore, studies carried out by Kanyumba & Lourens (2021) found that training and development impacts retention and there is significant relationship between career development and retention, therefore due to changing narratives in higher education due to advancement in technology, implementing effective training and development is imperative to remain competitive . The next section introduces us to women in higher institutions in the context of South Africa.

2.8 Women in higher institutions in South Africa

Prior studies states that higher educational institutions in South Africa are immersed in the male way of doing things and women who kick against this system are despised (Mabokela,2011). As time evolves the situation has not really changed, studies show that higher educational institutions (HEIs) are designed in terms of hierarchy in ways that women still experience marginalization (Andela et al., 2008; Kele & Pietersen, 2015; White & O'Connor, 2017). As earlier mentioned, this phenomenon seems to be global, however the year 1948 is a significant year in South Africa, it was the year when racial separation was made law and this segregation was rolled out in specific cultures and communities as well as the educational sector. Women's lived experiences within higher education spaces still echoes the powerful forces of discrimination experienced during apartheid resulting from the fact that, higher education system inherited from the apartheid regime was designed mainly for whites. As mentioned in previous discussion, globally the gap in gender equality in higher education is significant but it is particularly noticeable in higher institutions in South Africa. Scholars have argued that experiences of women in South African workplaces and the pattern of racial and gender segregation are still prevalent (Corneilse, 2009; Moodley, 2018; van Rensburg, 2021). This is evident in a study conducted by Kola & Pretorius (2014) whereby the demographic compositions of staff in higher education institutions fail to reflect the

demographic realities of South Africa such that black people and women are still severely underrepresented, especially in senior academic management positions (Breetzke & Hedding, 2018; Sadiq, Barnes, Gumedze & Morrell, 2019). Meanwhile white males still dominate senior management positions in the selected universities, for instance, at the University of Pretoria, the University of Witwatersrand and Free State University where there are predominantly white males and females in professionally qualified and academically qualified positions. White women are sufficiently represented compared to women from the designated groups and the greatest numbers of the designated groups' members were in the unskilled categories at the selected universities. According to Moodly (2015) in the context of South Africa as well as globally, gender inequality in higher education remains a challenge that needs attention, women seem not to be equal to their male counterparts (Moodly, 2015). Gender imbalance is undeniably a common problem in higher institutions and the reasons for this is associated with economic, political, sociological and historical factors. However, according to Gouws (2011) collective demands by women's organisations to establish government structures and state institutions to encourage women's empowerment and promote gender equality were strongly supported by feminist academics who provided submissions on the "design and functions of the National Gender Machinery" (NGM). Higher education institutions in South Africa forms part of a framework in South Africa's post-1994 democratic era, it followed regulations affiliated to the country's constitution which removed various forms of discrimination, including those related to race, gender and physical disabilities this can be found in The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. The pillar stone of the constitution intended to redress apartheid's legacy on gender inequality and discrimination.

Despite several measures put in place to deal with these inequalities, gender disparity remains a challenge in higher institutions in South Africa (Teferra & Altbachl, 2004; Cassim, 2005: Akala, 2018; Rustin,2021). Nonetheless, the gender policy framework established guidelines

in South Africa to promote equal policies and opportunities between men and women yet, despite its existence, there is still no change, especially in higher institutions where gender disparity and inequality still persist. Labiso (2020) indicates that as part of the national strategy to redress imbalances of the past the government introduced affirmative action where concerns regarding women came to the fore both within government departments and the corporate sector (ibid.). Issues such as equality, human rights, empowerment and welfare received significant attention (Van der Bank, Mphahlani & Moloi, 2015; Akala, 2018)

Furthermore, the Gender Policy Framework (GPF) aimed at addressing imbalances of the past was created, gazetted and inscribed into law. included in this process was the drafting of procedures and practices aimed at ensuring that women are afforded equal opportunities in all sectors of the South African economy. Gender inequality and the fight for gender equality appears to be a general problem that cuts across SADC regions, including South African institutions of higher learning (Goldin, 2013). Goldin (2013) reminds us that gender issues have everything to do with unequal power, status and control over entitlement. Numerous studies on gender is a clear indication that an understanding of the above-mentioned concerns requires policies that can effectively deal with the lack of gender equity and equality.

Walker (2018) using the capability approach (CA) promotes an inclusive perspective of gender equality in the context of higher education. This approach has been used to inform gender policies and highlights the fact that higher education institutions informed by policy, create opportunities for women, empower them who are now able to challenge gendered social structures and identities. Therefore, the identification of empowering capabilities in higher education is of vital importance to the development and sustainability of gender justice (ibid.). Walker (2018) further states that other factors that demand attention to promote and achieve gender equality are social expectations of women and men, institutional practices and culture

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that often reinforce persistent gendered inequalities and commitment of national bodies towards the pursuit of gender equality.

2.9 Gender Equality in South Africa

Concerns around gender equality go beyond African universities in general and have been raised in South Africa in particular. South Africa has made tremendous efforts to ensure that gender equality is included in its legislative policy frameworks that promote the empowerment and eliminate discrimination against women (Van Der Byl, 2014, Segalo 2015; Mvulane, 2021). Before 1994, there was no concept of equality before the law, both the state and society disrespected the human rights of those who were socially excluded and marginalised, especially women (Van Der Byl, 2014) and deeply entrenched discriminatory practices became the norm, predominant value system promoted an understanding of women as inferior to men at all levels. The study of Vyas-Doorgapersad (2015) reflects on gender equality, a situation where women and men have same opportunity to realise full human rights potential and equality. However, Vyas-Doorgapersad (2018) further argues that gender equality is a critical fundamental human right in defining diverse spectrums under which equality can be measured, therefore assess to gender gaps within the workplace is linked to position, power, money, opportunity, responsibility, and authority.

Noticeably, years of effort prior to 1994 various women's organisations and civic structures organised themselves around the voices of women, influencing change in the way women wanted to be treated. This led to the inheritance of powerful grassroots structures as agents of change to promote the rights of women in a free and democratic society (Van Der Byl, 2014). The year 1956 is a significant moment in the history of women's resistance, a period when women marched against the pass laws, a campaign that united women across different races and motivated women's march to the Union buildings to protest against prohibitive law of

having to carry a pass. Hassim (2006) and Walker (2015) remind us that women's movement in South Africa has always been active in the national liberation struggle.

The African National Congress Women's League (ANCWL), Federation of South African Women (FSAW and later FEDSAW), Communist Party of South Africa, Black Sash, United Women's Organisation, Black Women's Federation, and many other organisations were key in the liberation struggle (Hassim, 2006; Walker, 1991). These organisations recognised the need to achieve the rights of women's and immediacy of the struggle for national liberation. Most importantly, FEDSAW based on its mandate worked against racialised state oppression and fight discriminatory laws of the apartheid government through women's activism and put an end to other forms of oppression. Black Sash, on the other hand, organised mainly around voting rights, human rights, legal assistance to political prisoners and ending conscription. The realisation of gender equality was prioritised on the state agenda because it had not been taken up elsewhere.

With more than a hundred women's organisations across race and party lines represented in the umbrella body of the Women's National Coalition, the demands for gender inclusion was instituted since its inception in 1992. However, this was not devoid of internal political strife on how gender equality should be understood and achieved (Van Der Byl, 2014). Consequently, the advent of democracy in 1994 presented the South African government with the opportunity to change its trajectory for women and the most vulnerable members of society. Emphasis was placed on an equitable society and meeting the socioeconomic rights of citizens, particularly those who had been historically excluded from participating in the mainstream of society. In South Africa issue of gender inequality, unfair discrimination in the workplace originates far back during apartheid era. After the collapse of this regime in 1994, a new government introduced 'Equality' as a right in the 1996 South African Constitution. It was then that equality regardless of gender, race, and culture, was adopted as a human right. This was

an underpinning commitment by government to redress gender parities created by the injustices of apartheid. As a result, the Constitution is seen as the core of human rights promoting equality to all South Africans.

Despite implementing various legislative programs, policies, and statutory measures to eliminate gender inequalities and unfair discrimination in the workplace, most women in South Africa still face unfair discrimination (Musetsho., Isac, & Dobrin, 2021). The representation of women in higher positions such as management and leadership remain low and women are still underrepresented while men remain dominant (Musetsho., Isac, & Dobrin, 2021). Gender inequality remains a challenge both within and outside South Africa although women contribute far more towards the global gross domestic product (GDP) than their male counterparts. Women continue to remain under-represented in all spheres and this situation is worsened in organisation where women are trapped under the umbrella of glass ceiling (Vyas-Doorgapersad, 2020). Verniers & Vala (2018) suggest that recruitment, promotion and job assignment should be taken into consideration and that gender equality implies women emancipation or empowerment in various aspects of daily life.

2.10 Gender equality in higher education in South Africa
As discussed, issues of gender equality in South African society has been a concern over the years and higher institutions is not exempted (Kadalie, 1995; Bhoola, 1996; Flood, 1998; Tshoaedi, 1998; Kethusegile, 2000) Despite the prevalence of gender inequality before 1994, significant progress is made with regards to women accessing higher education, this is primarily in response to legal and policy efforts at international and national levels to promote equality and social justice. A good example of these efforts is the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals in 2015 and later the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) in 2016. Despite the promotion and achievement of numerical parity in education in many countries, studies show persistence inequalities in gender in all spheres of higher education (Francis et

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al., 2014; Mama, 2006; Morley, 2006; Neale & Özkanll, 2010; Phipps & Smith, 2012; Vaccaro, 2011).

Although South Africa performs well in terms of numerical gender profile, it falls short in its goal of achieving gender equity (Loots & Walker, 2015). According to Archie, Kogan & Laursen (2015) and Hunt (2016) black students, especially black women, and women in general, struggle to access more prestigious fields like science and engineering, access is not improving. In terms of employment, the underrepresentation of black female staff in South African universities remains noticeable (Archie, Kogan & Laursen 2015; Hunt 2016). Mkhize & Pillay (2018) study looks at black students in general while focusing on female staff in particular and adds that gender profile in South Africa is mediated by race, which means that very few black students and females in science, and this is reflected in the academic staff profile. Although with an increase in the number of black women who have become senior administrators thought some have gained professorships through administrative track, in practice women make up the majority of undergraduate students and gender equality is no longer included in the policy redress agenda, perhaps because attention to race is "perceived to offer better political capital" (Mama, 2007). Clearly, gender, race and social class need to be understood together rather than being seen as separate challenges.

Over the years, the Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2015) stated that women constitute the majority of undergraduate students (58%) but are unevenly distributed across faculties, with more women in education, commerce, and the humanities than in science and engineering although there are slightly more black women than black men in higher education. Substantive changes have occurred in the representation of black students and in particular, black women in higher education (Akala & Divala , 2016; CHE, 2015; Badat, 2009; 2010; DET, 2012). This improvement seems to contribute to the achievement of transformation policies whereby more women are accessing education compared to the apartheid era (CHE, 2013; CHE, 2010; DET,

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2012). Emerging literature indicates that policies brought about meaningful change in institutions of higher learning.

In South Africa women form part of a policy and legislative framework however within higher education institution (HE) it is still male-dominated women are not equal to their male counterparts at all levels (Moodly, 2015). In this study, Moodly (2015) further states that the equity target outlined in the Women Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (WEGEB) is not currently reflected in higher education leadership. In this instance the study of Moodly (2015) study does not address the processes and factors that attract black women to universities and the author fails to elaborate on some of the factors that retains them in universities and their participation in decision-making.

Earlier study, Mama (2003) states that the level of women's entry into higher educational institutions both as students and as employees is slow and uneven and this is the case for both administrative and academic staffs, however it is more pronounced for senior academic and research positions. Mama (2003) further argues that despite institutional and managerial claims of administrative impartiality, the institutional cultures of universities in Africa do not necessarily present the gender-neutral organisational climate that tends to be assumed in higher educational institutions and from within an African context. In general, from a gender perspective in particular—a more focussed strategy as per the institutional policy to promote and advance equality is critical if one is to redress existing imbalances in terms of gender.

Similarly in South Africa, an earlier study by Moletsane (2005), states that female academics face numerous challenges in pursuing careers in higher education. This stems from the fact that, particularly under the apartheid regime, women were prevented from participating in any normal South African academic culture and denied the opportunity to create meaningful positions for themselves in the academic environment (Moletsane, 2002). Although there has been transformation aimed at promoting the development and advancement of women,

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particularly black women, since the advent of democracy, old prejudices are slow to uproot. Moletsane (2005) adds that female academics often see themselves as survivors of racism, classism, sexism that is they remain reticent in promoting themselves and their female colleagues.

However, the South African constitution serves as a forum for promoting gender equality in the country (Mhlanga, 2013; Stevens & Ntlama, 2016, Walker, 2018; Nhlapo, 2019) and unsurprisingly therefore, policies have been pronounced to safeguard gender equality and equity in higher education. Gender inequality is one of the fundamental factors for stifled progress, particularly so in higher education and women have a substantial contribution to make in the area of higher education but as we have seen from the discussion above, their role continues to be constrained, undervalued and misapprehended as they continue to be regarded inferior to their male counterparts (Mhlanga, 2013).

Shober, (2014) highlights possible challenges women encounter in higher institutions, in this study, participants raised concerns impeding their development in South Africa's higher education environment, highlighting gender as the pivotal element that challenges opportunities for career-related development such as difficulties encountered trying to adapt to a male-dominated environment, citing outright discouragement and the pressure to forgo family responsibilities to participate in male organized social events, another challenging barrier was lack of a conducive environment to grow within the higher education community. In other instances, women may impede other women from obtaining promotions or being championed in the workplace, which necessitates the importance of mentorship either through selected, supportive individuals within the institution or beyond the academy. (Shober, 2014).

However, at the national level, Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Bill (Republic of South Africa 2013) was enacted to align legal and social justice regarding women's empowerment. This bill focused exclusively on women with no bearing on the context of

patriarchal roles on men's experiences and how these influence gendered relationships and other forms of discrimination, for instance, sexual discrimination related to gender (Loots & Walker, 2015). Furthermore, this bill was drafted by the Department of Women, Children and People with Disabilities (DWCPD) to promote equality, identify and prevent discrimination against women on the basis of gender and race. One of the main objectives of this bill was to promote engagement, build women's capacity to participate, enhance the understanding and attitudes of communities to accept the capabilities and participation of women as their equals; and to develop support mechanisms for women. According to Loots and Walker (2015), the Commission for Gender Equality (CGE) was created to promote and monitor gender equality and to review all national policies through a gendered lens, conduct research, handle complaints and educate the public on gendered issues. Although the passing of the bill and the subsequent establishment of the CGE testify to some level of national governmental awareness of addressing gender inequalities, creating a national gender equality policy for education has not yet been prioritised (Loots & Walker, 2015).According to Akala & Divala (2019) the higher education sector generally reflects the problematic gendered power relations in South Africa. The democratic era has – with an intention for redress and social transformation – employed a policy framework and affirmative action to ensure a more just and equitable society; this affirmative action is a policy intervention that aims at redressing imbalances in areas such as education, workplace and political participation. However, the general impact of the affirmative action policy show that although some gains have been made in the increase of the number of women in the sector, a great deal still needs to be done (Akala, 2019).

According to data from the Council for Higher Education (2017) of the 3,040 senior managers in higher education, only 44.76 per cent are females. Female academics formed 29 per cent of professors, 41 per cent of associate professors and 46 per cent of senior lecturers. (Mdlenleni, Mandyoli & Frantz, 2021). However, at the level of lecturer and junior lecturer, the majority

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are women, although women make up the mainstream of the staff, their representation at executive levels is relatively low and also it overlooks the realities and lack deep interrogation and understanding of the higher education environment that women work in, which remains conducive for systemic gender prejudice. This has resulted in the failure of higher education to implement transformation and address the way in which gender injustice remains persistent in higher education (ibid.). The recruitment Act in South Africa serves as a guide in all public domain with higher education inclusive, therefore this study will examine in the next section the recruitment Act in South Africa to better understand the process in institution of higher learning.

2.11 Recruitment Act in South Africa

Recruitment refers to those activities in any organisation put in place to attract competent employees who possess the required skills and qualities to fill the job requirements or position (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2005; Adeosun & Ohiani 2020). Following on from a recent studies by (Van der Westhuizen et al., 2011; Arundel, Bloch & Ferguson, 2019; Hamza, Othman, Gardi, Sorguli, Aziz, Ahmed & Anwr, 2021; Abbasi, Tahir, Abbas & Shabbir, 2022) it is suggested that the basic recruitment policy should be able to answer questions which addresses the objectives of recruitment in public sector institution, legal prescriptions on fairness, discrimination and that governmental policy and regulations are the most strategic factors to consider in determining recruitment policy. Legislation such as the Labour Relations Act RL 66 of 1995 and the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998 that protect the interests of public officials during the recruitment process should be in place.

In this same context, recruitment and selection provides a gateway for employment which in order words refers to the activities taking place in response to a vacant or existing position that needs to be filled (DPSA, 2003; Jepsen & Grob 2015). Elearn (2009) defines recruitment as the ability of an organisation to attract people or employees from whom it will make its

selections. Recruitment is not the only approach whereby an organisation might meet its human resource capacity requirements, on the other hand, recruitment can be seen as a tool through which any organisation or public sector aims to promote gender balance in terms of employment equity by so doing making it accessible and attractive to the society (DPSA, 1997, Bhalla 2019; Holley, 2022). The study of Compton et.al. (2018) looks at recruitment as a process of locating potential applicants for an existing position, this process aims at attracting competent and eligible employees (ibid.).

In South Africa, the White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery of 1997 was one of the significant policies put in place during the new dispensation in 1994. The South African government through the White Paper clarified that a "transformed South African Public Service will be examined based on its effectiveness in delivering services which meet the basic needs of all South African citizens" (RSA, 1997:9). This was clearly stipulated in the South African legislation that encourages and promotes principle of good public service delivery to all citizens in the country (RSA, 1997) therefore, recruitment of public officials must not only be based on identifying and attracting potential employees rather ensure those appointed have the necessary skills to achieve strategic goals and objectives of the organisation. The policies that guided the process of recruitment and selection included being inclusive of other races, gender-sensitive, accommodative, inclusive of disabled persons (DPSA, 1997). This transformation practice, especially in the public service, was instituted based on the implementation of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) to achieve and promote equity at the workplace. However, or contrarily, recruitment and selection process in the public service before the democratic dispensation in South Africa in 1994 was racially gendered and biased as it excluded blacks - African, coloured, Indian and the disabled were excluded from public service positions (DPSA, 1995) and were rarely appointed to positions of influence in the public service, they were mostly employed at lower levels in the departments (Erasmus et al., 2005). Most senior

positions were occupied by white minority (DPSA, 1995). Therefore, selection and recruitment processes gave the impression that certain racial groups, especially blacks, were incapable of performing managerial responsibilities. However, the new dispensation provoked a turnaround because-legislations and policies guiding recruitment and selection practices were put in place to address historical disparities in employment, selection and recruitment processes in the national labour market (DPSA, 1998).

Furthermore, in terms of policy guidelines, selection and recruitment particularly in the public service is done based on individual departments, however each department implements these practices within the framework of national norms and standards as agree by the legislation regulated by the Minister for Public Service and Administration (PSC, 2008). The study of Van der Westhuizen et al. (2000) states that recruitment policy was developed primarily to provide broad procedures and guidelines to departments to attract qualified candidates at a minimal cost and time and to support managers in making the right decisions. For any public department to function effectively and efficiently as stipulated in Chapter 10 of Section 195 (h) and (i) of the Constitution, departments had to cultivate and promote the act of good human resources practices and personnel management and the need to amend imbalances of the past so as to achieve a representation of all people of South Africa (RSA, 1996).

Listed here are some of the legislation and policies that guide and direct the recruitment and selection process in the public service: The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the Public Service Act 103 of 1994, The Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998, White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service, 1998. Although there are more legislations and policies related to selection and recruitment, those mentioned above are few that has been mentioned for the purpose of this study. However, selection and recruitment of skilled and competent employees are not the only important aspect, rather the management and retention of such employees must be considered.

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While recruitment and selection in South Africa especially in the public sector may be similar, higher education institutions follow quite a different trajectory. For example, the conditions of recruitment in higher education are based on publications, research, conference proceedings, supervision of students and working experience amongst others. This will be further discussed in the next section.

2.12 Understanding attraction, retention and engagement in relation to HEIs

Available literature indicates that higher educational institutions in South Africa are confronted with gendered inequality despite transformative national policies (Loots & Walker, 2015; Shober 2014; Mankayi, Cheteni & Pan, 2021; Moodley, 2021). Some of the transformative policies include areas on attraction and retention. However, retention and attraction seem to be a challenge due to a wide range of general socioeconomic and political factors that do not encourage women to enter and remain on their career paths. Also, some of the frustrations due to restrictions and or conditions placed in terms of advancing up the ladder in higher institutions mean that women are reluctant to apply in the first place (Saurombe, Barkhuizen, & Schutte, 2017; Moodley, 2021). However, subsequent discussion examines briefly the issues of attraction, retention, and engagement in higher institutions in South Africa and examines how females relate to these concepts.

College of Human Sciences (CHS) at the University of South Africa (UNISA) (Council for Higher Education, 2016) state that in an academic setting, the quality of higher education depends on the qualifications of staff and their involvement in high-quality research, as well as the number of staff with PhDs. However, there are differences between senior academics who are due to leave the university maybe within the next few years and the new applicants who are yet to replace them (Dube & Ngulube, 2013; Sadiq, Barnes, Price, Gumedze & Morrell, 2019; Pieters,van Zyl & Nel, 2022). As a result, the university may runs the risk of losing the valuable knowledge produced by academics at the professorial level especially those who could

be retiring in the near future as well as renowned scholars and top-rated researchers who also might retire (ibid.). Dube and Ngulube, 2013), state that losing professors and renowned scholars means losing critical knowledge and skills and that the university should put strategies in place to retain the skills and knowledge of academics who are making valuable contributions to the institution and that they should retain these academics regardless of gender and also ensure an equal gender representation. Although initiatives to retain staff do exist, they are often poorly coordinated. Dube and Ngulube (2013) further posit that there is need for the development of an institutional knowledge retention framework that will facilitate mentorship programmes, career development initiatives and effective strategies to create the retention of human capital within the College of Humanities in UNISA. This study is relevant as it contributes to existing body of knowledge on attraction, retention and engagement in a university environment.

Saurombe, Barkhuizen and Schutte (2017) identify key elements that form part of an appealing higher education that will attract and retain current and future talent, these include: work and the surrounding environment a conducive and appealing internal and external environment attracts academic staff in the HEI, also the culture and identity of the institution, that is, an accommodative and attractive organisational culture and identity. Furthermore, reward practices play an important role in organisational commitment among employees, this in return change the way employees think about work. The study further shows that financial rewards has an effect on organisational commitment and suggests that universities should carry out salary revisions to develop a reward management structure that is externally competitive, internally fair, and consistent with the current acceptable international rates. Employees who are provided with benefits, such as increased salary, bonuses, and promotion, develop strong feeling of loyalty to the organisation which leads to high levels of satisfaction and long-term commitment and that poor rewards and lack of recognition will lead to a poor turnover for early

career academics (Makondo, 2014; Onah & Anikwe, 2016; Selesha, 2014; Saurombe, et.al., 2017; Mabaso & Dlamini, 2018; Lindathaba-Nkadimene, 2020) as this might lead to poor retention rate.

In a sample study carried out with female academics, Bezuidenhout and Bezuidenhout (2014) posit that vigour, dedication and absorption are positive trend and that female academics possess, thus in general they are fairly energetic, mentally resilient, strongly involved in their jobs, enthusiastic, proud, inspired and happily engrossed in their work. This is confirmed by the work of Chan, Mazzucchelli and Rees (2021) who write specifically about resilience in relation to ongoing criticism and rejection in research, but it is relevant for the discussion here. So too is the work of Chan, Mazzucchelli and Rees (2021) who states that the level of rejection and criticism impacts the emotional functioning of academics. The pressure to increase research outputs, exhausting interpersonal relationships with students and escalating administrative duties exacerbate greater chances for promotion and encourages professional development through mentoring, coaching, and networking which will nurture a sense of accomplishment and contribute to a fully developed professional identity in the academic. (Bezuidenhout & Bezuidenhout, 2014). Having looked at the recruitment Act in higher institution in South Africa, the following section will now look at ways in which this Act is applicable with UCT's policy on recruitment.

2.13 UCT experience of recruitment
University of Cape Town is an inclusive, engaged research-intensive African university. As set out in the five strategic goals of its strategic plan, Vision 2020 (available on the UCT website) UCT is committed to a vision of transformation that promotes equity and inclusion,

recruitment, and selection; development and retention; augmented by the Vice-Chancellor's (VC) vision of sustainability and excellence to enable transformation. [11]

UCT's employment equity plan acknowledges that selection and recruitment procedures and practices is crucial within UCT community. Therefore, the role of employment equity representatives in the recruitment process has been a strategy believed to advance efforts to on-board employees from designated groups. In addition, the need to simplify and streamline the appointment process has become a critical issue, risking the loss of first-choice candidates, thereby potentially impacting the university in terms of teaching and learning.

2.14 UWC experience on recruitment

University of the Western Cape is a national university that strives to be a place of quality, a place to grow. It is committed to excellence in teaching, learning and research; to nurturing the cultural diversity of South Africa and to respond to the needs of the society in a transitional critical and creative way.[12] According to University of the Western Cape Five Years Employment Equity Plan of 1st October 2020 to 30 September 2025, recruitment, and selection of all its appointments, policies and standing orders are directly linked to its EE strategy. This is the duty of the recruitment and selection panels to focus on faculty and divisional EE goals and targets in the appointment process. To support UWC's transformation agenda regarding gender and employment equity, a specific policy called, Accelerated Promotions and Equity Appointments Sub-Committee of the Joint Appointments Committee of Senate, and Council provides an alternative appointment route to follow when filling an academic vacancy. This policy creates opportunities for a committee to identify potential candidates from designated groups to fill vacant positions through a series of specified steps. Candidates appointed are

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[11] http://www.uct.ac.za/main/explore-uct/strategic-plan

[12] https://www.uwc.ac.za/Pages/Mission.aspx

those who can possibly add value and benefits in furthering the EE goals and UWC slogan on "Respice" (looking back, looking forward) which implies leaving behind practices that were unethical or unjust and moving towards a more just and fruitful future. The EE plan provides a guide to promote attraction and retention known as Talent Stewardship- it "is a conscious, deliberate and planned approach undertaken to attract, retain, diversify and develop people with the required competency and capability to meet current and future organisational capacity needs" this can be found in the Talent Stewardship Guide, Annexure E, Five years Employment Equity Plan from 1st October 2020 to 30 September 2025. When combined with the EE strategy, talent stewardship contributes significantly to the building of a diverse and representative workforce profile at all levels.[13]

2.15 UWC Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998 in terms of Section 25(1)

Based on its wide experience in the liberation struggle, UWC is aware of its distinctive academic role in helping to build an equitable dynamic society. At UWC implementation of the Employment Equity plan of 1 June 2016 to 31 May 2020 was adopted to provide insight into setting reasonable targets aimed at:[14]

- Identifying any barriers that may contribute to the under-representation of staff members from the designated groups.

- Identifying other employment conditions that may adversely affect or lead to the discrimination of staff from the underrepresented groups and

- identifying practices or factors that positively promote employment equity and diversity in the institution.

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[13]https://www.uwc.ac.za/files/files/Approved-UWC-5-Year-Employment-Equity-Plan-final3-4-1.pdf

[14] https://www.uwc.ac.za/SO/HR/Documents/UWC%20EE%20Plan%202016-2020.pdf

The purpose of the Act is to achieve equity in the workplace by:

- Promoting equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination and

- implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups and also

- to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce.

Moreover, institutional operational plan was developed in accordance with EE Act guidelines intended to meet the university's planning and reporting requirement as an employer under the Act. The plan also forms part of a wider strategic planning framework at UWC, guided primarily through its five-year strategic plans (institutional operation plans) that capture the strategic goals of the institution. UWC's present institutional operational plan between 2015–2020 highlights unambiguously transformation as one of its key deliverables. The institution stands to benefit substantially from conscious and dedicated efforts to diversify its staff profile and to this end, commits the university to the attraction, development, and management of diverse talent.[15]

This commitment to employment equity is recognised both as necessary for redressing staff inequities from the past in higher education as central to shaping the university's relevance and ability to respond to contextual and emerging challenges. UWC is intent on building its reputation as a caring higher education institution where people are valued and acknowledged for their different contributions to supporting the academic project. UWC proposes that to be such an institution, it must remain vigilant in continuing to enhance the diversity of its talent and maximise its value in the undertaking of core functions.

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[15]https://ikamva.uwc.ac.za/content/whitepaper.pdf

At UWC, performance development system is aimed at developing capacity within the institution to ensure that staff members are motivated and continuously engaged in activities that support best practices for the university to achieve its short-, medium- and long-term goals. The performance development system also assists in generating valuable human resource information that may be used for a variety of reasons, for example, to support an individual's development, the identification of coaching needs and for other continuous improvement purposes. The performance development system is aimed at assisting in transformation by providing an enabling environment for the attraction, retention engagement and development of all staff members and will be used for the required progress reports per probation requirements.[16]

2.16 UCT Employment Equity Act.

The UCT policy on Employment Equity went into effect on the 1 of February 2021.[17] The goal of the UCT Employment Equity as captured in the Vision 2030 is "to unleash human potential for a fair and just society." Therefore, UCT is committed to redressing inequality and building social justice through conscious interventions to return dignity to the formerly historically disadvantaged by amplifying their voices and creating an institutional culture that makes it possible for them to reclaim their agency. The Employment Equity Act (EEA) further states that the EE policy is to ensure redress through intentional and targeted recruitment strategies designed to improve the representivity of designated groups and the creation of an inclusive and diverse workplace, which therefore means that, the spirit of the policy is to champion an

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[16]https://www.uwc.ac.za/SO/HR/Documents/Performance%20Development%20Guideline.pdf

[17]https://www.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/328/about/policies/Policy_Employment_Equity_2020.pdf

organisational culture of inclusivity, respect for all its people, ensure equal opportunity and a fair treatment in all aspects of employment including recruitment, promotion, training and advancement.

 Employment Equity policy aims at ensuring that the institution complies with EE legislative principles by:

- Upholding fair and objective principles and procedures for the staffing, development, retention and exiting of employees of the institution.
- Providing guidelines for the appointment of candidates to the institution, as well as, the development, promotion, retention and exiting of employees in the institution.

The EE policy further states that, using the University's recruitment policies and procedures as a framework, efforts will be made to appoint suitable internal and external candidates from the designated groups to vacant positions. Also, to make the University's recruitment strategy an effective tool for Employment Equity, the strategy will strive to be proactive and long term, rather than reactive and short-term. Hence, succession planning and retention strategies will be used to identify and develop the potential of internal and external candidates from the designated groups.[18]

In terms of the EE policy:

- the recruitment processes shall be informed by the University's Employment Equity Plan which includes the planned affirmative action provisions, recruitment and selection, as an important mechanism to achieving the University's numerical goals and

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[18]https://www.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/328/about/policies/Policy_Employment_Equity_2020.pdf

targets and increasing the representivity of the designated groups, shall be conducted fairly and without unfair discrimination in order to ensure that a larger skills pool is available from which to recruit.

- The University's Recruitment and Selection Policies and practices shall outline the approach to recruitment and selection and reflect the goals of the University's Employment Equity Policy.

- When advertising positions, the University shall consider the Employment Equity Policy read in conjunction with HR Practice in all its recruitment processes. Job advertisements shall emphasise the suitable criteria for the job and shall accurately reflect the inherent or essential requirements (i.e., the core functions) of the job and competency specifications.

- All selection committee chairs must always adhere to the compliance of the Employment Equity Policy and the HR Practice Note. This shall be achieved through the adherence of the recruitment process rules and criteria, the completion of EE Checklist (HR168) forms and raising of disputes in accordance with section 7 of this policy.

- During the recruitment and selection process, the suitability of the candidates will be determined in line with the definition of a 'suitably qualified person' as enshrined in the EE Act in section 20 (3) and (4). The suitability of a candidate will further be interrogated in terms of the recognition of prior learning as defined in this policy.

- During the recruitment and selection process, the Employment Equity representatives shall form part of the committee and consistently participate in: a) sharing information and data in relation to Employment Equity goals and targets for consideration by the committee; b) advising the committee on the Employment Equity Plan demographic profile, goals and targets; c) the formulation of the job advert taking cognisance of any

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statement that may unfairly exclude designated groups; d) the meeting to propose the shortlisted candidates to the full committee and the final interview shortlist that is decided by the committee; e) the interview phase and provision of feedback about the interviewed candidates; f) voting in the process to assess whether candidates are deemed suitably qualified; g) documenting and recording the process using the EE Checklist (HR 168) form; h) noting any recruitment process concerns to the committee, Head of Department and the Transformation Chair; i) report non-compliance to the EE policy to the VC via the DVC Transformation Office.

- The recruitment and selection process will be done in a fair and open manner to verify demonstrated competence, growth potential and alignment with the institutional values and principles as outlined in section.[19]

2.17 Theories underpinning the study

This study is underpinned is underpinned by the following theories: Feminist/feminist standpoint theory, Herzberg's two-factor theory and Job embeddedness respectively. These theories have significant cues that speaks to this study. For example, the standpoint theory, a feminist theoretical perspective argues that knowledge stems from social position. While at the same time the perspective denies that traditional science is objective and suggests that research and theory have ignored and marginalized women and feminist ways of thinking. Meanwhile Herzberg theorized that employee satisfaction has two dimensions: "hygiene" and motivation. Motivators, such as recognition and achievement, make workers more productive, creative and committed. This undemanding signifies the importance of attraction, retention, and

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[19]https://www.uct.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/328/about/policies/Policy_Employment_Equity_2020.pdf

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engagement in HEIs. In this way, these assumptions provide the theoretical basis to better understand the circumstances that underlies their work environment at both UWC and UCT. Female lecturers are influenced by factors such as flexibility, career growth and or development, working environment, engagement, support system amongst others that cause their attraction, retention, and engagement (Barkhuizen, Lesenyeho &Schutte, 2020). The reviewed theories include Feminist/feminist standpoint theory, Herzberg's two-factor theory and Job embeddedness.

Feminism, or feminist theory, is unquestionably an umbrella term that contains diverse ideas and perceptions that centre the social construction of gender. Notwithstanding the three waves of feminism- the first wave took place between the 19th and early 20th centuries in United States and Europe, it concerned was achieving voting right, equal opportunities, and other legal rights for women. Second wave feminism was initiated by both white and non-white women of Western countries, as well as in developing countries. It started in the 1960s, to promote equal education employment opportunities, maternity leave, birth control and abortion rights, fight against domestic violence, marital rape, and sexual harassment. Third wave feminism presents a critique to the previous feminist trends and extends from the 1990s to 2000s where women found themselves to be strong and rebellious, while women working in different occupations are not subjected to a sexist patriarchy (Mohajan, 2022) . I do not see the need here to explain the history of social, political, and academic movements of feminism, or to explain the diverse views held by feminists such as liberal feminism, socialist feminism, radical feminism, post-structuralism, and postmodernism (Eagleton, 2003). What I do think important is the rationality of feminist ideas and how they inform my study. It is, therefore, my primary consideration to make use of relevant feminist thoughts that were developed over the past decades, in specific social contexts, by multiple feminist thinkers, and are ready to transcend geographical locations. Feminist ideas as postulated by Hochschild (1983), reflect on women as a group who

are marginalized and denigrated to a lower social status than men and are confronted with more emotional challenges in public and professional places. Females have to borrow from their domestically related images, often wives and mothers, to establish rapport and authority in their interaction with the workplace and with their careers and are more vulnerable to commercialization, exploitation, and estrangement (Hochschild, 1983). These ideas – proposed decades ago – are still relevant and are reflected in the work of feminist philosophers who write about social injustice, discriminatory practices and issues of exclusion and inclusion (Nussbaum 2000, Fraser 2009, Goldin 2003, Goldin 2008, Goldin et al, 2021).

Based on this discussion, in my view, the experiences of female lecturers are better understood through the lens of a feminist theory. Feminist paradigm assumes gender as a basic category which analyse the values, experiences of women, their behaviour, and interactions in the context of social change which aligns with my study (Pasque & Nicholson, 2011; Carneiro 2016; Alhumaid, 2019). Furthermore, feminist paradigm emerges to allow women's experiences as lived, shared, and interpreted by women themselves to be the subject of social research. In this regard women are able to speak about their lived experiences and be able to attach meaning to it in a natural setting - in this study UWC and UCT. Feminist research centres on women's diverse situations and strives to respect, understand, and empower women (Basmechi 2017; Alhumaid 2019; Mohajan, 2022). Clearly, feminist epistemologies accept women's stories about their lives as a legitimate source of knowledge. According to Hesse-Biber (2012) and Patterson, Kinloch, Burkhard, Randall, & Howard (2016) feminist research seek to discover "truths" about women's experience in their own words. A feminist framework is thus appropriate when exploring the participation and experiences of female lecturer at UWC and UCT where I examined the experiences of these lecturers identified in my study, and their narratives as a source of knowledge and truth emanated through their shared experiences.

Feminist theoretical framework therefore plays a significant role in putting together different information and emerging themes which leads to a conclusive and authentic research output.

Feminist theory also elaborates on feminist epistemology (theory of knowledge) considered as an important tool for constructing effective knowledge based on the insights of women's experience (Cochrane, 2013, Basmechi 2017, Alhumaid 2019, Mohajan, 2022). This study further demonstrates that women acquire a different type of knowledge based on the fact that their roles in almost all societies are significantly different from those of men.

2.17.1. Feminist Standpoint theory

Feminist theory was used interchangeably with feminist standpoint theory to examine women's social roles, experience, and interest- experience in terms of situating themselves within the university environments which gives a better understanding in terms of their engagement and choice of a particular university. The way researchers perceive the social world around depends on their position within, Jacobson and Mustafa (2019) therefore standpoint theory according to Sweet (2020) and Gurung (2020) examines how our social positions shapes and defined the way we understand and see the world around us and how people view the world. Meanwhile Patowari (2020) looks at feminist standpoint theory and its importance in feminist research. Feminist standpoint theory further places women's experience at the centre of research, methodologies, and epistemology (Chauhan,2022).

In this study feminist standpoint theory provides an assessment based on analysing gender inequality and the promotion of women's interest through their own voices. Amongst others, this theory was appropriate and suitable for this study, it provides a complete guide in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities. For me feminist standpoint theory as described by Huirem, Lognathan and Patowari (2020), Gurung (2022) is used interchangeably with feminist theory, based on this argument, this section examines a number of theories that

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speaks to retention, attraction, and engagement, since each one of them approaches the concepts differently, thereby specifying different understanding of the phenomenon. This is important in this study as it reveals a better understanding of the ways and manner in which female lecturers contribute to a particular institution's scholarship.

A study carried out by Cochrane (2013) state that feminist standpoint theory attempts to elaborate on feminist epistemology which is an effective knowledge of women's experience. Cochrane's study further state that women possess a different type of knowledge since their role in almost all societies are significantly different from those of men. Therefore, feminist standpoint theory is explored in this study to understand the nature of gender inequality through their shared experiences. It examines their experience in terms of situating themselves within the university environment - UWC and UWC and provides a better understanding of attraction to the given institution from a feminist perspective. Feminist standpoint theory has guided this study, provided a critique for social relations and analysing gender inequality and the promotion of women's interest through their own voices – from their own standpoint. Amongst others this theory was appropriate for this study as it is more comprehensive in addressing the root causes of gender inequalities.

Earlier studies Hartstock (1983), Collins (1986,1990) and Smith (1987) claim that feminist standpoint theory is built on the foundation of investigation an interplay between power and knowledge. This is helpful in our own study where we consider academia as a site to interrogate power and the production of knowledge from a gendered perspective. In developing feminist standpoint theory, Smith (1987) aimed to examine women's articulations in order to understand how their realities are organized, and the ways in which social relations and societal structures inform their experiences. In short, it is knowledge created by women for women. Thus, earlier studies Hartstock (1983), Collins (1986,1990) and Smith(1987) state that feminist theorists

were already arguing that women's experiences had not been adequately represented by mainstream research because they have been framed within, and interpreted by, dominant (i.e. men's) conceptual categories. That is, women's experiences have been understood in concepts and language largely developed by educated men. Feminist standpoint epistemology was originally taken up as a means of attending to women's experience in particular and is associated in some circles with more essentialist understandings of gender (ibid.).

As is now clear from the discussions above, this study investigated the lived experiences of particular female lecturers in higher institutions (UWC and UCT) through their described narratives which are reliable sources of truth and knowledge allowing the researcher to capture their shared experiences. The feminist theoretical framework plays a vital role in integrating different information, examines emerging themes that leads to a conclusive and authentic research output.

2.17.2. Herzberg's two-factor theory
Herzberg's two-factor theory amongst other theories has been studied and used extensively to relates and understand the role of motivation in retention (Berry & Morris, 2008; Owler & Morrison, 2015; Almaaitah et al., 2017). Herzberg theory comprise of two factor theory also known as motivation-hygiene (Castellanos, 2014). According to (Armstrong,2014) this theory was founded to understand what causes employees feel good or bad about their work environment. According to Herzberg (2003) factors that make individuals satisfied and motivated in their work environment are different from those that make them dissatisfied. He further explains that employees tend to describe two different types of satisfying experiences: *intrinsic* experiences which are related to job content-which is the ability to achieve psychological growth and contribute to employee satisfaction. These factors are called 'motivators'-or growth factors which include achievement, recognition, advancement, and growth. Dissatisfying experiences on the other hand also known as hygiene factors are *extrinsic*

in nature and largely stem from extrinsic non-job-related factors, such as company policies and administration, salary, interpersonal relationship with colleagues, working conditions, status, security and management styles (Herzberg, 1987).

Herzberg states that for an employee to be motivated, the job has to be enriched in a way that the employee is able to realise its potentials, opportunity for achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement. Therefore, an employee will stay or leave his/her job not because of hygiene factors that affect his/her dissatisfaction, but because of the motivation factors that contribute to his/her satisfaction with the job (Henha, 2019). The theory highlights the importance of addressing these elements as important measures for facilitating job satisfaction and causing employees to stay within their jobs (Ahmad & Azumah, 2012; Henha, 2019). However, employees start becoming receptive to turnover intentions when the factors that contribute to their satisfaction are affected (Henha, 2019).

Although this theory received extensive support, Renfors (2017) feels it has not been adequately criticised. However, Herzberg's two-factor theory has been criticised for making unjustified inferences based on a small and specialised sample - engineers and accountants (Armstrong, 2014), it has also been claimed that the findings of Herzberg's study are inevitable, and this assertion is based on the interviewing methods used by the interviewers (ibid.). The interviewing method used in Herzberg's two-factor study is criticised as an approach that possibly led to respondents linking motivational factors as being under their personal control, therefore applauding themselves while hygiene factors as being under the control of management, for which they could not blame themselves, thereby resulting in biased reporting (French et al., 2011). Another form of criticism for this theory is based on individual differences not been considered when studying responses from the respondents such as the effects of age, gender, culture, and other variables. This criticism assumes that every individual will react in the same manner in a similar situation (Armstrong, 2014 and Badubi, 2017).

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Despite this criticism, the Herzberg two-factor theory continues to succeed since it to understand employee retention. According to French et al., (2011) and Ndeipanda (2018) this theory has important implications for an organisation as it provides a better understanding of the significance of work as a motivating factor for employees, considering the limited influence of hygiene factors (more money, fringe benefits and better working conditions) and the strong influence of motivators (achievement, recognition, responsibility and opportunities for advancement and growth). The Overall impact of this theory is clear as it points out that motivation can be increased through basic changes in the nature of an employee's job, viz. job enrichment (Steers & Porter, 1991, Ndeipanda, 2018).

My study supports the views of Herzberg's theory which states that, motivation factors such as achievement, recognition, the work itself, responsibility and advancement lead to job satisfaction. Herzberg's duality theory contributes to this study because of its importance and effectiveness in unpacking the intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors. The theory takes into consideration motivational factors with a direct influence on job satisfaction and it shows the different facets of job satisfaction which include both motivator and hygiene needs. Recognition for accomplishment is an effective means of motivation as there is a positive relationship between recognition for accomplishment and job satisfaction particularly among female lecturers. While advancement refers to an actual change, growth is about the potential for advancement in the future. This growth can take the form of development opportunities, or acquisition of skills.

There is a positive relationship between the opportunity for growth and job satisfaction among female lecturers and recognition for accomplishment. Female lecturers feel satisfied with their jobs when their accomplishments are recognized and/or awarded. When they are valued for their contributions, and they become more motivated and loyal to the university there is better job performance. The opportunity for Growth also reveals that employees feel satisfied with

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their jobs when they realize that there are opportunities for growth such as promotions, salary increment, etc. this in return increases their satisfaction and work motivation which is eventually translated into positive gains to the institution.

2.17.3. Job Embeddedness

The idea of job embeddedness was introduced by Mitchell et al. (2001) with the aim of improving employee turnover. Factors such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, individual's perception of job alternatives determines if an employee will leave an organisation or not. According to Shibiti (2019) job embeddedness is the collection of forces that influence employee retention, its emphasis is on factors that keep an employee on the job, rather than the psychological process one goes through when quitting (Akgunduz & Sanli, 2017). According to Mitchell and Lee (2001) job embeddedness theorises that an employee will stay in a company as long as the incentives to stay exceed their expectations. Employees' decisions to stay or go are influenced by their job embeddedness and will be more committed to their jobs if they have good relationships at work, which may be achieved by working in teams. Furthermore, job embeddedness also looks at how an employee is compatibility with their work and the workplace. It states that, when an employee decides to quit an organisation, he or she will bear sacrifices of leaving the company alternatively, when an employee leaves the company, he or she will forfeit some advantages like appealing benefits and compensation, the opportunity to work with colleagues with whom they have grown close, and promotion for opportunities (Ghosh & Gurunathan 2015; Ehtiyar & Ersoy, 2018). As a result, job embeddedness is an advantage to organisations when it comes to maintaining employees because it allows them to understand the need to stay, allowing them to develop retention tactics that are tailored to their needs (Lyu & Zhu, 2019). Opportunities like possibility for advancement, employee participation and opportunity for personal growth and development

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may all play a significant role in the employees' perception of job security, and in turn, have an impact on employee commitment.

The study of Tangthong & Agahi (2018) posits that employee development is the most crucial function in an organization and developing employees also develops an organization's abilities as a whole. In the same light, Khadijetou (2016), Adeoye & Egwake (2019) states that career development programs positively affect employee retention. In this same light Pillay, Dawood & Karodia (2015) and Kefelegn (2016) posit that career development has a high positive correlation on employee motivation and intention to stay. According to Takawira, Coetzee, & Schreuder (2014) engaged employees are likely to have a greater attachment to their organisation and positive experiences, which reduces their propensity to leave the organisation.

Based on the preceding discussion, attraction, retention, and engagement are important for any organisation (Rossi, 2018). Findings from the study by Zulu, (2020), highlights that while challenge of racial and gender stereotypes exist in higher education institutions in South Africa, engagement remains significant. The findings of Zulu's study further reiterate the challenges that higher education institutions still need to address in order to shift a transformation agenda beyond the current status quo which appears to make attraction, retention and engagement complex(Zulu, (2020). Khunou, Phaswana, Khoza-Shangase and Canham(2019), in their work, 'Black academic voices' demonstrates that subtle and sometimes overt racial exclusion continue to be part of the everyday university experience for those who remain and in this context makes defeats the notion of transformation and hence the impact on attraction and engagement as well.

Literature also demonstrates substantial relationships between engagement, attraction, and retention. It can be concluded that organisations such as HEIs strive to identify engaged employees with high retention levels which, in turn leads to higher productivity (Lyu & Zhu,

2019; Tangthong & Agahi, 2018; Lyu & Zhu, 2019; Shibiti, 2019). In a nutshell, the above-mentioned research results are discussed in detail in the analysis chapter.

2.18 Conclusion

This chapter presented numerous discussions on existing literature on women in higher institutions in relation to the concepts of attraction, retention and engagement, gender equality globally and nationally as a contribution towards the understanding of factors that attract and retain women in higher institutions and how they engage at different levels. This study responded to an existing gap in the literature concerning the voices of women in higher institutions particularly in combination to these three main concepts- attraction, retention, and engagement. Studies have been carried out on women in different areas and in various capacity however, their experiences based on these concepts have not been researched within the particular context of higher education in general and in South Africa in particular. Although the literature explored various aspects associated with women in higher institutions the relationship between attraction, retention and engagement merits further research.

This study therefore set to address existing gap as limited studies has been carried out in this area in particular, it investigates what attracts female lecturers to higher institution - explored at a particular site of investigation that of UWC and UCT. It also considers not only attraction but the way in which attraction, engagement and retention go together. Although there is a vast body of knowledge on gender, or on retention or attraction in the workplace, these ideas have not come together and have not been applied to specific university contexts. This thesis therefore explores a deeper understanding of the reasons that attract women to higher institutions of learning, retain them there and consider their level of engagement, therefore this thesis provides valuable insights to guide and inform higher institutions of learning. In the next chapter which is chapter three, I present the methodological design used in this study to

understand the concepts on attraction, retention and engagement of women in higher institutions, particularly the two selected sites, UWC and UCT.

Chapter Three

3.1 Introduction: Research and methodological design and implementation

This section outlines the research methodology. It discusses how respondents answered the in-depth semi-structured interviews which focused on aspects of their experiences of becoming academics and attraction to academia; promotion and progression; aspects of career development such as personal growth in institutions of higher education and how this effect an individual's career trajectories and different types of support structures in Higher education institutions. The overall aim of this study was to investigate the concepts of attraction, retention and engagement in relation to women in higher institutions, using the University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town respectively. The research questions that inform the study are provided here below:

- What factors attract women to UWC and UCT?

- What are the retention factors for women at UWC and UCT ?

- What is their level of engagement/involvement at various levels within UWC and UCT

- What factors foster the promotion of women?

This chapter also discusses the research design used to meet the study objectives. The institutions were chosen because of their historical context, UWC being a historically black university and UCT historically white. Today these institutions are grappling with racial profiling in different ways because of the historical context. The chapter starts by explaining the research methods which provided the context within which female lecturers express their different views relating to what attracted them to a particular institution. This is in line with Dwyer et al. (2012) who argue that it is imperative for researchers to pronounce the methods used in a particular study since they enhance an understanding of a specific pattern of analysis within the context of the study in question. Also, a particular issue under study is implicit based on the background in which the study is designed (Nunkoo, 2018). This section further looks at research design adopted including, the study population, sampling method, data

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collection procedure and instruments used as well as their reliability and validity. The procedure of collecting the data as well as the problems encountered faced in data collection, process and analysis are correspondingly discussed. The chapter further outlines ethical considerations applicable to this study.

3.2. Research design

This study explores the use of research design which, according to Creswell (2014), is about the sequence of measures that connects the techniques used for collecting the primary and practical data which answers the research questions and to ensuing data collection, analysis and conclusions. Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, (2018) observe that research design holds the study in question in an organised manner and further enables the principal investigator to position all the significant sections of the study together and in a manner that enables the answering of the central research question in a logical way. It is also a design that provides a pragmatic characteristic of how research was conducted to answer research questions yet to be addressed. Thus, it is therefore, the investigator's overall strategy for responding the study questions at hand. Accordingly, in this study, the research design explains how the participants were selected and interviewed, the data collection techniques or instruments used and how the data was analysed (Maree et al., 2010). Furthermore, a research design is described as overall strategy a researcher chooses to integrate different instruments of the study thereby ensuring that the researcher effectively addresses the research problem. This thus constitutes the design or outline for gathering, measurement, and analysing of the data (Ivankova et al., 2007). Mouton (2001) and Dann & Phillips (2001) explain that the term "design" denotes a plan on how researcher intends to conduct the research.

In a nutshell this study adopted an exploratory research design to analyse and understand data obtained from the participants from both UWC and UCT. According to Ivankova et al. (2007),

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Meyer (2022), Carter, Andersen, Stagg and Gaunt (2022) suggested that exploratory research design involves both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques such as focus groups and face to face interviews with participants. This adopted a qualitative research design since it is concerned with establishing answers to the whys and how of the phenomenon in question (unlike quantitative). Due to this, qualitative research is often defined as being subjective (not objective), and findings are gathered in a written format as opposed to numerical (Andersen et al., 2022).

3.3 Research methodology

Research methodology refers to the methods and process used to collect and analyse data in this study (Dwyer et al., 2012). It is a term that has been explored in every research with variant definition by different authors although this study alludes to some of these definitions applicable for this study. Research methodology is a way to systematically solve research problem (Devi,2017). Devi (2017) adds that it is a science of learning how research is carried out logically using various steps that are largely adopted by a researcher to respond to problem along with the logic behind them. A qualitative research methodology was adopted in this study to ensure reliable and valid outcomes that address the objectives of the study (Ivankova et al., 2007; Maree, 2011).This methodology was therefore, used in this study to collect qualitative data required to probe and comprehend potential issues that attract of and retain female lecturers in higher institution (UWC and UCT). Rahman (2017, p.103) describes a qualitative exploration research as an "interdisciplinary field that incorporates a broad range of epistemological viewpoints, study methods and interpretive procedures for grasping human experiences" (Rahman, 2017, p.103). The most significant characteristic of a qualitative researcher is to understand the data from the respondent's viewpoints.

Levitt et al. (2018) defines qualitative data as responses provided by individuals participating in a study in the form of narratives that are subjectively, non-numerically describing reality of

interest to the researcher. Studies show that data can also be collected from secondary sources and as well be supplemented by the empirical one from the primary sources such as interviews (Babbie & Mouton 2012; Creswell & Poth, 2016; Creswell et al., 2018). In this study, qualitative data and secondary sources which include peer-reviewed academic journals, books, conference papers, newspaper articles and electronic databases were used to investigate factors on attraction, retention, and engagement of female lecturers in higher institutions particularly at UWC and UCT.

3.4 Qualitative research method

Qualitative technique was considered suitable for this study because of the rich body of descriptive information that can be used to achieve the objectives of this study (Pedersen, 2002; Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020; Umanailo, Hamid, Hamiru, Assagaf, Bula, Nawawi & Bon, 2019). One of the main tenets of qualitative research data in a qualitative study is to answer research questions, thematic analysis involving the findings, and interpreting patterns of meaning within the data by analytically categorising topics that are progressively integrated into themes (Ritchie et al., 2013; Aspers & Corte, 2019; Allan, 2020). Qualitative enquiry creates a sense of lived experiences based on a specific observable characteristic in a context of selected individuals rather than generalisation from a population sample, hence, the goal of this approach according to Leavy and Harris (2018) is to gain insight into the participant's perspective. Leedy and Ormrod (2014) also state that in a qualitative research study, researchers can use non-random sampling when selecting sources of data especially when sampling is purposeful in nature. Therefore, selected individuals could provide the much-needed information regarding the study under investigation (Williams & Moser, 2019). This form of research (Qualitative) permits flexibility which allows researcher to review and acquire more data from respondents (Roberts, 2020). It is therefore in this regard that this study

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implicitly used this method to enable the researcher explore factors related to attraction of women and their retention and engagement in higher institutions (UWC and UCT).

Furthermore, qualitative approach is considered suitable for this study because according to Babbie and Mouton (2001) researchers using this method "always study human action from the insider's perspective" (Babbie & Mouton, 2001: 53). This approach also states that people assume realities to understand and make meaning out of experiences reality in a manner that reflects views, perceptions, and belief systems (Mohajan, 2018). Within this paradigm social scientists are more interested in how people create and make meaning of their world as they interact and relate with other people (Thomas, 2009; Mohajan, 2018; Williams & Moser, 2019). In this case the researcher cooperates closely with the participants intending to understand and interpret what the respondents say so as to gain an understanding of how they make sense of their environments or a phenomenon. Thomas (2009) adds that in a qualitative research study the researcher behaves natural in order to understand how participants construct the meaning of their social world, here he refers to the researcher as being "naturalistic" because it explores a situation or event in its natural context.

Since this study investigates the experiences of female lecturers within the University sector, it is located within feminist research which, according to Burton (2000), "places diverse experiences of women at the centre rather than on the margins of social investigation". According to Burns and Walker (2005) research could be described as feminist when "femaleness and maleness and the differences and dominations between and within them are made a central feature for research questions, conceptualisation and analysis." (Burns &Walker, 2005, p.25) This study investigated how the experiences of female lecturers are influenced or shaped by gender. Hearing women's voices through their experiences is important in feminist methodologies.

I have adequately described feminist theory in chapter two but suffice to say here that situating the research within feminist theory, feminist scholars argue that females experience are taken advantage of or exploited by their subordination to men. According to Letherby (2003) feminist research strives to promote social change and makes this approach reflexive as informed by a theory of power. Furthermore, feminist scholars seek to recognise the research participants' involvements, justifying the assertion that feminism is a movement against sexism and exploitation of women. Since gender is situated at the centre of social inquiry, feminism gives voice to the silenced, ignored, and voiceless women and aims to reduce the unequal and discriminatory social order perpetrated against women (Sarantakos, 2005).

Feminist research to Fonow & Cook (1991) is distinct in that it does not use the traditional and conventional research methods. However, it puts emphasis on feminist methodologies that are qualitative in nature. Feminist research stems from women's experiences and considers these experiences as of critical concern. It also takes into account the researcher's reflective or position ; the researcher then reflects, investigates, explores critically and analyse the nature of the research process. Frye (1983, p.56) states that "one of the great powers of feminism is that it goes so far in making the experiences and lives of women intelligible". In this regard, feminists seek a methodology that supports research which is of value to women and can lead to social change beneficial to women.

Although numerous studies have also looked or examined what makes it feminist research *feminist* (Fonow & Cook, 1991; 2005; Maynard, 1994; Mohajan, 2018; Freeman, 2019; Kaur & Nagaich, 2019), Sprague (2016) observes that feminist research is often understood to be qualitative because this type of methodology lends well to examine concerns which underscores quantitative methodology more in feminism and feminist concerns. Quantitative feminism methodology can provide invaluable data about gendered lives and the important questions that need further investigation in relation to attraction, and retention for example. In

fact , both qualitative and quantitative feminist scholars generally acknowledge that the role of the researcher would have an effect on the research, when we seek to understand social situations as they affect women in a diverse manner but also concerned with positive social change, especially as it relates to diversity of women's lives. Feminist inquiry draws heavily on qualitative methods as it is particularly useful for eliciting, hearing and collective unique voices, perspectives of participants in terms of understanding gendered experiences. While feminist research is not a solution for all issues in higher education, it has much to contribute in understanding, addressing the gendered contexts of colleges, universities and educational policies (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011).

From the above analysis, situating this study within a feminist context is of vital importance since the unique focus of the study is on women in higher institutions with specific interest on the retention, attraction, and engagement of women of female lecturers at UWC and UCT. Despite several policies and regulations on gender equality and substantial literature on gender in the workplace (Sebola, 2015; O'Connor, 2020; Saadat et al., 2022) feminist research has rarely looked at some of the reasons why women are not attracted, retained, or engaged in the workplace in the first place - more specifically in the academic environment in general - and at UWC and UCT in particular. Although feminist research cannot speak for every woman, it can offer new data grounded on the authenticities of women's experiences and enthusiastically offer operational changes in the social world. It is further characterised by its diversity, trans disciplinarity, uses diverse methodologies constantly redefined by the concerns of women coming from different perspectives. Feminist research thus requires   issues like diversity, democratic decision-making and empowerment of women including traditionally marginalised women (Brayton et al., 2014).

From the above analysis, while feminist scholars have looked at women from a general perspective, they argue that women's experiences cannot be emphasised or seen from one lens

simply because of the dynamics that exist, for example, domestic issues vis-à-vis their academic work, community issues, family issues, leadership, research and teaching. The experiences highlighted by these female lecturers vary in different forms as expressed in their responses.

3.5 Data collection

The aim is to obtain empirical evidence from participants using instruments such as question guide so as to interpret, analyse and build a convincing credible answer to questions that have been posed. Data collection is, therefore, process of gathering information in a conventional way that enables one to answer research queries . Though methods vary by discipline, the emphasis on ensuring accurate and honest collection of data remains unique (Kabir, 2016). In this study, before starting to collect data, effort was made by the researcher to make appointments with selected key participant prior to actual data collection. This was done to conduct interviews according to participants' time and place of convenience. After confirmation of appointments, most participants preferred to be interviewed in their respective convenient places of work (this was before the national lockdown). Before lockdown, I was able to conduct interviews with some participants from UWC in their offices – face to face. During the pandemic as everything went online, the remainder of my interviews (from both UWC and UCT) was done via zoom or Google meet depending on what the participant preferred. Before beginning any interview, the researcher introduced herself purpose of the study to participants. The self-introduction was backed by an introductory letter obtained from Head of Department and Ethics Committee at UWC and UCT respectively (Appendix A) . After the introduction, a consent form was given to each participant to read and be fully informed about the purpose of the study before participating in the interview process. Copy of the consent form was emailed to the participant before the interview took place for those who did interviews via zoom and or Google meet. After reading the consent form participants who

accepted were interviewed following the designed interview schedule. Respondents were informed interviews were recorded using a mobile phone and a tape recorder and that they will be transcribed later by the researcher.

I was able to conduct one interview a day although there were days, I could be able to interview two or three participants. All interviews were conducted through face-to-face conversational style and these interviews were conducted in English. Each interview began by asking about participants' demographic characteristics relevant to the study. Each interview session lasted between 40-45 minutes. After every session, participants were thanked for having accepted to participate in the study.

3.6 Sampling methods

Non-probability, purposive sampling was used in this study to select respondents. This sampling method was used because the sample was known to the researcher and participants would therefore respond quickly, which was cost effective. According to Christensen et al. (2014) non-probability sampling is a process in which the researcher relies on his/her own judgment when choosing participants to participate in the study and the respondents are considered key informants (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Participants were selected based on knowledge about the objectives of the study under investigation (Silverman, 2020). Being knowledgeable puts the researcher in a position to provide the most resourceful data needed to accomplish a specific task (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

The study sample is a smaller cohort of participants from which a principal investigator chooses or selects from a larger population using tools such as a survey, structured interviews or another method to collect the data (Teeroovengadum & Nunkoo, 2018). The sample population for this study was therefore female lecturers from both UWC and UCT. This sampling structure was chosen because it can be used to choose from a much larger population, and it also contributes to the methodological rigour of the study. The interviewing process and selection

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was based firstly on female lecturers who have served in both universities for quite a number of years (from 10 years and above). This is because female lecturers from this category are likely to have experiences based on their longevity at the University. The duration of employment was a critical factor when selecting respondents. My selection cuts across faculties and department. Each of the participant category were carefully chosen to provide qualitative data needed to answer all the research questions and objectives of the study and in relation perspectives of female professors and lecturers.

3.7 Administration of interviews

As earlier stated, interviews were conducted with female lecturers from both UWC and UCT using a semi-structured interview– but mainly with open-ended questions. These interviews were conducted using an interview guide because of its flexibility and simple to probe for issues not thought of before (Neuman & Guterman, 2017). Flexibility was assured by incorporating open-ended statements; that is, questions which enable respondents to divulge needed data in an unlimited flexible manner (Hofisi et al., 2014). Although an interview can simply be described in form of interaction between the researcher and the participants. Thus, it can as well be understood as an interactive process whereby the researcher asks questions to get particular information from participant. However, the most important aspect is for the researcher to collect information that is authentic and valid. Interview is a convenient process of collecting the data in qualitative research and can direct participant in responding to a specific research question (Stuckey, 2013, Neuman & Guterman 2017). Edwards & Holland (2013) also state that interviewers are specialized professionals who ethically seek relevant information from subjects to validate research question. Sewell (n.d) describes interviews as an effort to understand the world from participant's point of view, to understand experiences in ways that uncover their lived echosystem before scientific explanations. Furthermore, the qualitative interviews are central to data collection (Gill et al., 2008; Neuman & Guterman

2017). This method involves a one-on-one interview process (and preferably face-to-face), that emphases on individual experiences than universal views and beliefs. Burkinshaw (2015) argues that interviews should be studied within "social praxeology" researcher has to position interviews within the dominant social, political and economic context, therefore in the context of this study is attraction, retention and engagement of women in higher education institutions .Most importantly, with interviews the questions are presented with little room for variation as such the researcher controls the interview using a standardised set of questions. To avoid being too rigid and over standardised, the interview guide allowed space for open ended questions, whilst still 'controlling' to some extent, the pace and content of the interview. It was this interviewing technique that was best suited for this study. As earlier stated, purposive sampling includes participants who were female lecturers working at UWC and UCT regardless of age, marital status, race, class or historical background. Therefore, interviews were conducted based on availability and willingness of female lecturers. The only criterion was that they had been employed from ten years and above .The researcher initially hoped to interview fifty female lecturers from both UWC and UCT, from different faculties, units, schools and departments. Unfortunately, largely due to the Covid-19 outbreak, it was difficult to reach out to lecturers in person and some lecturers, especially from UCT, took quite some time to respond to emails while others did not respond at all.

3.8 Structured interview

With structured interviews, the interviewer has total control and authority in the process as such, gives the interviewee less room to be casual (Stuckey, 2013). The researcher in this case asks specific set of questions in a predetermined order but with limited number of responses irrespective of the questions asked by researcher but tend to be quite short, and, as such the response categories are structured in such a way that the respondents are expected to respond, with short and straightforward answers. Stuckey (2013) affirms that, structured interviews

have set of guidelines that must be clearly observed by researcher and by so doing the investigator adheres to the sequence of questions during the process. Structured interviews were appropriate to use especially when interviews require that the participant gives a response to each ordered question. However, in this study an interview guide was used with both structured and a semi- structured interview question.

3.9 Semi-structured interviews

Numerous scholars have identified semi-structured interview questions as an important data collection approach in qualitative study, particularly within social sciences domain (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Bradford & Cullen, 2012; Alshenqeeti, 2014). It can be used to understand the meanings, reality and experiences of participants and to explore how these experiences and meanings are informed by discourses, assumptions or ideas that exist in broader society (Braun & Clarke, 2016). In addition, in the interview process guides the researcher in the process of selecting participants and provides space on how to respond to the study questions geared to answer the objectives (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). Like structured interviews, this type of interview has an outline of topics and questions prepared by the researcher. However, semi-structured interviews do not have the rigid adherence and implementation is dependent on how interviewee responds to question asked by the researcher. Although there was set of guiding questions responses from participants gave the researcher flexibility to pose more nuanced questions than the ones drafted originally. Therefore, there was room for more personalized and individual responses from the participants. This format allowed participants more freedom in expressing themselves in a meaningful opinionated manner, while allowing the interviewer to maintain focus on the topic at hand (Kallio, Pietila, Johnson & Kangasniemi, 2016). Nonetheless, the interview guide was an instrument merely used to guide, rather than a formal instrument that 'must' be implemented strictly according to a pre-set plan. In this way the semi-structured interview guide becomes an

effective tool as it strives to understand the practical experiences and perceptions of research participants - female lecturers - relating to central themes of the study objectives. Semi-structured interview questions were selected as the means of data collection and also to guide the researcher to explore the perceptions and opinions of respondents regarding complex and sometimes sensitive questions and answers. Besides, the varied professional, educational and personal histories of the sample group permitted the use of a non-standardized interview schedule.

In addition, Denzin and Lincoln (2008) state that when using structured interviews in qualitative research the researcher must be consistent with the study introduction and the sequence of questions and wording. The researcher avoided suggesting an answer or agree or disagree with a response but allowed the participants to provide their personal views on the topic. This protocol remained the same for the semi-structured interviews. As face-to-face interviews are ideal for this study, it was hoped that all interviews could be conducted in this way but as already indicated, lockdown measures meant being agile, adjusting and conducting the work in an unexpected way. Interviews were organised via *Zoom* and *Google Meet*. Denzin & Lincoln (1998, p.4) use the term 'bricoleur,' and although it can have negative meaning for instance, an amateur to describe the agility of the researcher who is able to 'perform a large number of diverse tasks such as the online interviews. In this study 'bricoleur' applies well to the lockdown as the research was adjusted and applied quite differently from the original planned.

Interviews were conducted telephonically and a few of the respondents also decided to fill in the question guide from home on their own, as they did not have time to set up the date and time for an interview on *Zoom*. Ultimately, about 98% of interviews for the research were done via *Zoom* or *Google Meet*. The interviews were 40 - 45 minutes long to avoid respondent fatigue. Although responses were based on personal feelings and experiences of participants,

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it produced data that allowed the emergence of new concepts for the study (Rabionet, 2011). According to Krauss et.al. (2009), providing often unexpected responses that guided and informed the study.

3.10 Secondary Data

Studies show that secondary data has important testable assumptions that can guide the researcher   identify key variables that can give meaning to emerging studies (Cheng & Phillips, 2014; Clark, 2013; Johnston, 2017). It is acknowledged that secondary data can provide significant information from the existing research but provides direction   for the researcher (Johnston, 2017). The advantage of secondary data as part of date collection according to Cheng & Phillips (2014), Johnston (2017) and Foley (2018) it allowed me to identify the gaps and related variables that relate to my study. Furthermore, as Sherif (2018) states, secondary data analysis in qualitative research benefits researcher to answer exploratory research questions re-examines perceptions and experiences of participants. This provided the researcher with the opportunity to examine and analyse existing information in line with the current study and also inform research questions, interpretations and conclusions absent in the findings (Johnston, 2017; Broom, Cheshire & Emminson, 2009; Sherif 2018). This form of data collection (secondary data) is often collected, archived as a product of independent qualitative studies conducted either by a research team or by individuals (Andranovich & Riposa, 2012; Dworkin, 2012).

Nevertheless, secondary data has disadvantages as outlined by Foley (2018) and others Pederson, Linda & Vingilis, Evelyn & Wickens, Christine & Koval, John & Mann 2020) this must be considered when analysing data for reuse. Firstly, the data set might not answer the researcher's specific research question to the degree that the research would have expected. Secondly, a secondary data set might not contain the specific information that would allow the researcher to answer question of the study being carried out and thirdly, the researcher can

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never be able to know exactly how data was collected and how well that process was executed (Foley, 2018; Cheng & Phillips, 2014, Pederson et al., 2020).

Despite disadvantages, pre-existing data provides information and direction on the topic being studied. According to Bishop (2014) it is about gaining new insights in which the researcher re-analyses the data from new or different perspectives. To start with, using secondary data, the researcher must locate data that is useful for their research problem, capture the relevant information and also evaluate how the existing data meets the quality of the current research being studied. This research method (secondary data) can be collected without fieldwork and mostly looks at the published reports which study as sources searched from libraries, reading books and the internet.

According to Babbie & Mouton (2001), Sherif (2018), Ruggiano & Perry (2019) secondary data analysis is a useful tool that can help researchers to achieve a balance between specific and generalised findings. It is precisely, the approach that I used in our own study, especially the identification of possible gaps with regard to female lecturers in higher institutions. Thus, desk literature review provided step-by-step process of identifying and analysing the gaps from existing studies so as to integrate them in my study. The desktop review gave evidence that there has been no scholarly work on factors that attract and retain female lecturers to higher institutions, and their level of engagement and the way these three concepts can – or cannot – be linked. Therefore, desktop review was a platform for conducting qualitative empirical study.

Applying secondary data in this research was prevalent because it is flexible and can be utilised in many ways, for example, it is viewed as an empirical exercise using systematic method with procedural and evaluative steps which is similar to collecting primary data (Andrews, Higgins, Andrews, Lalor, 2012; Schutt, 2011; Smith et al., 2011; Johnston, 2014; Pederson, Vingilis, Wickens, Koval & Mann, 2020). In addition, qualitative research typically

relies on analysing documents and material from varying sources (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). Overall, secondary data involves a thorough examination of existing relevant information that would allow and assist the researcher in understanding the subject matter that is being investigated (Motsoeneng, 2011, Vingilis, Wickens, Koval & Mann, 2020, Baldwin, Pingault, Schoeler, Sallis & Munafò, 2022). The focus was on theory associated with women/gender bearing in mind that this study speaks to women in higher educational institutions in particular. This method (secondary data) thus had two functions – the first it informed the research questions, the design, instruments and the second was to situate the study theoretically and to inform the analysis and the discussion. The technique provided information that allowed the researcher to think critically about gender issues specifically in the context of higher institutions.

3.11 Selection of research participants

Before collecting data, I obtained permission and approval from the Research Ethics committees from both UWC and UCT (Appendix A) . Purposeful sampling as per the work of Sparkes & Smith (2014) was used to recruit female lecturers from both universities-UWC and UCT. Using publicly available contact information on the University websites online database, the researcher emailed participants of their potential to be interviewed. All female lecturers who responded to emails expressed willingness to take part in the study therefore, they were included as participants. There was significant attrition as out of the 50 who were approached only 30 responded in the affirmative. Once the 30 were identified a follow up website search to examine the profile of the staff member was conducted. The purpose of this search was to determine the number of years a lecturer had served the university as only staff who had worked for 10 years or more as professors, associate professors, senior lecturers, and lecturers were considered suitable for the sample.

It was challenging to draw up a sample online and to decipher whether the participant qualified for the interview. Since universities were closed, there were delay in responses to emails from participants which slowed down the data collection process. Responses from participants from UCT were particularly slow and follow up emails were necessary to 'nudge' the participant and speed up the process. I had to cancel face-to-face interviews that I had made with staff at UWC and change appointments to online which also slowed down the process. These were unusual times and staffs were often more anxious or unsettled as they were working from home under conditions that were not always conducive to optimal working conditions (for instance having small children which could be disruptive or/and having load shedding which is an added perturbation when trying to manage workloads from home). Scheduling interviewers required agility and responsiveness to the particular needs and availability of the participants. All these factors meant that data collection at a time like this in South Africa (COVID-19 and load shedding combined) required careful planning to avoid disruptions.

3.12 Data Analysis

Analysing qualitative data requires organising themes in a manner that conveys meaningful data and one which is built on the objectives of the study. According to Wu et al. (2020) qualitative data analysis requires noticing, gathering and thinking. It consists of in-depth information usually presented in the form of words, and themes that relate to the study in question. The aim of this process is to collect meaningful data in a comprehensive manner (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018).

The qualitative data analysis for this study meant first transcribing verbatim all the recorded data. Each interview was read repeatedly – often stopping or rewinding the transcription to ensure that the actual words of the respondent were captured accurately. Once the words were captured, it was important to put into context what was being said and to relate it to the themes of the study. As Rubin and Rubin (2005) suggest, organising the transcripts into themes is an

essential step in the analysis and these authors remind us that the next step in terms of the analysis entails first listening to but then reading each transcribed document to identify themes. In this study, data was analysed to understand concepts of attraction, retention, and engagement and to determine patterns or trends (Mouton, 2001). This entailed first decoding, then presenting and then analysing the interviews. In order to present and analyse, interview responses were interpreted and categorised into themes. These themes were later categorised based on different objectives and this process was repeated to ensure qualitative data was fully analysed.

The transcribed interviews were analysed using thematic content analysis. According to Babbie and Mouton (2015) data interpretation in qualitative study draws on conclusions that reflects interests, ideas and theories. Data was organised along the themes of attraction, retention and engagement from each university. Gaps in the findings were highlighted and recommendations for future research were made.

3.13 Ethical considerations
Ethical consideration is relevant for any research and includes defined ethical guidelines such as protection from harm, voluntary participation, consent, right to privacy concerning information participants may reveal (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Denzin and Lincoln (2013) state that research ethics have been most often tied to entitlement that legitimises engagement in the research and the right to 'know' the other. Meanwhile Marshall and Rossman (2016) state that the potential trustworthiness of a study should be judged not only by how competently it is designed ,but also by the stipulated plan for how the researcher will be ethically engaged.

It is the therefore the responsibility of the researcher to acknowledge all resources used in a particular study . In addition, this study was conducted according to the professional and ethical guidelines provided by the Ethics Committee at UWC and UCT. The research conducted ensured that the ethics procedures of both institutions-UWC and UCT were followed at all

times. Confidentiality was assured and participants were made to understand that participation was voluntary, and no participant was forced to participate nor asked to complete any information that could compromise their identity , and they may withdraw from the study at any stage, for whatever reason, and may refuse to answer any question. Participants were informed that all data and their identities would remain confidential and any other personal information obtained during the interviews were withheld. Most importantly, informed consent was obtained from the participants, and all data and results were handled confidentially.

Research integrity was maintained in a way that allowed participants to have trust and confidence in the methods used. In addition to these core principles, the researcher ensured that the research was conducted according to appropriate ethical protocols as explained above, that is, to seek ethical approval for this study from both institutions. Participants were treated with integrity, honesty and collegiality, the researcher-maintained honesty, accountability and professionalism throughout the research and data collection process. Honesty in all aspects include the presentation of research objective, the intentions of the research, reporting on research methods and procedures. The researcher introduced the study to the respondents via email, who were then able to understand their role in contributing to the study for which they agreed to give their informed consent, knowing that participation was voluntary and could decide to withdraw from the interview at any stage.

Confidentiality and Respect for privacy is of supreme importance so as to build trust with the participants (Benedict, 2012). The researcher ensured that all participants' information was kept private and confidential and remained anonymous, identification of information of participants such as their names and addresses were not disclosed, and participants did not sign their names on consent forms. Participants were ensured anonymity, confidentiality and gave permission for interviews to be recorded.

3.14 Positionality as a researcher

Located within a feminist framework, feminist researchers asserts that researchers should engage in a critical reflection of self, power, knowledge, and emotion during research process. This study therefore explores the researcher's positionality and how it influences the research process. Positionality describes an individual's view and position in particular research (Foote & Bartell 2011, Savin-Baden & Major, 2013 and Rowe, 2014; Delamont 2018; Holmes & Darwin 2020). Furthermore, according to Savin-Baden & Major (2013) positionality reflects the position researcher choses to adopt within a research study. This process influences how research is conducted, its outcomes, and results (Rowe, 2014; Delamont 2018; Holmes & Darwin, 2020.).

Based on the discussion above it is important to analyse my positionality and how it impacted the research process. I played different roles during the research process - a mother, a tutor, a research assistant, and a student. Based on UWC's socio-historical context, I was aware of my positionality as a black non-South African woman, having to familiarize myself with the history of South Africa especially on gender related issues. I was also aware of the ways in which shifting roles and positions motivated me in this research process. I also considered my own attraction and engagement with UWC which is my academic 'home.' I was also influenced by fellow colleagues at the University and their own experiences of attraction, engagement and retention at UWC and also UCT. As such brought my positionality, assumptions, values, feelings, attitudes and belief in the research process, both the empirical aspect of the research but also the lens through which I chose particular authors or interpreted their theoretical stances. I also had a certain anxiety about whether or not respondents would want to engage with my own research and whether they were attracted to other topic. I had a certain advantage though, because, being embedded in a University setting, I was more familiar with the environment and how to navigate through its corridors, than I would be if I had been working

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as a researcher outside a University context. My own embeddedness within the University setting shaped each conceptual, methodological and analytical decision that I made.

Being a black African feminist and a PhD student at UWC I was already interested in higher education and aspects of engagement, attraction, and retention during my Masters. It was easier for me to approach staff at UWC than at UCT and I admit to feeling somewhat intimidated by UCT with its reputation as one of the best Universities in Africa and in South Africa in particular. I felt anxious that staff members at UCT would not welcome my intrusion into their working lives. There was an added dimension in that, being at UWC, I also needed to take care that I would not be too familiar and assume that I knew the way staff members think. I had to approach the topic with as much objectivity as I could. In order to produce a good and sound piece of research which yields significant results, I needed to recognize the distance and proximity between my participants and myself. It was necessary to remind myself that my own feelings or experiences at the University might be very different for that of staff members and that I should guard with extreme rigour against projecting or expecting any particular response from a participant. It was a relief to feel welcomed by the participants, not perceived as an outsider or as someone trying to invade their privacy. I had a comparative advantage in that I was a young female black academic – belonging to a cohort that was now recognised as being important and needing to be listened to. All of these factors mattered and were part of my positionality in conducting this study.

3.15 Limitations of the study
Qualitative research has been criticised as being purely descriptive, not precise and too subjective and impressionistic (Lehman, 2008 and Maher, Hadfield, Hutchings & De Eyto 2018). Lehman (2008) states there is a lack of transparency in qualitative research which makes it difficult to see how and why researchers reach to certain conclusions. As earlier mentioned, qualitative approach was used in this research to understand experiences of female lecturers

from both UWC and UCT and although the results were based on the participants' responses, however results cannot be generalised as representing all female university lecturers in South Africa. The findings are based on small sample purposefully chosen. Since semi-structured interview was used to gather information from research participants, the researcher was able to describe the phenomenon under investigation. The study has explored the authentic and lived experiences of female lecturers from both Universities (UWC and UCT) in higher institution, however, some limitations are worth indicating. As outlined earlier, there were only 30 participants interviewed. While invitations to participate in the research was extended to participants vial emails to, circumstances beyond control meant that some did not want to be interviewed, some participants indicated they were not available and will not take part in the interview but failed to give reasons. In the course of this researchy two participants who showed interest failed to respond to emails despite follow up via emails sent to them. The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant ripple effect in the data collection process as it resulted in a much smaller sample. Face-to-face interviews are also the preferred way to go but this was impossible due to lock-down.

3.16 Conclusion

This chapter covers the methodological concerns of the study. It presented a theoretical description of qualitative research as a response to research questions and objectives of this study. It further explains how research participants were selected. In summary, this chapter provides the research methodology which include, data collection methods, desk top analysis and interpretation, limitations to the study and ethical considerations. This chapter presents the role of the researcher in terms personal, social, and professional characteristics as a woman within higher education setting as discussed earlier. The next chapter presents results, analysis and interpretation of this research.

Chapter Four

4.1 Introduction: Data analysis and presentation-themes

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attraction, retention, and engagement of female lecturers in the lens of higher institutions focusing on UWC and UCT. The earlier chapter provided methodology used in this study. This chapter discussed the presentation of data, analysis and interpretation of results based on study objectives and questions: (A) Determine factors that attract women to the two selected higher institutions, University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town, B)Examine factors that retain women in these institutions, (C) Scrutinise policies that promote gender equity and equality in Higher institutions in general, (D) Scrutinise policies that promote gender equity and equality at University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town in particular, (E) Determine the level of participation and engagement of women at various levels within institutions of UWC and UCT. The questions include:What factors attract women to UWC and UCT?, What are the retention factors for women at UWC and UCT ?, What is their level of engagement/involvement at various levels within UWC and UCT, and What informs the promotion of women?

Findings were organised into major themes and then divided into sub-themes which are identified using themes in relation to objectives.

Qualitative approach was used to explore experiences of selected female participants from both universities with a view of understanding their life experiences, struggles and perceptions in their own words.

Furthermore, the interpretation and analysis will also be done based on the theoretical framework provided in chapter.

4.2 Gender equity and equality in higher institutions perceptions of UWC and UCT

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, the ANC government has made significant impetus to ensure respect for equality of women including higher education institutions. Such developments were of course without legal and policy efforts from the international and national levels to promote equality and social justice. According to Akala & Divala (2019) higher education institutions in South Africa today still reflect gendered power relations, however, post 1994 SA through its various policy initiatives attempts to ensure the ills of the past are redressed through social transformation, which include among others: employment policy framework, affirmative action to ensure a just and equitable society. Affirmative action for instance, is a policy intervention that aims to address imbalances of the past across sectors including higher education.

In light of the above, SA's higher education institutions have since 1994 experienced policy transition and significant transformation that gives credence to gender parity and implementation by policymakers. Inequality was norm during apartheid rule including in higher education institution. This is to say that, unequally human right were prevalent and parity was only enjoyed by the minority. Nonetheless, some higher education institutions adopted the apartheid ideology of segregation alongside racial and gender lines. Zulu (2016), argues that the post 1994 SA has demonstrated the agency of transformation trajectory with the objective of redressing the injustice of the past in a manner that create space that were exclusively for a particular race, group or gender type (Zulu, 2016).

That said, 1997 Higher Education Act no 101 provides the establishment of institutional forums at universities to promote transformation as well as national oversight committees to ensure affirmative action is accomplished. This initiative has overtime increased female representativeness at all levels including higher education institutions. This in addition, has

been critical in terms of increasing equality in research and other responsibilities. Despite above narrative, development towards gender equality in academia remains a dream for many female academics especially the under-representation, side-lined in particular activities, discriminated against and sometimes victims of circumstances (Sadiq et al., 2019; Kiguwa, 2019). However, this seems to suggest that despite the affricative action policy impact of the increased number of women in the sector, a lot still needs to be done (Akala, 2019). This provides ground for this study as it aims to understand the perceptions and attitudes of the participants (female lecturers) towards gender equality in the context of retention, attraction and engagement. When asked about gender equality, participants indicate that they are aware of gender equality and equity policies, and they believe that this is what the university has attempted to adhere to when recruiting staff. Some participants were knowledgeable about gender equity and equality policy even though they might not know what it entails: "Yes, but I do not know what they entail." However, another participant stated that:

> *There is a lot—for instance grants and funding—that give preference to black females and also, they are protecting their rights as in the workplace. Yeah, because when I started here, it was predominantly males and older professors and over the years since I have been here there has been a change and it keeps recurring, so the number of females has increased so that's one of their policies to push up the females. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC).*

On the subject of equality, from the above response one can see that there is a sense of inclusion for women, especially young black females who believe that they are now being taken seriously in terms of recruitment. The above findings corroborate with Naicker's (2013) who argues that transforming higher education institutions has greatly changed the academic land scape in SA particularly recruitment and retention of staff. A number of interventions have been introduced to increase women in higher education. This has been done through research grants, more

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leadership positions in academics, mentoring activities, and a host of other interventions (Naicker, 2013).

Another participant had this to say:

> *I don't think it has anything to do with my gender, personally, our department, there is difference between individual departments and the university, and I think it depends on the discipline. Look our department has got a lot of women in it, that's not to say that gender doesn't have an impact (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC).*

Some indicated that there are female-dominated departments and therefore, the question on gender equality and equity is not a criterion for selection. This seems to indicate that some departments such as social work, nursing and dietetics employ more women anyway and that gender equality and equity in these departments is not relevant because they are female-dominated. However, the participant also indicated here that when it comes to selection process, one would hardly find male applicants therefore, in most cases women are considered, although men would be appointed if they do apply and qualify but women are the majority that often apply in these departments. The point here is that departments such as Nursing or Dietetics attract more women than men and thus there is a skew towards women. It is not surprising that women are promoted here since these departments do not, on the whole, attract men.

In the course of the interview issues of race and gender emerged, and this is unsurprising as institutions of higher learning remain acutely racially divided (Akala & Divala, 2019). Issues of race seem to be as prominent as issues of gender. One participant expressed her view that a white, Afrikaans-speaking person would be likely to be accepted at Stellenbosch University and an English-speaking white person would most likely be accepted at UCT. These are both predominantly white institutions and it means that those who are coloured or black would be

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more likely excluded or if they were accepted would remain on the periphery. After several years of democracy issues of racial segregation are still a reality:

> *No matter what we say, institutions are so highly racially divided. So you will find Afrikaner white person want to go to Stellenbosch and then you will find the ones that go to UCT, the English white person, the majority will be there a few coloured and black faces you see there maybe because we need to encourage them to come to universities but our university has always been you know open in terms of race but if you look at our university, you will see mostly people are coloured persons, you will notice a very few of the other races. So, for me, along racial divide, we are still divided that way, no matter what, we still see the race. (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UWC)*

Amidst all these contradictions, universities in general strive to open doors for all races but, in the case of UCT, racial tension remains and the university continues to give preference to whites and coloureds rather than black employees (Sadiq, Barnes, Price, Gumedze & Morrell, 2019). Therefore, in this complex space of higher education, gender concerns might be blurred as there are also significant problems of discrimination in terms of race. This can be seen in the response of the following participant:

> *I mean UCT is doing a lot of work to attract black or equity scholars though you know sometimes those processes don't work and otherwise, but I think in some cases yes but in some cases no. (Female lecturer: interviewed November 2020, UCT)*

The response ties in with UCT Employment Equity target which states that achieving an equitable staffing profile is a core objective of the University's Vision 2030 strategy. This approach refers to the aspect of transformation set out in the UCT's Employment Equity (EE) Policy implemented in March 2021. UCT's EE aims at investing in the academic development

of black females, academics with disabilities, managers, attracting black females through postgraduate student scheme and postdoctoral fellowships to broaden the pool of potential future academics (EE plan, 2022-2026).

On of the participant stated that:

> *I am sure that there are because UWC is a progressive university where there are very progressive policies however, I am not familiar with it I am not familiar with policies I must in all honesty admit I am not. (Female lecturer: interviewed: October 2020, UWC)*

This also suggests that while these policies are in place, not everyone knows that they are there nor what they mean. It might be more advantageous if the university was to indicate clearly what the content and intention of these policies so that there is no ambiguity about what is expected and where the university stands in terms of gender and race.

Meanwhile another participant pointed out that:

> *Yes, the university is just busy now revising the equity policy and at the most universities there is a strong pull towards females first, you know, even in the people that applied now will not be males, but it will be females that will be taken into consideration especially black females of which we don't have a lot and so we['re] trying to encourage that in the faculty as well as in the university. (Female lecturer: interviewed August 2020, UWC)*

There is evidence that some staffs are aware of the policies – but this is inconsistent. Findings above indicate that while UWC is striving to ensure gender equity and equality, the university is trapped in the dilemma of historical racial divides. Racial segregation act against the ideals of gender equality and equity the university wants to embrace because the ideas of equality and equity are not simply about gender but also have to do with race and the realisation of equal rights for all. Thus, the Employment Equity plan of 1 June 2016 to 31 May 2020 was adopted

to identify   barriers that contribute to the under-representation of staff members from designated groups.

On the issue of equality and equity, another participant indicates that:

> *You know you just look at the history of our country and education and if you look at our profession of occupational therapy was traditionally dominated by white women and I mean I am an example, I studied in the 80s and we only had white women in my class so in my age now, this profession still tends to be dominated by white women and so same thing when one is looking to appoint people, you would have a lot of people who are from one specific race. And so therefore it is very difficult to try and find suitably qualified black men because it is dominated by gender and race because of the context and history. UWC really tries very hard, as I said to try and locate people and to have representation in our staff so that is quite complicated. (Female lecturer: interviewed August 2020, UWC)*

The above response indicates that there are some departments (such as Health Sciences) at the university that are guided by the rules of the Allied Health Professional Council and that could explain why the minimum of three years of practical experience is used when considering the promotion of female staff. This seems to vary from one Department to another. It seems that there is an acute awareness from some that it is the issue of South Africa's history that contributes to this complex landscape.

Most of the participants from UCT claimed that people are hired depending on what role they are being hired for and although qualifications are, of course, considered, recruitment is largely based on racial or gender perspective. Thus, recruitment is addressed at an overall institutional level but also within the operational level of a given department. The university has tried to ensure that gender equity and equality are managed by committees, especially those specific

committees responsible for hiring (and firing) staff members. It is these committees that ensure that there is good representation and appropriate skills across the board. Some respondents felt that there was gender equity and equality at UCT when they were appointed yet others indicated that they benefited from the policy because they were fortunate enough to have experience and skills in male-dominated areas. For example, one pointed out that:

So, I'm very lucky in a Department that I'm in, in Chemical Engineering, there is a very good appreciation for these issues, and they're actually acted upon. We also have benefited from the fact that for many years now we had a female dean in our faculty. She is actually from my department and so that has gone a long way to sort of promoting and underpinning the gender equity issues we raised awareness of. And I think because in engineering it has traditionally been a male-dominated field. There's a lot of emphasis on which types of programmes there are for the promotion of women and making sure that we get more women also into our undergraduate classes and it's been slow to change but we shall get there, bit-by-bit. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UCT)

The response from this participant seems to suggest that the Engineering Department which is mostly male dominated has been able to come up with programs that can attract and promote more women into the Department.

Generally, findings from the study show that both institutions, UWC and UCT are cognisant of the Employment Equity (EE) Act, 55 of 1998 in terms of Section 25(1). Employment equity is the criterion that both institutions apply when recruiting and selecting their staff, but this varies based on the Department and Faculty. While these universities seem to adhere to gender equality and equity principles, issues of gender inequality remain prevalent. From the findings, racial tensions issues and profiling of female candidates remains a challenge particularly at UWC. These tensions are be prevalent at UCT than at UWC.

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As earlier indicated from the interviews (and literature) above, based on responses and analysis of data, institutions of higher education in South Africa are confronted with gender inequality and racial issues despite transformative national policies. Both UCT and UWC have come up with institutional policies to address issues on gender equality and inequality. Findings from the field research echoes the weaknesses in the National Legislative Framework which fails to explicitly explain race in relation to gender equality and equity at higher education institution in general.

Findings also show that both institutions under study have adopted and crafted institutional policies that address gender equality and equity issues at respective departments and faculties. In other words, this seems to indicate the sign of compliance with the National Legislative Framework and Employment Equity Act, 55 of 1998, Section 25(1).

Participants from UWC indicated that adherence to these policies vary between departments or even from one faculty to another. The reverse is also true in terms of gender representation. In the following interview, we see a reverse gender skew in the health sector. For instance, citing one example from the community and the health science faculty: "there are too many women in this faculty compared to others". This is possibly because the health care system in South Africa is generally dominated by women. Unsurprisingly, there are more women in this profession than in other professions. Traditionally, according to Zamanzade (2013), gender roles and discourses were perceived as caring which means that caring image symbolise femininity. Thus, gender practices significantly influence the way in which male and female nursing lecturers experience gender (Zamanzadeh, 2013). The idealised meanings of masculinity and femininity provide a rationale on how the nursing profession is structured. A study conducted by Ward & Grower, 2020; Teresa-Morales, Rodríguez-Pérez, Araujo-Hernández & Feria-Ramírez (2022) indicate that when men enter the nursing profession, they identify with departments that are masculine in nature which do not require basic nursing

responsibilities like bathing patients or changing bed linen. Men choose to work in departments like psychiatry, pharmacy, and theatre where there is less contact with patients. Thus, there is gendering in the nursing roles, departments, and positions (Ward & Grower, 2020; Teresa-Morales, Rodríguez-Pérez, Araujo-Hernández & Feria-Ramírez, 2022). It therefore justifies reason why more women are attracted to this type of work than men.

Correspondingly, participants who were based in the Community and Health Science Faculty indicated that their department is guided by the rules of the Health "Professional" Council. One of the participants thus indicated that:

> *I haven't really gotten into that component but if I look at our faculty, CHS Faculty, very definitely, I think we actually got too many women, our faculty is predominated by women that possibly health care system in South Africa is generally predominated by women that's perhaps a reflection of the broader societal allocation of women to these professions. (Female lecturer: interviewed August 2020, UWC)*

Some respondents indicated that when they joined UWC a couple of years ago most departments were predominantly male and posts were occupied by older professors who had been in charge for many years.

> *These policies exist but they (sic) seem to be still this male dominance and power imbalance that exist because of the pre dominance(sic) gender, but I realised I think it was last year when I attended an NRF workshop, it was one of these, I think it was about black academic advancement and the group that were invited were all female and I think the idea of only inviting females was to get people to talk about why they are not applying for these opportunities, then women were saying that you know, what we experience here is actually the deviation from the norm, where they feel that the opportunities are somehow limited by them being female. (Female lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC)*

Nonetheless, the number of female staff members has exponentially increased as a result of policies that promote female access to equal employment opportunities, and also because of the goal set by National Research Foundation (NRF), First Rand Foundation (FRF) to increase the number of suitably qualified Black Africans aspiring academics and academic staff with disabilities at South African public universities. The establishment of Black Academics Advancement Programme (BAAP) is based on the notion of parity at higher education institutions. Based on responses, a common narrative is that both institutions grapple with the issues of race and demography and that the implementation of the gender equity policy at UWC is not always taking place, compared to UCT. Still, the above response indicates that gender equality and equity as well as race is gaining recognition.

Responses from UCT indicate that the University hires people depending on the roles they are being hired for and sometimes, as opposed to always, departments look at demographics such as race or gender. UCT is keen on gender equity and equality and the university is also trying to consider other historical issues such as race and demography (e.g., age and disability). One participant indicated that:

> *Though policies that promote gender equity and equality are complex, the university is trying to ensure that even in programs such as engineering and construction which were rationally(sic) male-dominated, more and more women are being recruited. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UCT)*

As shown in the transcriptions above, the view of the participants indicates that, UCT is committed to a vision of transformation and the promotion of equity and inclusion. Moreover, UCT's Employment Equity Plan acknowledges that employment equity has been a strategy believed to advance efforts for employees from designated groups and that adherence to these principles means simplifying and streamlining the appointment process.

Essentially, the findings from both UWC and UCT show that despite racial and demographic challenges, both universities are operating in line with Chapter 10 of the South African Constitution, Sections 195 (h) and (i) which stipulates the cultivation of a positive personal and human resources practice which are reliant on the ability, objectivity and fairness as well as the need to address the imbalance of the past. In this way, it ensures a broad representation of all in South Africa (RSA, 1996).

4.3 The qualifications of women working in institutions of higher educations

Study findings show that women working at higher institutions are expected to qualify for criteria set in accordance with university's internal regulation and procedures. In theory then and in alignment with the principles of institutions of higher learning where criteria for promotion for both men and women are the same, this should mean providing flexibility in terms of time, especially for a female lecturer who is a wife or mother and who is expected to work full time because of other obligations, this means that, criteria for promotion for women should be flexible and not same with men as they have more responsibilities outside academia like (childbearing and being a mother and a wife) that gives extra load and limited time to publish. Furthermore, this reflects the essential differences between male and female lecturers in terms of outside pressure that impact females and make it more difficult to publish and meet the stringent requirements of the university in terms of its promotion criteria.

There is pressure on female lecturers to publish and supervise despite the constraints that they might experience at home - or in the workplace. Around this issue, although male staff also experience pressure around publications the essential differences between men and women in lifestyle, demands at home weighs more on females when it comes to performance in this domain. This is not to say to say female employees should be given lower requirements,

however promotion criteria should take into cognisance the extra responsibility on female lecturers who are mothers and wife.

Participants acknowledged that promotion is linked to supervision, research output (publications) as well as specific qualifications, preferably a PhD degree as well as the extent to which the staff member participates in local and international conference platforms. Unsurprisingly, our findings show that years of experience also determine whether or not a particular staff member will be promoted. A participant had this to say:

> *So, like with a senior lecturer role so in my case I say we need a PhD or equivalent industrial experience. So, if you have been working in the industry for ten years and you are really in a particular research area that is seen as same ability to conduct research and to engage with the university research at that level and in this case, you can become a senior lecturer without a PhD but then with significant industrial experience. (Female, lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC)*

From this response, it is clear that years of experience count towards promotion of staff without a PhD. For example, some professions such as Medicine and Accounting have long applied promotion possibilities all the way to full professorships without needing a PhD because of recognition of the practical nature of knowledge making appointment and promotion requirements regardless of field/discipline. In view of the above, UWC has developed a Five Year Employment Equity Plan from 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2025 as a framework for recruitment and selection for all appointments, retention and recruitment. Hence acts as a standing order directly linked to its EE strategy. To support University's transformation agenda regarding equity, a specific policy called Accelerated Promotions and Equity Council provides alternative appointment route to follow when filling an academic vacancy. This policy creates opportunities for the Committee to identify potential candidates from designated groups to fill vacant positions. Furthermore, the EE plan acts as a guide for promotion, attraction and

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retention known as Talent Stewardship a deliberate approach to attract, retain, diversify, develop people with required competency and capability to meet current and future needs of an organisational (Talent Stewardship Guide, Annexure E, Five years Employment Equity Plan 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2025). This therefore implies that the Talent Stewardship promotes retention by recognising and retaining staffs in this context female lecturers who have vast experience based on the practical nature of knowledge making.

However, there are instances where, despite years of experience, a female lecturer is still not promoted - contrary to the fact that experience correlates with promotion. In certain departments where experience does not equate to promotion:

> *But then there is a case in our Department, there is a lecturer in our department that was a supervisor, a contract staff member on part time for more than 20 years now and she is not a lecturer, she is not in a full-time position. And I have always questioned this whenever I have the opportunity with the HODs in the faculty that I found it unfair because she doesn't have a PhD and the only thing I can make is that she is not a permanent staff member because of that qualification, the PhD and which I feel unfair because of the value that she adds I mean she has been part of the rewriting of [the] curriculum, she has been in the department for more than 20 years and yet she is still not a permanent staff member. She is a contract lecturer that is employed every five years because she teaches on a particular program (female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC)*

There are differences between female and male academics in terms of publication. Male academics tend to produce more publications and they are promoted more rapidly, usually because they hold a PhD and/or a Professorship. Based on participant's experience, male staff members do not have same responsibilities outside of the workplace as their female

counterparts. This seems to suggest that this conclusion or assumption is based on participants' experience and therefore cannot be generalised.

It is evident from the responses of the respondents, that females are not simply academics but they also have obligations outside of the workplace, stating that "I am a mother" and "*I must go home and think about what children will eat and the like.*" This confirms what Liani, Nyamongo, & Tolhurst's (2020) study carried out in Ghana which posits that females struggles to advance in higher education owing to heavy workload such as administrative, teaching, mentorship, and childrearing amongst others, as compared to men who exclusively focus more on research and publication output. This puts men in an advantage position as they publish more and this creates the virtuous cycle where they then have higher chances for promotion. It is also clear that the pandemic further put a strain on females/women lectures in terms of publication who had to lecture online, mentor and at the same time attend to family-mother duties (Minello , Martucci & Lidia, & Manzo, 2020). Here we have the opposite, instead of virtouos cycles – leading to promotion – we have vicious cycles where women are penalised because they are not publishing. This leads to a downward spiral where women are not being promoted and therefore feel less engaged.

Participants from UCT indicated that the criteria for promotion differ from one department to another and also depends on the discipline of the staff members.

One participant indicated that:

> *Our Department got a lot of women in it that is not to say that gender doesn't have an impact. One of the things that happened post-apartheid was the opening of positions for white women in particular. I think this has had much influence in terms of anthropology and women in anthropology it really has opened the space and in our department, we got three, four actually older white women, sort of my age they are in the 50s and that's a bit abnormal, like it shouldn't be that way, we should have black*

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females as well, but the two we have at the moment are on contract but, that's what post-apartheid did. It opened those space for white females to be employed (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UCT).

The above extract explains how, to date, opportunities are given particularly to white women which dates back to the apartheid era where black female lecturers were and still are scarce in certain departments. One may find more females than males in one particular Department (as explained in the extract above) but not overall even though the institution as a whole should be catering for those segments of the population who were and still are historically disadvantaged. Another participant stated that:

What I think like [about] the way the employment works now, I don't think it's just about women it's about black women too and the work is to cultivate feminist institutions— we are not seeing that, what we['re] seeing is increased amount[s] of work you know so because as women as feminists we try to support our students and that means we take on a lot more work than male colleagues who don't necessarily do all that care work (female lecturer: interviewed November 2020, UCT).

The participant's response above shows how intersectionality of identity is positioned in academic institutions and as such provides a critical understanding of race and identity within the context of higher education. In addition, it also shows how female academics understand their own identity within this context and at the same time play the role of a mentor as highlighted in the response above. This narrative specifically examines the status of black academics in the white space of academia, how it can be understood in relation to issues of inclusion, equality, and social justice and how the processes of inclusion positions black academics females in the academia. This further echoes the standpoint theory which posits that women's opinions and experiences are voiced by themselves (Cochrane, 2013, Huirem, Lognathan & Patowari, 2020, Chauhan,2022).

Drawing from the same excerpt above on the point that women 'take *on a lot more work than male colleagues who don't necessarily do all that care work'* literature on care work in academia and the extent to which it is a burden on female rather than male academics and that it is not recognised within promotion structures is elucidated to support this argument.

Recent scholarly articles by Crabtree & Shiel (2019) and Francis & Stulz (2020), state that family responsibilities are some of the factors that delay or prevent the promotion of women at work, includes caring for children and other household activities. Also travelling overseas and lengthy stays in another country also accelerates promotion to professorial positions, however, women do not enjoy these advantages as this factor prevent women with families and children from applying for such promotion and advancement in their career. This geographic mobility is identified as an essential component for advancement in careers. Furthermore, women at senior lecturer levels take on multiple roles such as mentoring less senior academic staff. They see this as giving back to the community and they assist colleagues or students to write grants, apply for jobs, write articles and so forth, all of which are time consuming and mean that the female staff member who engages in this way is less likely to publish herself. Less senior academics are looking for mentoring so that they can be promoted and female staff take up this challenge and work in a collaborative way with others (Crabtree & Shiel, 2019; Francis & Stulz, 2020). These are just some of the additional responsibilities that women in higher education feel they have to do over and above their assigned academic duties. These efforts ironically deter or delay promotion.

While the majority of respondents felt that it was qualifications that counted as the key component for enabling women to teach in the university, some respondents stated its difference as it depends on the discipline. For example, the Accounting Department might employ someone with a master's degree because many students with junior degrees look for

jobs in both the public and private sector. That is why the department provides them with teaching opportunities after the completion of their Master's, while pursuing a PhD.

So, then it depends on the discipline that is bringing in people, so take someone like in accounting they mighty employ someone with a master's because it's very hard to find people with PhDs. (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UCT).

Research indicates that Sadiq, Barnes, Price, Gumedze & Morre (2019) women with high qualifications especially those in lower positions gets promoted faster. However, promotion varies across faculties, for example staff in Law and Commerce faculties gets promoted quicker than those in science. The university's efforts to provide regularity and fairness reflect different appointment and promotion criteria, like more weight is given to professional as opposed to research and teaching. Another possible explanation for different promotion criteria between faculties is based on the different weights rules provided for research achievements. These differences might well contribute to different promotion outcomes of staff members with similar profiles and records of achievement by different faculties (Sadiq, et.al., 2019).

In addition, a respondent stated that:

I think different faculties have different requirements for the posts, first of all, for example, in CHS (community and health science) faculty, I think we have amongst the most stringent requirements for certain positions whether you are a lecturer or a senior lecturer or whatever, they got very clear, very strict guidelines set down. So, when I applied for the post at that point basically, they were looking for people who were qualified, who had completed the course. The natural medicine course they had proper qualifications because their first graduates of the course only finished off in 2007 so you could see there were a very few people that would properly qualify to actually teach in the department. So, the regulatory body, the Health Professional Council of South

Africa, also has requirements that you need to have a minimum of three years post completion of course before you can actually lecture. (Female lecturer: interviewed, September 2020, UWC)

The respondent continued to clarify her situation by explaining the stringent policies that comes with having a lecturing position in certain departments.

So, you can understand the challenge in our department of finding people to actually lecture. So that was the first thing and so people were employed in our department, they didn't meet that criteria of three years post qualification to come back and teach. In essence, anyone who had completed the course and had some experience after that was a candidate to be considered to lecture in the department. For myself, I had been in the field of education for many years and so I had that previous experience that I had brought with me, and I had added qualifications although I hadn't completed that particular journey as well. So, I think at the time I had six degrees so that was a requirement and yeah so, you know in the faculty they were willing to accommodate us because of the unique challenges that our department faced (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UWC).

In the extract above, it is clear that certain departments have more stringent requirements than others and also, in the case of the above respondent, she needed certain degrees before being considered for promotion.

Another participant from UCT had a similar view:

Once you are in the university it's expected that you will get your PhD so if we say like we hire someone with a master's level or even working on their PhD the expectation is that you will do your PhD so that's what you will keep working towards. So, then it depends on the discipline that is bringing in people so take someone like in accounting

they might employ someone with a master's because it's very hard to find people with

PhDs. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UCT)

The above response suggests that there are differences exist across departments and faculties. Thus, promotion does not simply have to do with gender but also takes place within specific context, like that reflected in the extract above. Whereas different criteria than elsewhere are applied in the accounting department. Generally, findings show that qualifications have been used as a benchmark when considering women for lecturing positions in both universities. Apart from qualifications, women must show that they have completed publications, supervision, research output and have the necessary experience and academic discipline required by that department.

The findings suggest that women compete with men for educational attainment (Buchmann & DiPrete, 2006; Van Hek, Kraaykamp & Wolbers, 2016; Auletto, Kim & Marias, 2017; Evans, Akmal & Jakiela, 2021). This means that men get promoted quicker than females because of the extra work accompanying their academic pursuit/work which is not very common with men. A participant from UWC stated that:

Males tend to have more publications, or they tend to get promoted quicker because of
their titles but I also think it is because they get to do these things fast because they
don't have other responsibilities outside of work. I am not just an academic, I am a
mother, I must go home and be a mother, a house to look after and a lot to think about,
like what my child will eat. (Female lecturer: interviewed March 2020, UWC).

The above findings shows instances of how promotions are executed across departments and faculties. The next section explains factors that attract female lecturers to UCT and UWC as explained by participants.

4.4 Attraction of female lecturers to UWC and UCT as revealed by participants

Despite additional duties, some respondents (female) indicated that work ethics, commitment and passion for teaching attracted them to UWC.

> *And I enjoyed just the ethos of UWC and when I saw that they offered a natural medicine course I came back to do that again, it was a five-year course and I basically just stayed [laughs], you know the ethos underlies the university I can identify with. So, for me, that is something that attracts me to the university. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC)*

However, for others the reason for them being at UWC is that they did their postgraduate studies there and they enjoyed the ethos of the university so much that they decided to stay.

> *Well, I came from UWC and then I did my postgraduate studies at UWC, and I enjoyed just the ethos of UWC and when I saw that they offered a natural medicine course I came back to do that again, you know the ethos that underlies the university I can identify with. So, for me that is something that attracts me to the university (Female lecturer: interviewed June 2020, UWC).*

Another participant stated that:

> *Remember previously UWC was called a bush college and it really was a leader in terms of revolutionary anti-apartheid's developments and thoughts coming out of the university and so that is something I can really feel strongly attracted me. (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UWC).*

The above responses speak to the theme of attraction which according to Herzberg theory is a motivator- therefore as put forth by the participant as a reason that attracted them to higher institution. In this context, an employee will be fascinated to stay in a particular job due to motivating factors that influence job satisfaction and fulfilment (Henha, 2019). The importance

of motivation as discussed in the literature encourages retention and also leads to performance and provide satisfaction (Almaaitah et al., 2017 and Berry & Morris, 2008).

While environment may seem different, both UCT and UWC have similar attributes when it comes to the female workforce. The consensus from participants is that working in higher education offers women more flexibility in terms of time than what other workplaces might offer, despite their other roles of being housewives and mothers as well as working full time. One participant indicated:

> *So, I have always felt that women in academic positions tend to have more flexibility in order to balance between home life and work life. (Female lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC).*

For some, flexibility becomes one of the key factors for retention:

> *Flexibility in working hours that is the beginning and end. That for me is everything. the flexible working hours enable me to do my work in times that suit me, yes. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UCT).*

Another participant also indicated that "I always felt that women in academic positions tend to have more flexibility in order to balance between home life and work life".

Another participant supports this view and reflects on the issue as follows:

> *Umm, but what keeps me here I think is definitely that there is a small degree of flexibility that I can have, which would not be possible if I was working in a private practice or in a hospital. (Female lecturer: interviewed March 2020, UWC)*

While the literature argues that increases in managerial positions have restricted such flexibility, there is also ample discussion about the extent to which academic flexibility is a major draw card for those who want more time for parenting and other responsibilities beyond the workplace than is provided in most other professions. Reisinger and Fetterer (2021), workers consider flexibility more valuable than the level of salary or other perks. In other

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words, the ability to work from anywhere has become a top priority and motivator for many employees (Holcombe, Ehrhart & Ziegert, 2005). For instance, looking from the perspective of Vroom's Expectation Theory of Motivation, if an employee's personal goal at work is to build strong networks, working fully remotely or even partly has serious effects on this goal. Although flexibility in terms of working location does not exclude office work, as for some employees switching between the office and home is the right amount of flexibility.

Participants indicated there were many aspects they enjoyed in their current role and that a successful career also meant they could participate in every aspect within the university. This also meant more autonomy and choices regarding where they could go in their career .They also acknowledged the importance of making a difference and mentoring less experienced staff, this reflected in their response:

> *I think it is because of the history of the university and what they stand for because they were initially for the coloured community for it was the first coloured university, so that stood out for me, and I wanted to be part of the change. And that's why my goal is to get young ladies, as part of a research group and motivate them to do their PhD so that they can contribute towards the change in this university. Besides opportunity, it's a place of growth and they support. They give opportunities to grow, like promotion for women specifically. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC).*

Another participant expressed the passion for teaching as well:

> *I still worked in private practice for another few years after for about seven years and then I applied to UWC because I liked teaching ... uhm I always enjoyed in practice teaching people and training staff, so I enjoyed the teaching component of it. (Female lecturer. interviewed February 2020, UWC)*

Participants cited collegiality and support for each other as is clear from the extract below:

What happens is we work as a department to support each other. So, if, for example, a colleague is pregnant and needs maternity leave, then we just shift all our teaching around, so they get at least six months off from teaching responsibility. (Female lecturer: interviewed June 2020, UWC)

The university structure acknowledges female staff in this respect because one who has had a child is entitled to six month of maternity leave. The difference here is that the university is more generous in this respect than other workplaces in the country. Hence, an employee may commence maternity leave at any time from four weeks before the expected due date of birth unless otherwise agreed. This is also a source of motivation for some employees since it enhances shared relationships between co-workers. Those who share a strong bond are able to transfer information faster – due to presumably the sharing a similar point of view – and trust with each other more easily and overall work better together (Yang, et al., 2021).

Additionally, a general perception from respondents is that women are attracted because of opportunities such as tuition rebates in case you have children, research, travelling for conferences, bursaries, research collaboration with other universities and community engagement.

I was in desperate need of a permanent position, though I didn't really see myself as an academic, but I had to take this on and also seeing that my children would eventually go to varsity I thought okay that will be a greater opportunity because I was able to get a bursary for them. (Female lecturer: interviewed November 2020, UWC)

Meanwhile, participants from UCT indicated that it is the history, identity and culture that attracted them to the institution. Some are attracted because of affirmative action and the transformation process that is taking place, particularly the opportunity to accommodate black women in a historically white institution.

I came back to UCT for studies and because of its history and identity. I also felt very comfortable getting into the PhD and further an opportunity for postdoc and in the process a contract position came up. However, I may emphasise that UCT has a much-refined culture which I enjoy. (Female lecturer: interviewed May 2020, UCT) .

This concurs with the study of (Saurombe, Barkhuizen, & Schutte , 2017) identify as key elements that forms part of an appealing higher education that could attract and retain current and future talent, this include: work and the surrounding environment a conducive and appealing internal and external environment will attract academic staff members in the HEI, the culture and identity of the institution, an accommodative and attractive organisational culture and identity (Saurombe, Barkhuizen, & Schutte, 2017). This also supports the work of (Slaughter et al., 2005), who posit that people get attracted to a job that corresponds with their personalities, history, gender, participation, or simply social norms.

Passion for personal growth and the level of engagement with other colleagues as the reason why she was attracted to UCT:

I think what's important is the way you feel you are treated, I feel treated very well, when I say treated you know do your colleagues see you as an equal, do they engage with you as someone that they need in that department. And you are given opportunities to grow and so that's very important to me especially also the opportunities to grow yourself, feeling like someone believes in you is very important. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UCT)

Barkhuizen, Rothmann & Vivjer (2014) suggest that individual's involvement in institutional activities such as committee meetings, research, supervision, teaching and learning amongst others are important factors that promote and encourage engagement at academic institutions. Another participant stated job security as one of the reasons that attracted her to UWC:

Well jobs are scarce you know so if you have a job you want to keep it you will do what

you have to do to keep your job. I mean I was a person who was interested in research,

but I had to do my Master's in order to stay at my job otherwise they would have to take

in other people. (Female lecturer: interviewed June 2020, UWC)

Most of the responses supports are in line with UWC's institutional operating plan (2009) which provides a very broad framework for attraction and the development of excellent talent that enables the university to realise its vision as well as achieving its strategic goals. The university also plays a distinctive academic role in South Africa through critical and creative ways that seek to building an equitable and vibrant society. Concurrently, the UCT's Employment Equity Plan acknowledges that the recruitment process has been a strategy believed to attract staff for it provides an enabling and supportive environment, especially for women from designated groups who are encouraged to work at the university.

Furthermore, UWC appeals on its proud history of participating in the struggle against apartheid and today the institution continue to strive for the promotion of open access for education as well as contributing to build an equitable and vibrant society. Thus, the implementation of Employment Equity plan of 1 June 2016–31 May 2020, provides an insight towards the setting of practical objectives aimed at identifying barriers that contribute to underrepresentation of staff members from the disadvantaged groups, including the identification of other employment circumstances that may unfavourably lead to discernment of an employee from being underrepresented because of gender, colour or race.

However, UCT upholds the principle of an inclusive, engaged, and research-intensives set out in its five strategic goals of Vision 2020. Further, UCT is committed to a vision of transformation that promotes equity and inclusive recruitment, selection, development, and retention. Furthermore, UCT's Employment Equity Plan is premised on the recruitment and selection policies that are practical to the UCT community.

In summary, both universities (UWC and UCT) strive to uphold and promote the policy of equity and fairness to attract, retain and maintain excellence. Therefore, the next section will investigate the reasons for their retention in both universities.

4.5 Reasons for retention of female lecturers in higher institution as revealed by participants from UWC and UCT

Staff retention is well documented although institutional differences exist between different universities. For example, Werner et al. (2012), Mushemeza (2016), Barkhuizen et al. (2020) stressed that retention is based on improved productivity to the institution's competitive advantage. It is interesting to note that most of those who contributed or participated in this study indicated they did not experience challenges related to retention. All the factors of retention (effective commitment, job characteristics, career development and training, a sense of belonging, qualifications, support systems, flexibility working environment, being valued, and recognised, engagement, and opportunities to grow) influenced respondents' intention to stay. A participant had this to say:

Besides opportunities, it's like, it is a place of growth, and they support women, they give these opportunities. There is always promotion for women specifically. (Female lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC)

Another participant adds that:

Opportunities for personal not just personal, what I mean is professional development opportunities to grow in different ways and different levels from within the department faculty and within broader university. I've been able to operate in many different roles and positions and then there is a lot of flexibility you know one is not just tied to an office between eight and five every day well you have to be there five days a week there's been opportunities to travel, to go to conferences, opportunities to interact with colleagues all around the world to interact with students from all over the world, very

rich experience at UWC and I value that so I've stayed. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC)

Another participant relates more to how she is being treated:

The way you feel treated and from my perspective I feel treated very well, when I say treated is do your colleagues see you as an equal, do they engage with you as someone that they need in that department? Are you given opportunities to grow and so that's very important to me especially also the opportunities to grow yourself. Yeah, feeling like someone believes in you is very important. And so that's been very important for me, the other thing for me I see potential to grow especially as a female young academic. (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UCT).

Another participant stated a similar view:

I love my colleague[s], my colleagues are kind, they are professional, they are generous, they are supportive it's not perfect, no place is perfect, but I've worked in other places where people screamed at each other. I think you are in the space with people who are decent, and they treat you with respect and kindness it makes a huge difference. And the work is good like I love what I do, I love my students. (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UCT)

One participant stated:

Honestly, UWC creates a very comfortable environment for its staff. I stayed there because I'm very passionate about what I do. I'm very passionate about learning and UWC creates a lot of opportunities for staff to learn and grow so you don't actually get bored in your job because there's always something that you need to do, something you need to learn, something you need to master. I can honestly say the job keeps me on my toes daily there's always something new something you did not know. So yeah, to think about if UCT had to offer me a job I will first think really hard if I really want to go

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there because I'm comfortable where I am and I think that's what UWC offers, makes

its staff comfortable in a sense that it offers you security it offers you a place to grow

all of that, UWC makes you grow. (Female lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC)

Job satisfaction and a supportive environment are all important factors highlighted by
participants.

Oh, yeah it has to be a supportive environment, it has to be an environment that

understands us as a woman, and again I speak for myself and others that you need to

have flexibility to ensure that home life is in control. People who actually listen to you

and people who take you seriously, so I have always felt here at UWC, in my

department, there are people who do listen to me and people who do respect me and it

goes both ways. So, it is a supportive environment and a respective environment… an

environment that doesn't promote men over women. (Female lecturer: interviewed

February 2020, UWC).

Based on the numerous responses stated above, respondents reflected on working in a
conducive environment and one that promotes and encourages retention and career
development or growth. Importantly respondents viewed retention and engagement for
example, as a valuable factors to be implemented at different levels within a university. In
addition, participants expressed positive feelings about their job satisfaction which
corroborates with Herzberg's (2003), Owler & Morrison (2015), and Almaaitah et al., (2017),
who assert that organisations should consider positive value of intrinsic motivation factors
especially when developing retention reward systems. Armstrong (2014) considers non-
financial financial factors as critical for retention of employees.

Some participants form both institutions pointed to job scarcity and financial reasons as
motivators to stay:

Well jobs are scarce you know so if you have a job you wanna keep it you will do what you have to do to keep your job. I mean I was a person who was interested in research, but I had to do my Master's in order to stay at my job otherwise they would have to take in other people. (Female lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC)

For some, the students are the main factor that keeps them there as well as the fact that it appears to be a good working environment

I think that I find a place in my department I experience the sense of belonging and also, I enjoy the work, I enjoy my students, the teaching. I find that these students have a great appreciation for learning and I think it's probably because of the students' poor background[s] the fact that they may have struggled to be at an institution so there is a lot more commitment to the work and to mostly the content that we teach, there is also a very respectful nature amongst colleagues in the department there are many opportunities for growth through the workshops, there is(sic) also opportunities for funding and I feel a great sense of support from the department and of course from faculty towards myself and my colleagues in the department and I just enjoy the work at the end of the day I enjoy the research that I do, the students that I teach, the colleagues, the friends that I have made, so all of those factors they contribute to my actually wanting to stay here, there is a sense of purpose in terms of what I do. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC)

Another positive response regarding attitudes to retention at UWC is:

I would say I do have a good relationship with people. I keep myself out of political issues, I try not to get involved in place[s] where I should not be, I feel the very key that keeps me in the place, the students are the motivating factor. And then slightly in our working environment I love being at UWC, I've always been there, it almost like a home for me. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC)

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From responses above, participants specifically indicated their wish to improve student academic lives, and their community at large. Thus participants enjoy interacting with students for not only academic work but also social problems as Strauss (2012) notes, they too were committed to empowerment of others. Participants also believed that knowledge sharing makes a significant contribution towards enhancement of the broader student community and beyond. Participants fitted into the aspirations of academics with career expectations and a clear understanding (and commitment) to what is required in an academic environment (Grobbelaar & De Wet, 2016).

The question of retention is individual and department specific. For example, some respondents felt that it is the question of being valued and recognised, finding fulfilment about what you do, that gives room to grow as an individual. This also creates loyalty, interest in research, satisfaction, passion for teaching, commitment to student mentorship and a culture of care within their Department – all of which are considered to be valid reasons for staying at UWC.

> *I enjoy what I'm doing, I love the work that I do at the university I think UWC gives you a lot of scope to develop yourself. I've gone through from my bachelor undergraduate bachelor's degree through my masters through my PhD. I've been able to be head of department. I've worked in many different capacities so there's a lot of room for development, personal development, and opportunities if you want to take them and I did and UWC has been very good to me, and I've been very loyal. (Female lecturer: interviewed May 2020, UWC)*

They also indicated that it is not simply about a good pay cheque but that being valued is what matters. Moreover, it was also emphasised that the university as an institution is a better option than working in the private sector.

In the words of one respondent:

I can say, Ok I don't have class tomorrow, I will stay at home but I will do my work by email so I can work remotely. I can say I can finish this marking. So that kind of flexibility and understanding I have here made that part of my work easier which I could not enjoy while working with the private sector. (Female lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC)

Respondents from both institutions highlighted similar concerns regarding retention. They felt that the reason they stayed was pertinent to their own cases and departments where there were opportunities to network with their colleagues, work closely together, feelings that they were in a "good" Department coupled with a feeling that they were well qualified and appreciated and that there was stability and opportunities to grow academically. One participant said:

I love being at UCT, okay the motivation to stay for [a]longer period of time is because I have a family and I want the stability if I were on my own and my kids are growing up now then I would consider moving to other universities. A lot of my colleagues would go for conferences, they decided not to travel as much, so there is an aspect of gender, we don't travel as much we don't go to conferences as much, it's because of our children. (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UCT).

From the above assertions, it can be concluded that quality of women in Higher Education is largely dependent on their qualifications, involvement in high-quality research, and a host of other factors discussed earlier. While participants disagree, money is the sole motivating factor, Dube and Ngulube (2013) argue that an attractive pay package could attract and retain employees. However, Mabaso and Dlamini (2017) indicate that individual wages, other financial fringe benefits cannot influence academic staff to move from one employer to another. This seems to contradict the study of Kinnear and Sutherland (2001), Chiboiwa et al. (2010) and Ahmed & Ali (2021) who state that salary and financial benefits positively relate to employee retention. Chiboiwa et al. (2010) also argue that money has never a good

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motivator for retention since people attach value to the work they enjoy over and above a monetary value. These ideas are reflected in the following extract:

The reason why I got employed was because my field is very specialised there's not too many people so when they needed a lecturer there were very few of us, so I was in private practice and not many people are willing to leave private practice for UWC because the private practice offers financial freedom where UWC doesn't allow that. You have a lot of work most of the days you are busy, so for employment they look at the experience in your field I was out of UWC for quite a while then I was running a successful private practice service at the same time so that was me, I was interested, I came because I wanted to do the teaching part of my career and build on that part. (Female lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC)

The above findings supports the theory on job embeddedness which states that people stay in their jobs, even when there are alternatives and opportunities to move to another job (Mitchell et al., 2001; Sekiguchi et al., 2008; Ng & Feldman, 2009). This theory further states that employees will only leave when they feel dissatisfied with their current work environment (Mahoney, 2005). Hence, employees who are satisfied with their job are less likely to attract to another job but those who are dissatisfied with the working conditions and have alternative work are likely to leave (Harman et al, 2007). This is echoed in Herzberg's (2003) duality theory of job satisfaction which indicates that an individual's decision to stay in the workplace is based on job satisfaction (Nel et al., 2011). It is also echoed in the work of George (2015) and Mathimaran & Kumar (2017). According to my own findings, pay is not a reason to move to another job. This is precisely what women in both UCT and UWC have indicated though differences in settings and dynamics exist between them.

Another participant stated that:

For me personally I always wanted to be a teacher because I was really good at understanding concepts and passing them on to other people, so they understand better. So, I was very good at that, one of my strongest points, so when I was offered the opportunity to study at a university UWC, being a teacher was a strong pull towards that, also the financial stability was also a very strong pull to that. In private practice you earn more than you do at UWC but it's a very unstable environment because you are basically self-employed. So, it depends on your effort it depends on your time etc. So, it's a very unstable sort of environment whereas UWC, besides the passion for teaching, it offers you that financial stability as well so those are the two reasons for me personally why I sort of come here. Furthermore, I do feel that UWC is more supportive of their staff, in terms of growth in terms of employment in terms of promotion, UWC is more open with their criteria so they tell you this is what we are looking for this is why you didn't make it, so you know why you are rejected but for UCT specifically you have no clue why they rejected you, what qualifications were missing. If you apply for a post that you felt, you were more than qualified/overqualified you will not get a response. (Female lecturer: interviewed June 2020, UWC).

Findings above demonstrates that there must be an establishment of support system that ensures conducive work environment in an institution and one that provides options for growth and career development for retention of women in higher institutions.

4.6 How female lecturers engage at both UWC and UCT

Barkhuizen, Rothmann & Vivjer (2014) suggest that teaching equipment, engagement in challenging tasks provision of assistants (tutors) promotes work engagement at academic institutions and as such equips academics with basic skills to perform duties effectively. In addition, issues like reward systems, fairness, personal development, open communication, and capacity building fosters engagement. Hanaysha (2015) affirms that engagement has positive effect on commitment and productivity. This assertion can be exemplified in this study which indicates that women are engaged in committee meetings, teaching and research at both departmental and faculty levels, supervision, writing of papers, community engagement, and carrying out collaborative projects with other universities.

Participants indicated they play an active role in policy and decision-making, at departmental and faculty levels and also engage with other departments both within and outside the universities. This can be seen in the following response:

> *Everyone here has a responsibility, all the staff members are part of the committee, part of teaching and learning. Everyone has got equal responsibility. I think our faculty produced the greatest number of publications. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC)*

Nonetheless, the findings above contradict Ramoiah's (2014) study in which postulates that women's engagement and participation are limited, especially at different social, cultural and institutional levels which is seen as an obstacle for successful engagement of women, particularly black female academics activities in South African Higher Education Institutions. However, finding concurs with Barkhuizen, Rothmann & Vivjer's (2014) study that claims that individual involvement in institutional activities such as committee meetings, research, supervision, teaching and learning is a factor that gives women an opportunity to participate and engage at various institutional levels.

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Others claimed that most (if not all) Deans are men and felt there should be a better gender balance in this regard. This seems to indicate that promotion at the higher echelon is unequal since most real decision-making may happen at an upper-management level which often disregards input from lower levels. However, one participant had this to say:

I have just been appointed Deputy for the Assessment Committee and that's a little bit weird because I don't have a PhD and its normally an Associate Professor to hold that position, but I came, and I questioned the hierarchy initially. I literally said the hierarchy is outdated. I said people should be appointed in positions and groomed to fill certain positions, just because you don't have a PhD doesn't mean that you don't add value. (Female lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC).

This extract indicates a sense of responsibility, and this participant was able to achieve her goal of becoming Deputy for the Assessment Committee. This is a case where gender is not necessarily the determining factor for promotion. The participant has displayed a sense of responsibility, she was fit for the position and decided to voice out her opinion, despite not having a PhD. Based on her experience in the industry before coming to academia she was confident that she qualifies for the position. Thus, although having a PhD is seen as one of the criteria for promotion, there are exceptions.

Women are represented in key management position which further echoes their level of engagement. A participant from UCT states the following:

Yeah so, I sit on all levels, Department, Faculty and University and that seems that over the years and all those committees there's always fairly good gender balance. I can't think of any exceptions without that, and you know you very much treated regardless of gender it's a very sort of open equitable space. I've never experienced anything that's made me uncomfortable from a gender perspective. (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UCT)

A similar response came from a participant in another Faculty, that of Community and Health Science (CHS) which constitutes mostly women. Here women are significantly represented and constitute the majority. They are actively involved in policy formulation and decision-making activities at the Faculty levels. Another participant from UWC points out that:

You know departments nominate different people to sit on the different committees so you can accept that or not and yes, I serve on faculty-level committees, I've served on institutional level committees and in our department as well. I have done all of that and yeah and I must say from the committees that I have served on most of them were dominated by women. So, I think maybe it is just in the faculty that we are, probably in the science faculty you will find a different scenario. But anything coming from the CHS faculty it is very much driven by women. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC).

On the same note, another participant adds that:

Yes, definitely there is a lot of consciousness in terms of balance in committee meetings, but because as I said earlier, women are almost overrepresented at academic institutions and certainly at UCT there are a lot of women, with the exception of a few faculties' women are certainly involved. I don't have statistic here; I'm guessing based on my experience and certainly the law faculty women are involved at every level and you can see the DVC and there is a lot of senior women in the executives so yeah I think women are certainly involved. (Female lecturer: interviewed May 2020, UCT)

From the above excerpt clearly, there is a level of gender representation and that women are practically involved and engaged at different levels. It is worth reiterating that some departments have more women as lecturers than men.

Another participant stated that:

Look, participation obviously there is enough participation, we have different committees inside the faculty that we serve on, we also have faculty boards which are the biggest form of meetings, where all faculty levels have to be present on, and where you can't say you know your piece but there are always dominant voices, you know. Maybe some female lecturers, they do not want to speak maybe they are afraid, they think what they will say is not going to be accepted, you know, mostly those who are at professorial level and so on, their voices are noted, who have stayed longer at UWC their voices are the more dominant. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC).

The inclusion of women, as per participants' responses, supports Vyas-Doorgapersad's (2015) view on gender equality especially the reflections on situations where women and men should have equal opportunities to realise full human rights and potential in terms of gender equality at the workplace. One can conclude that to a greater extent women at both institutions participate in decision-making at various levels without prejudice.

4.7 Factors that have resulted in women being promoted

In response to one of the research questions, this section examines the promotion of women in higher institution. Responses from the participant shows that the majority of female lectures in general and women in particular are promoted based on a number of factors such as: qualifications, research output, publications and work experience amongst others. For some, promotion is based on recommendation from the Appointment Committee at the Departmental/Faculty level, with criteria such as transparency, discipline, attending regular workshops, attending international conferences which together form part of the package that encourages promotion. Although this is a normal trend in higher institutions irrespective of gender, it is important in this study to understand how this plays a role in relation to engagement

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and how it fosters promotion. This can be analysed through the voice and experiences of the participants. For example:

> *I mean you need to produce your research; you need to work towards your postgraduate qualifications, these kinds of things are expected at any institution and of course you got supervision as well. So, you know you need to meet all the required criterion. Well at the faculty, they have got a very established set of criteria that applies to all departments. They do look at your qualification, but they also look whether you've been supervising research, so if you've been supervising Master's or PhD students, all of those things accumulatively would account for you to as well as your publications, these are kinds of things they look at. (Female lecturer: interviewed June 2020, UWC).*

The above quote supports Mushemeza's (2016) study which states that academic environment requires highly trained experienced staff to build a strong well-functioning university. Therefore, appointment, promotion and recruitment of qualified candidates must reflects parity or equality.

Promotion is not always easy as explained in the following extract:

> *Well, apparently the guidelines have changed for promotion. So before, for example, my colleagues were promoted to senior lecturer without a single publication, yet for me I am going to need to have multiple publications and peer reviewed conference proceedings and journals. (Female lecturer: interviewed February 2020, UWC)*

The above extract supports Amundson's (2007) who claims that people are promoted based on their participation but not limited to workshops, research and mentorship. It should also be accompanied by experience and involvement in activities that leads to learning and ongoing skills development in an institution. As the literature has shown, it is also attributed to a university's culture, social atmosphere and work–life balance.

Other respondents expressed the same view and states that:

I mean it's a lot of hard work, you've got to manage your family, you've got to manage your workload, you know it takes a lot out of you to manage to keep all balls in the air at the same time. It's like I mean you need to produce your research, you need to work towards your postgrad qualifications, these kinds of things are expected at any institution, yeah, of course you got supervision as well. So, you know you need to meet all those criteria. (Female lecturer: interviewed April 2020, UWC).

Similarly, another participant responds:

And I am a single parent I am really tired still don't have time to deal with all these things. Today for instance I couldn't get my day going and when I started going on I am like oh my gosh I have so much to do. My daughter is trying to do her work, but she is very independent that's fine, but she is ten. Um, so you know its busy and for me I just feel like the expectations from the academia is sometimes a bit much especially for women, I think a bit excessive. And very often institutions don't consider some of the additional balls that you have to juggle. You have to be a partner, you have to be a mother, you have to be a supervisor, you have to be a colleague, you have to be a friend, you have to make time for your family. (Female lecturer: interviewed November 2020, UCT).

The demands put on female lecturers are well expressed in the responses above. Despite the extra duties outside academia that fall on the shoulders of women, the response above indicates that women still have to publish in order to qualify for promotion. This correlates with Mashaba's (2022) study in which he posits that balancing work-life balance and household activities is challenge for women educators because the home responsibilities are complex to balance these with work obligations which often leave little or no time for themselves. Despite the many hurdles, some women are promoted as a result of their commitment and the extra support they get from their female colleagues:

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I would say women are committed to what they are doing, there are women who within the university in different departments that are motivating for other females to be engaged in research as I've given you the example of my mentor and there are also others from other departments that will be publishing you know and then he would want to be close to those people and that's how most females will be progressing because you will be seeing your colleagues doing things and then you will be curious about how they're doing it compared to males within the faculty they are not engaging so easily in the research activities compared to female and then you would see females developing and growing in the field of research and academia because of curiosity and the wanting to engage with others. (Female lecturer: interviewed September 2020, UWC).

The pressure on women has led to some women seeking for opportunities elsewhere due to the workload and pressure to publish – where women find it more difficult to deal with the pressure to "publish or perish:"

Then we have got other ones who have been looking for jobs elsewhere because they don't like the pressure of hard working. What happens here is you do your job well, then they give you more work. (Female lecturer: interviewed October 2020, UWC)

Ironically, as is shown above, there is even more work given to a woman who might already be under considerable pressure at the workplace. This means that the level of workload at the institution can equally be affected due to increasing job demands which requires high output in terms of research, teaching and social responsibility (Geoffrey & January-Enkali, 2019). In this case it is almost as though engagement is forced – one must be engaged otherwise one is likely to perish.

It is important to try and understand just how participants manage work pressure and time. Another participant had this to say:

A lot of staff left the Department since I started and the main reason is just because academia is just overwhelming it's not for everybody so it's a lot of adjusting, the stress is extremely high. But if your passion is not higher than the stress you gonna fall so thankfully my passion for the last ten years has been higher that(sic) the stress level obviously that's the reason why I'm still here but I know some people they cannot handle this amount of stress, they can't handle the demands of academia, the demands of academia are quite high generally and it is more—it weighs heavy on females because of our additional responsibilities, responsibilities at home, family responsibilities, it weighs heavier on female[s] and that's why some of the females or most of the females have left quite quickly within my department. I've noticed, it's because they just can't cope, it's just too much, it's just academia as a whole is just very demanding (Female lecturer: interviewed August 2020, UWC)

Respondents also indicated that it is not only personal issues that interfere as it is often to do with qualifications or the lack of a track record in publishing journal articles that leave women behind. Apart from the pressure to publish there is also the issue of contracts. Many employees have been working on contract for a very long time without being promoted and this made them feel marginalised and in some cases results in them exiting from the university

This is captured in the following response:

Well, I think maybe also, there is a lot of people who have been on contract for a very long period of time and I think that could also be a factor for some people to leave the university and you know you need some security rather than having contracts every year and you don't know exactly what the contract is going to be (Female lecturer: Interviewed, June 2020, UCT)

Not being a permanent staff member seems to be a challenge at both universities as it leads too job insecurity. If one feels too job insecure one might choose 'exit' as the only available option.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of the findings from female lecturers in two institutions of higher education in Cape Town and considered the factors influencing their attraction, engagement and retention. Although there have been efforts made to address gender inequality in higher institutions there are a host of issues, including cultural and institutional norms that attract, retain and improve their levels of engagement in higher institutions. This study investigated aspects of engagement of female lecturers at both UWC and UCT. Study findings indicates that female academics are moderately engaged, and therefore, interventions are needed to move the current staff engagement levels from moderate to high. It also means carefully examining the factors that lead to engagement or disengagement as the case might be. Results also confirms that flexibility of working hours, institutional history, qualifications, support systems, good working environment, research, and supervision amongst others are critical for retention of female lecturers in higher institutions. It has been possible to identify broad themes from the narratives which collectively provide a basis for thinking about how female lecturers in academic function in these institutions and how they feel about being part of these institutions. Each participant responded differently and gave reasons why they chose a particular institutional environment that they are working. Many have similar experiences, but many also have very distinct experiences that differ from one institution to another, one faculty or department to another and from one individual to another.

Most importantly, one would think that a salary increase would motivate an employee to stay in a particular job, but surprisingly this is not the case as in this study salary did not motivate female lecturers to stay in the university. Other factors were seen to be more important than the pay package, although in this study the question with regards to salary was raised but most respondents did not see salary as a critical factor for motivation. On the contrary, monetary benefits which should serve as a motivating factor for employees to stay within an institution, falls low on priority scale compared to career development, work environment .

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UWC and UCT have a developed well-functioning structures that are organised and coordinated, defined policies on recruitment, selection and retention as well as policies that promote gender equity and equality. It is clear that both universities play a pivotal and critical role in the recruitment and selection processes within the institutions. Given the two universities very different historical trajectories, namely that one was a predominantly white (advantaged) university (UCT) and the other historically black/coloured (disadvantaged) university (UWC), it is somewhat surprising that experiences are not so different from one institution to another. There is sufficient evidence that recruitment and selection practices can contribute either positively or negatively towards the effectiveness and functionality of an institution and or organisation in both cases. There is a perception amongst respondents regarding the absence of policies in recruitment and selection processes particularly when it comes to female lecturers who have a lot to handle apart from being in academia. Thus, there is a need to put mechanisms and/or policies in place to address the identified challenges raised by respondents, to ensure a thorough understanding of the challenges and opportunities and to develop and improve strategies to provide more support to female lecturers, especially in higher institutions.
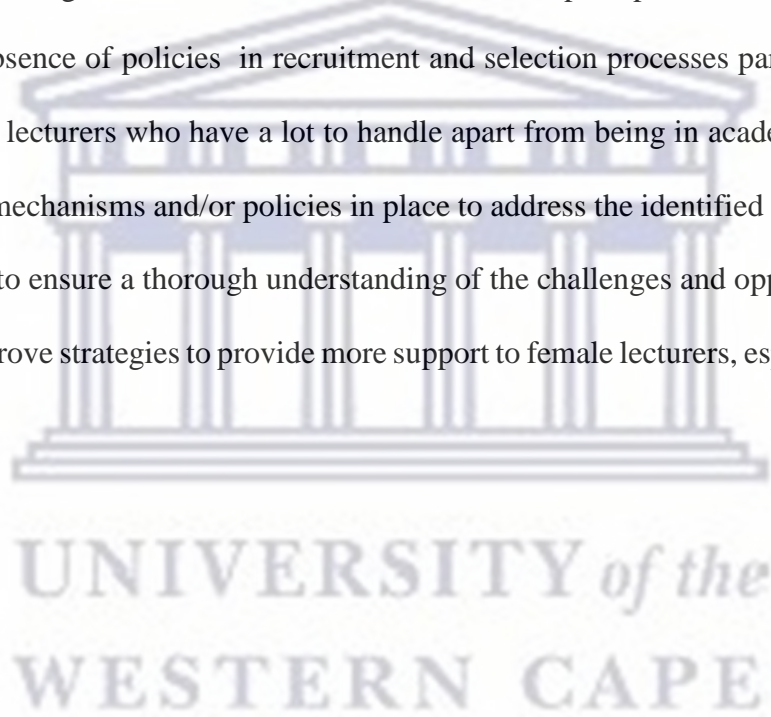
Chapter Five

5.1 Introduction: Findings, discussion and recommendations

Chapter one of this study introduced the research, outlined the study's objectives and significance. The main objective of this research was to determine the factors that attract retain and engage female lecturers in two distinct institutions of higher learning, UWC and UCT. The participants highlighted the following issues that have to do with attraction, retention and engagement of female lecturers in higher institutions: flexibility in working hours, shared identity/race, teamwork qualifications, working environment, opportunities to grow, engagement, research, supervision, teaching, and learning, engaging with other departments both within and outside the universities.

Based on the Commission for Gender Equality, (2017) South Africa since 1994 implemented socio-democratic legislation and policies to address issues on gender equality and historical injustices particularly in higher institutions. However, women continue to be underrepresented not only in managerial positions, but in higher institutions as well. In the context of this study, the problem statement captures the main area of concern to be undertaken in this study. Post 1994, institutions of higher learning were grappling with transformation of adopting a new pathway of teaching and learning therefore, universities in South Africa embarked on a mission to ensure that more women become absorbed into the higher education teaching systems. Despite these efforts there has been limited or no statistics to indicate attraction, retention and engagement of women in higher institutions in general and no studies on UWC and UCT in particular. Although existing literature speaks generally about gender, however concerns on attraction, retention, and engagement of female lecturers at UWC and UWC have not been critically explored. There is some literature that covers the notion of retention, engagement or attraction in the workplace in general but does not focus on institutions of higher learning in particular. Where there has been some focus on institution of higher learning, the

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three concepts, which we believe sit very well together and add insights that would not otherwise be there, are not packaged together.

The study therefore contributes to concepts on attraction, retention engagement of female lecturers in institutions of higher learning, particularly UWC and UCT.

Chapter two is a summary of literature, its outlined and examined conceptual and theoretical framework to understand attraction, engagement, and retention by drawing on existing research and debates that speaks to these concepts. In addition, it explains suitable theories selected to investigate attraction, engagement, and retention of women in higher institutions. This chapter further looks at the international, African and national perspective of women Higher education, and gender equality globally, in Africa and in South African in particular. This is important as South Africa has a very specific history of segregation, exclusion and inclusion and it is important to see whether and in what ways this history impacts on institutions of higher learning, such as UWC and UCT.

Although institutional culture and expectations result in the different experiences between different groups of women, many also grapple with their own personal aspirations, and it is not always easy to separate between the personal and the professional boundaries when it comes to experiences in the workplace. Duties in the home (as mother, wife, sister) and obligations that society places on women through culture, are 'carried' into the workplace and these boundaries thus become quite blurred.

Thus, paying full attention to experiences that might be negative, this study overall presents a positive narrative on women in higher education a deviation from negative social beliefs about gender discrimination that are usually researched across the globe. The narratives in this study, as expressed by the participants, are told based on personal and authentic experiences. These experiences are colored by the institutional policies that do – or do not – affect the way that

women might be attracted, engaged or remain in the workplace. Workplace policies are also embedded in National (and global) priorities all of which make recommendations to strengthen and promote more engagement amongst female lecturers, academic staffs in general. We see a more nuanced reality – that it is not necessarily policy and practice that drives promotion – engagement, attraction or retention – but it is often more personalized or nuanced stories that women talk about what how their workplace acknowledges them and what it has taken for them to be recognized or promoted.

This study further investigated a more comprehensive – and nuanced - understanding of factors that attract women to higher educational institutions, the reasons for their retention and their levels of engagement and participation at various levels within the institutions. Higher education institutions, informed by policy, create opportunities for women to act on. In turn, higher educational institutions are empowered and are able to challenge gendered social structures and identities.

Chapter three discussed the methodology. It explained how participants were selected, how data was collected and presented, the research design, process and tools. It reported on how respondents participated in in-depth semi-structured interviews which focused on aspects of their experiences on attraction, retention, and engagement at UWC and UCT, promotion and progression; aspects of career development; the positioning of respondents and how their identities affect their role in the academy; and the different types of support structures in their institutions. Furthermore, literature review informed the research design, validity and reliability by combining empirical data collected through qualitative semi-structured interviews method to address research questions and objectives that provided different definitions on attraction, engagement, retention of women in higher institutions.

Chapter four presented and discussed the findings and themes that emerged from the interviews, these findings were interpreted in relation to existing literature. The analysis as discussed in chapter four reflects on University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town policies on gender equality and guidelines for recruitment and selection. Findings indicate that factors such as flexibility in working hours, shared identity/race, teamwork qualifications, working environment, opportunities to grow, engagement, research, supervision, teaching and learning, engaging with other departments both within and outside the universities promotes the attraction, retention and engagement of female lecturers in higher institutions at both UWC and UCT.

Institutions are guided by their policies on recruitment and selection practices implementation of gender equality and equity and yet these more formal policies and practices are not the key determinants of appointment and selection. This could be attributed to the increased concern that some female lecturers are either not aware of the policies or whether these policies are implemented or not in the recruitment process. Gender, race and class are issues taken into consideration but there are also more nuanced examples of attraction, engagement and retention that came out of the empirical work.

The findings of the study show that there has been sufficient attention to drafting recruitment policies. However, not much is taken into consideration when it comes to policies on gender equality and equity. The results of this study show that University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town comply commensurately with the institutional policies on recruitment and selection. The study also reveals that both UWC and UCT's selection panels are representative of both race and gender as prescribed by the Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998. It seems as though the policies operate 'in the ideal' but that in practice they do not always guide and inform either appointment, but also the engagement, attraction and retention of female staff.

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As earlier mentioned, one of the objectives for this study was to integrate existing literature and theories on attraction, retention, and engagement to obtain a better understanding on factors that influence successful participation of women in higher institutions. This was carried out in relation to Herzberg's two-factor theory considered a feasible theory that provides a better understanding on the role of motivation in retention (Almaaitah et al., 2017; Berry & Morris, 2008; Owler & Morrison, 2015). This theory is commended for its simplicity and straightforwardness in understanding aspects of retention (Armstrong, 2014).

In accordance with feminist standpoint theory, the research process provided a space for female lecturers to reflect on their retention and engagement levels, relaying this in authentic and real lived experiences. Whilst participants were not involved in the theory, they nonetheless provided empirical evidence that allowed the researcher to evaluate their dispositions regarding attraction, retention, and engagement. The participants shared their understanding and expectations of how they would like the institution to understand their experiences and, by better understanding the lived experiences of their staff, institutions would be able to better align themselves with the goals of improving productivity and also ensuring that staff remained with them. Through interactive dialogue with participants, the voices of participants were captured. Many of the female staff showed their loyalty and commitment to the institutions of higher learning where they worked.

Job embeddedness according to Robinson et al., (2014) is a state of mind when an employee decides to stay or leave an organization due to certain organizational-related factors (ibid.). This factors either relates to organizational or community and its affect performance and productivity of the organisation (Peachey et al., 2014; Shibiti, 2019; Lyu & Zhu, 2019). Job embeddedness be better understood through the lens of three different constructs referred to as links, fit and sacrifice. Fit is defined as the compatibility of an employee with the current organizational culture and the surrounding community. Links refer to employee's connections

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within the organization or with an external community that may influence decision process. Sacrifice describes opportunity cost for the employee when leaving the job (Reitz, 2014). Therefore, job embeddedness theory was used to understand why female lecturers decide to stay with a particular institution (Nafei, 2015, Holtomet al., 2006). Literature indicates factors affecting attraction, engagement and retention of women in higher institutions, particularly at UWC and UCT, career development opportunities, work-life balance, flexibility in working hours, shared identity/race, teamwork, qualifications, working environment, opportunities to grow, engagement, research, supervision, teaching, and learning, These factors have an impact on how female lecturers perceive their work environment, and on their engagement level as well as decisions whether or not they want to stay as employees in these institutions.

Chapter five provides a general conclusion regarding the research study's objectives and practical recommendations for future studies. The discussion in this chapter was analysed based on supportive arguments from empirical evidence to understand responses from participants, in relation to attraction, retention and engagement in institutions of higher learning. The next section of this chapter discusses the limitations of the research. The researcher concludes that this study can be used by higher institutions to improve their recruitment and selection processes in order to increase productivity as well as to ensure that valuable staff members are not tempted to seek employment elsewhere.

5.2 Conclusion

This research provided important information on factors that attract female lecturers to higher institutions. As earlier mentioned, findings in this study challenge traditional knowledge practices on recruitment in higher institutions. It is therefore advisable to prioritise policies on attraction and retention, well developed, outlined to ensure quality scholars in particular are attracted, trained, and retained to support the sustainability and attractiveness of South African higher institutions.

5.3 Limitations of the study

This research has some limitations as the focus of this study is limited to women in higher education institutions in only two selected universities in South Africa University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town. The aim of this study was to investigate factors that attracts women to higher institutions, retention, and their engagement at different levels within the institutions. Firstly, data was based on perceptions of female lecturers from UWC and UCT as a result, the findings cannot be generalised to other academics and comparisons cannot be made with their male counterparts. Secondly, the study focused on academic profession thus findings cannot be generalised to other industries or workplace in general. Another limitation of the study is that the interviews are highly subjective and what a particular respondent reported during the interview might be coloured by personal experiences in the 'now' that might not be a true reflection of how that staff member feels at another time. These idea of retention, attraction, and engagement are thus nuanced not only by the respondent's own experience but also by the fact that the interviews took place at a very specific time in South Africa COVID-19 and lockdown measures .

Some challenges were encountered while collecting data. The first challenge was a delay on the approval of the researcher's ethical clearance, especially from UCT. The second major challenge relates to the unresponsiveness of some participants despite several contacts via email. In the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, most lecturers had to switch to working online from home and adapting to this new way of working presumably delayed responses from participants and thus data collection took longer than envisaged. Despite these limitations, respondents provided 'thick' descriptions and authentic lived experiences. As such the text is rich and the empirical data, despite the fairly small sample size, provides ample scope for interpretation and for a much better understanding of what attraction, engagement and retention mean within the context of UWC and UCT.

5.4 Recommendations for future research

Empowering women in institutions of higher learning is important for the development and sustainability of gender justice, equality, and equity. Other factors that need attention are social expectations women subject to, institutional culture and practices that often strengthen persistent gendered inequalities. This often impacts institutional and national bodies in their pursuit of gender equality. These factors must be considered when policy recommendations are implemented as they not only influence abilities of women but also impact on values and ways in which transformation towards gender equality is – or is not –realised. This study proposes further investigation into factors that enable women in Higher Institutions to empower themselves and to be empowered through mentorship programmes or/and other fringe benefits in the workplace, that could together constitute an important instrument to retain, promote and empower women in their pursuit of a meaningful career in academia.

Secondly, it would be to the benefit of institutions of higher learning if they could put in place policies and programmes that promote gender awareness and which are gender sensitive – taking into consideration the specific needs, constraints and opportunities that face women not only in the workplace but in their personal lives.

It is not sufficient to have policies in place that promote gender equity – for what is needed is vigilance and careful consideration in a very practical way so that women are attracted to work in institutions of higher learning, engage full on with their work once there and embed themselves in academia without wanting to exit. This can only happen once institutions such as these become far more conscious of difference and diversity. One of the major issues highlighted by the participants is that women publish less than their male colleagues, which is often due to cultural reasons such as managing both home and academic activities. Therefore, higher institutions, especially at faculty and departmental levels can set up support systems perhaps make it mandatory where young female lecturers and researchers could be linked with

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older, more experienced ones, with the aim of promoting capacity-building and knowledge in creating a sense of community among those women and providing helpful tools and guidelines.

It would also be to the advantage of both the institution and the female staff themselves to have more flexible work programmes and more time to write papers and publish – perhaps relieving them of some of the teaching and mentoring burdens that are part and parcel of academic life. In general, there is room for far greater attention and recognition that women play often quite hidden roles as mentors or carers, nurturing young scholars in the workplace – something that often goes quite unrecognised. As such, earmarking role models who are women – and providing incentives to women to become role models – is at present missing in academia and merits much more focus.

The goal of full equality of opportunity for women in higher education will only be realised when there is support that is designed to encourage their entry into higher institutions – not just as mature staff members but as students who enter the system – and could themselves be attracted to seek employment in academia once their studies are complete. Here the slogan – growing one's own timber' is pertinent. This is unlikely simply to happen – it needs to be fully recognised as step towards the right direction in attracting, engaging retaining mature staff down the track.

If women are to contribute at all levels, their potential must be recognised and harnessed, especially when they have demonstrated their ability to succeed in the educational system despite obstacles within the workplace and in their private and personal lives.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Information; Research study and Ethical clearance

Information about the Research study, researcher, and ethical clearance.

I, Claudia Kahking Tosam Mukong a registered PHD student in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences UWC, my student number is 2712883. My supervisors Professor Jacqueline Goldin Extra-Ordinary Associate Professor of Anthropology and Water Sciences Centre of UNESCO Chair in Groundwater Earth Sciences University of the Western Cape

Aim of the study

The purpose of this research is to investigate the attraction, retention and engagement of women working in institutions of higher learning in general and in particular at the University of the Western Cape and the University of Cape Town. The study investigates the policy environment in these higher institutions to assess whether and in what ways policy promotes women and in instances where their supportive policy exists – to assess whether and in what ways it is implemented. The main aim of this study is to analyse factors that contribute to the attraction, retention and engagement of women in higher educational institutions in two selected Universities in the Western Cape, South Africa.

Ethical Clearance

I duly applied and was successfully granted ethical clearance by both the University of the Western Cape and University of Cape Town, and this is available on request.

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Many thanks for the time you invested in participating in this research study. The following key issues were observed: Researcher sought permission from respondents and participant is free decline not to respond in case the question affects the integrity of respondent. Anonymity was observed in case of any sensitive question or matter. A consent form was sent and signed by respondents via email to make them understand the purpose of the study. Participants were informed about their confidentiality and none disclosure of any information regarding their participation.

Interview Guide

RESEARCH TITLE: An investigation into the attraction, retention and engagement of women in higher educational institutions in selected universities in South Africa

Introduction:

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed, with your permission I wish to record this interview, what you say will be confidential and anonymous, no individual will be identified in the report. The purpose is to investigation into the "attraction, retention and engagement" of women in higher educational institutions in selected universities in South Africa. There are a number of areas to cover in the interview but I hope that you will raise any issues that you feel are important to you.

Professional background

1) How long have you been working with this university?

2) How long have you been working in this department?

3) How does the qualification of women influence their positions in your university?

4) In your institution, do you have policies that promote gender equality and equity?

5)   What attracts women in institutions of higher learning in particular university?

6) What motivates women to stay in a particular university for a length period of time?

7) How do they engage in research that is already taking place in your University.

8) What is the level of participation of women in decision making in this institution?

9) What are the factors that have resulted in some women being promoted?

10) As a female, are you satisfied with the way in which female are recruited and retained in this university?

Thank you very much for participating!

UNIVERSITY *of t*
WESTERN CAP

<u>LETTER OF CONSENT: TO PARTICIPATE INTERVIEW</u>

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed, with your permission I wish to record this interview, what you say will be confidential and anonymised, no individual will be identified in the report. The purpose is: An **investigation into the attraction, retention and engagement of women in higher educational institutions in selected universities in South Africa**. There are a number of areas to cover in the interview. I will like to get an insight from female lecturers regarding what attracts them to the university, how they are retained and their level of engagement and participation. I hope that you will raise any issues that you feel are important to you

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by Claudia K.T. Mukong towards the PHD Programme at Institute for Social Development (ISD) at the University of the Western Cape.

This study has been described to me in a language that I understand and I freely and voluntary agree to participate. My questions about the study have been answered.

I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time by advising the student researcher.

I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I agree to take part in this research.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I am free not to participate and have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to explain myself.

I am aware that the information I provide in this interview might result in research which may be published, but my name will not be used.

I understand that my signature on this form indicates that I understand the information on the information sheet regarding the structure of the questions.

I may also refuse to answer any questions that I don't want to answer.

I agree to the audio recording of my response and its use in this research.

By signing this letter, I give free and informed consent to participate in this research study.

Date: _____

Participant Name: _____

Participant Signature: _____

Interviewer name: _____

Interviewer Signature: _____

This research is being conducted by Claudia K.T.Mukong a student at the University of the Western Cape. Her contact details are as follows:

Cell: 0730457361   Email: 2712883@myuwc.ac.za

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Prof Mulugeta Dinbabo, acting Director, Institute for Social Development (ISD), University of the Western Cape. His contact details are as follows:

This research project has received ethical approval from the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape, Tel. 021 959 2988, email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa

Telephone: (021) 959 3858/6 Fax: (021) 959 3865

E-mail: pkippie@uwc.ac.za

LETTER OF CONSENT: TO PARTICIPATE INTERVIEW

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed, with your permission I wish to record this interview, what you say will be confidential and anonymised, no individual will be identified in the report. The purpose is: An **investigation into the attraction, retention and engagement of women in higher educational institutions in selected universities in South Africa**. There are a number of areas to cover in the interview. I would like to get an insight from female lecturers regarding what attracts them to the university, how they are retained and their level of engagement and participation. I hope that you will raise any issues that you feel are important to you

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By signing this letter, I give free and informed consent to participate in this research study.

Date: _____18 August 2020_____

Participant Signature: _____

Interviewer name: _____

Interviewer Signature: _____

This research is being conducted by Claudia K.T.Mukong a student at the University of the Western Cape. Her contact details are as follows:

Cell: 0740963912   Email: 2712883@myuwc.ac.za

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Prof Mulugeta Dinbabo, acting Director, Institute for Social Development (ISD), University of the Western Cape. His contact details are as follows:

This research project has received ethical approval from the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape, Tel. 021 959 2988, email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za

Private Bag X17, Bellville 7535, Cape Town, South Africa

Telephone: (021) 959 3858/6 Fax: (021) 959 3865

E-mail: pkippie@uwc.ac.za

LETTER OF CONSENT: TO PARTICIPATE INTERVIEW

Thanks for agreeing to be interviewed, with your permission I wish to record this interview, what you say will be confidential and anonymised, no individual will be identified in the report. The purpose is: An **investigation into the attraction, retention and engagement of women in higher educational institutions in selected universities in South Africa**. There are a number of areas to cover in the interview. I will like to get an insight from female lecturers regarding what attracts them to the university, how they are retained and their level of engagement and participation. I hope that you will raise any issues that you feel are important to you

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I understand that my identity will not be disclosed and was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time by advising the student researcher.

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I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, and received satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I agree to take part in this research.

I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary. I am free not to participate and have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without having to explain myself.

I am aware that the information I provide in this interview might result in research which may be published, but my name will not be used.

I understand that my signature on this form indicates that I understand the information on the information sheet regarding the structure of the questions.

I may also refuse to answer any questions that I don't want to answer.

I agree to the audio recording of my response and its use in this research.

By signing this letter, I give free and informed consent to participate in this research study.

Date: 25 August 2020

Participant Signature: NB Mlenzana

Interviewer name: Claudia_____

Interviewer Signature: _____

This research is being conducted by Claudia K.T.Mukong a student at the University of the Western Cape. Her contact details are as follows:

Cell: 0740963912   Email: 2712883@myuwc.ac.za

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Prof Mulugeta Dinbabo, acting Director, Institute for Social Development (ISD), University of the Western Cape. His contact details are as follows:

Tel: (021) 959 3848   Email: mdinbabo@uwc.ac.za

This research project has received ethical approval from the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of the University of the Western Cape, Tel. 021 959 2988, email: research-ethics@uwc.ac.za