Gender and The Management of Higher Education Institutions in Lesotho: A Case of the National University of Lesotho

'Matora Ntimo-Makara
National University of Lesotho
P.O. Roma
Lesotho

Abstract

Recent studies by organizations such as UNESCO (2002) and the Association of Commonwealth Universities (2004) continue to highlight heavy female underrepresentation at the Senior Management staff levels in Commonwealth Universities. The situation at the National University of Lesotho is no different. The responsible obstacles or hurdles that militate against women attaining senior management positions within Universities include discriminatory appointment and promotions practices, cultural stereotyping, alienation from the male culture, absence of adequate policies and legislation to ensure participation of women and the propagation of glass ceiling syndrome which privileges covert criteria for advancement. This concept paper argues that management is a gendered process and that men and women have different management styles which are to be seen and exploited as complementary in order to ensure quality management of higher education institutions. Whereas as established by Ntimo-Makara (1985) and corroborated cross culturally by Ozga (ed) (1993) and Van der Westhuizen (ed) (1991) male managers will often settle for hardcore managerial and leadership criteria of conducting everything strictly by bureaucratic rules, female managers tend to favour more facilitative and participatory approaches. They prefer more social, consultative, interpersonal and less hierarchical modes of management. For them, Transformational leadership style is critical. Institutions of higher education, therefore, need to adopt gender sensitive approaches to guarantee quality management.

1.0   Introduction

Higher education in Lesotho is broadly defined to include both University and tertiary level education. In other words, it covers all post-high school education whose minimum continuous duration is at least two academic years. The higher education sub-sector consists of the National University of Lesotho; Lesotho College of Education (LCE); Lesotho Agricultural College (LAC); National Health Training Centre (NHTC); Lesotho Polytechnic (LP); Centre for Accounting Studies (CAS); Lesotho Institute for Public Administration (LIPAM) and Machabeng College. (Ntimo-Makara and Makara 2002). So, for a population of just over 2.2 million people, Lesotho has one university. It is the management of the university that is the main focus of this paper.

The purpose of the paper is to provoke critical thoughts, reflections and discussions that focus on managing higher education institutions and how adopting gender sensitive approaches to management can help them survive the challenges which would otherwise put them at peril. For educational institutions to survive, it becomes important that they use all the human resources they have as indeed people are the most basic resource of any organization. Specifically, the institutions should have regard for the fact or reality that people (i.e. men and women alike) have different competencies, skills and talents, which can benefit institutional growth if appropriately exploited and utilized by the institution's leadership. This is a conceptual paper, which has essentially been informed by some qualitative data obtained through unstructured interviews with some members of the top management within the NUL, academic and non-academic staff, students and appropriate Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) officers dealing with tertiary education issues. Additional qualitative information was obtained through review of related literature.

Another critical source of information has been the author's personal experiences gained from involvement as a practitioner in the sub-sector for a period spanning over thirty years and her active participation as a member of local and regional committees and task forces on higher education.

The paper is organized such that the background sets the context. The second section discusses the significance of gender considerations in the management of institutions of higher

education. The third part gives brief explanation of the concepts that are regarded as critical to the discussion. Then follows the section which focuses on gender and its importance to organizations in general and educational institutions in particular. The paper gives a brief picture of the level of gender participation in the management of NUL as a higher education institution. The section is reinforced by citing some recent experiences that highlight problems that sometimes result from gender blind management practices. The paper concludes with a position showing how positive quality involvement of women in the top management of NUL could help enhance the institution's managerial performance.

Finally, conclusion reiterates the significance of gender sensitivity in the management of educational institutions both in terms of levels and quality of gender participation and approaches. Suggestions have also been made regarding how institutions can respond to the challenge.

1.1   Background

The presenter's interest in this area can be traced back to her earlier study (Ntimo-Makara 1985) conducted in Lesotho. Its main objective was to establish the situational, institutional and dispositional factors at play in determining the pattern of Basotho women's assumption or otherwise of management positions mainly within the formal employment sector. The issue was being raised against a backdrop of a situation in which, on the whole, women in Lesotho constituted the majority of employees within the public and private sectors, inclusive of higher education institutions. Yet, their representation in the managerial positions was comparatively minimal if not non-existent in some cases. Kimane, Ntimo-Makara and Mapetla's (1992) study sought to establish the extent to which "gender planning" became part and parcel of planning and practice in the civil service. It had been noted then that despite female employees' numerical superiority coupled with the fact that on the whole they were longer schooled and better qualified than their male counterparts, (Ntimo-Makara 1985), they were conspicuous by their "absence"/"invisibility" in the decision-making levels of management within the civil service. Over the years, since its founding in 1945, the University of Lesotho has boasted almost 100% male administrators at the top. This has been a recurring

trend to date inspite of the fact that there have been capable women with a positive leadership and managerial potential whose talent could have been tapped and utilized for the enhancement of the management performance of the institution.   But somehow they have remained sidelined.

The   findings   of   studies   by   Ntimo-Makara   (1985), UNESCO/Commonwealth Secretariat (1993) and Singh (2002) commissioned by UNESCO have all highlighted the gender imbalance in the management of institutions of higher education. Subsequent updates including the ACU (2004) report specifically featuring an update on gender equity in Commonwealth universities which formed part of the Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service (CHEMS) confirmed that, in 2000, women were still heavily underrepresented at the senior staff levels. The update further showed that in the Commonwealth universities, only 9% of the executive heads were women.

1.2   Why the Gender Argument for Institutions of Higher Education?

It has been established that a very close linkage exists between gender equality and sustainable human development.   This point was strongly reiterated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Reports through 1995-1997.   The principle of equality between women and men in both private and public life has constituted a major critical area of concern for quite a number of national and international fora since the 1975-1985 United Nations (UN) decade of Women.   Examples of such fora include the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development; 1995 Copenhagen World Summit on Social Development and the 1995 Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women.   In recent years, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region has even gone as far as developing the SADC Gender Monitor currently in use to monitor gender promotion within the region.

It is further important to note that Lesotho is signatory to all United Nations Declarations on human rights inclusive of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and has actually ratified them.   However, implementation still remains a problem.   Kimane, Ntimo-Makara

and Molise (1999:9) have argued that perhaps Lesotho's essentially patrilineal society basically makes gender inequalities inevitable and entrenches gender inequality. Consequently, both women and men, boys and girls have internalized the belief and accepted that men are naturally better endowed to lead, rule and take good political and administrative decisions because they know what is best for everybody. It is true that, for most of us, those attitudes are so deep-rooted that the level of concern for gender issues and sensitivity to disparities is very low as established by Otti and Motebang's study (1997).   The entitlement of every Mosotho to fundamental human rights and freedoms is enshrined in the Constitution of Lesotho (Chapter II). Again, in the Sixth National Development Plan, the government did acknowledge the need to address gender disparities in Lesotho and advocated for the empowerment of all people in the design and implementation of major decisions that have an impact on their lives. In 2003, the Government of Lesotho approved the Gender and Development Policy which is intended to be a basis for creating an environment for gender equity and equality.

Institutions of higher education are no less affected by the gender issues raised in the gender debate which is gaining momentum with every passing day. Hence the need to continue highlighting the problem with a view to facilitating action that would help redress the situation.

2.0   Introducing The Critical Concepts

The relevant critical concepts in this paper include education, gender and management. The focus is specifically on educational management.

(a)   Education: is generally defined as a lifelong process during which knowledge, attitudes and values are learnt.   Giddens (2001:688) defines it as the transmission of knowledge from one generation to another by means of direct instruction as is the case with both formal and non-formal education, and informally through general exposure.
In schools including institutions of higher education, teachers do not only have to deal with a whole range of learners and their differences of ability, behaviour, social and religious backgrounds

but also with the preconceptions and misconceptions both on their part and on the part of students, based on gender biases. In the same manner, universities and tertiary institutions as educational institutions continue to be agents of socialization. They are a means whereby culture including the notion of appropriate gender roles is transmitted (Lemmer 1993). Thus, differential gender-role socialization for boys and girls occurs largely through the processes of formal schooling and the effects thereof are best discerned in unequal educational outcomes such as the different patterns of achievements; aspiration and self-evaluation shown by males and females.

(b) Management:

Kreitner (1998:5) defines management as the process of working with and through others to achieve organizational objectives in a changing environment. Management is a social process. Critical to this process is the balancing of two central elements namely effectiveness and efficiency. Effectiveness has to do with achieving stated organizational objectives while efficiency is about balancing the amount of resources used to achieve an objective against what was actually achieved. As a process, management denotes a systematic way of doing things. The major management functions in any organization include planning, organizing, leading and controlling the work of organization's members. In education, we talk of educational management which Van der Westhuizen (ed) (1991:55) describes as a specific type of work in education which comprises those regulative tasks or actions executed by a person or body in a position of authority in a specific field or area of regulation, so as to allow formative education to take place. Within educational settings management manifests itself on all levels of the education hierarchy inside the classroom and outside.

Kreitner (1998:9) raises the issue of the "changing environment". In order for an organization to cope with the changing environment, the manager must be able to anticipate and adjust to the changing circumstances. Change must be anticipated, sought and channeled for the benefit of the organization and its members. It is, therefore, proper to see management as a contextual process. The context consists of the socio-economic, cultural, political and religious factors among others. As Kreitner (1998:10) argues, as we get into the twenty-first century the power base for managers should move

away from formal authority rewards and punishment towards knowledge relationships and rewards.   Also the manager's administrative role should not just be perceived as that of a boss, superior and leader but moving towards team member, facilitator, teacher, sponsor, advocate and coach.   For promotion of interpersonal dealings, there must be a definite move from competition and win – lose situations towards cooperation to facilitate more of win-win situations.   Such an environment is healthy enough to guarantee quality provision of services by the organization.

(c) Gender

In Lesotho experience has shown that it is wrong to assume that the concept "gender" is fairly well understood and appreciated for what it is even among the professionals.   Wood (1997) rightfully argues that we are all gendered beings.   She further posits that gender is something individuals learn yet because it is constructed by cultures, it is more than an individual quality.   It is a whole system of social meanings that specify what is associated with men and women in a given society at a particular time.   Thus, gender refers to culturally defined and socially constructed relations between women and men.   According to Giddens (2003), gender means social expectations about behaviour regarded as appropriate for the members of each sex.   It is about the socially formed traits of masculinity and femininity.   It also covers the psychological differences between men and women.

The questions of attitudes, roles and values that society assigns to either men or women within the context of the prevailing socio-cultural, economic, political and religious settings of a given society are covered by the definition of this concept.   The social constructions, in turn determine the power relations between men and women.   It is significant to note that these relationships are highly variable across cultures and are continually subject to change in response to the ever changing economic and other social circumstances.   The understandings of gender and gender roles are related broadly to issues of power and position in society.   For instance, within the context of a patriarchal society such as Lesotho, power relations between men and women are underlined by the socio-cultural and institutionalized subordination of women. Moser's (1989) analysis of issues surrounding the "Women's Triple

Role" raises the question of gender needs. Whereas practical gender needs facilitate for performance of gender roles without necessarily attempting to challenge or change them, strategic gender needs arise out of the analysis of men's/women's social positions. They are "context specific" and reflect a challenge to the prescribed roles and exclusion therefrom. For example, the current review of existing disabling laws and regulations by the Lesotho Law Reform Commission is an attempt at meeting strategic gender needs.

Gender relations are not static. Thus, as circumstances change, gender contracts keep getting negotiated and renegotiated at both individual and group levels as people struggle to adapt, cope and survive. Ozga (ed) (1993) thus argues that gender is immensely important even in the selection of the style of management and in shaping relations within organizations.

3.0   Gender In Organizations

Giddens (2001:359) points out that some two decades ago, organizational studies did not devote very much attention to the question of gender. Literature on organizational theory will point to the fact that Weber's theory which tended to have a great impact on a number of organizational theorists had presumed a model of organizations that placed men squarely at the centre.

The feminist scholarship in the 1970s led to the examination of gender relations in all the main institutions in the society including bureaucratic organizations. The focus of the arguments was not only on the imbalance of gender roles within organizations, but they also explored the ways in which modern organizations themselves had developed in a specifically gendered way. It is significant to note that occupational gender segregation is one of the major characteristics of bureaucracies whereby female entrants would be found in great numbers in categories of occupations which are low-paying and involve routine work. Above all, opportunities for women to be promoted are very limited. Thus it would seem that overtime both men and women have either accepted or learnt to live with the idea that a bureaucratic career was in fact a male career in which women played crucial supporting roles as clerks, secretaries and office managers while men concentrated on advancing their careers (Giddens, 2001:359). Looking at the domestic sphere one sees a more or less similar situation where often husbands advance

their careers at the expense of their wives career development as the latter provide support. Giddens (2001) concludes that modern organizations developed as male-dominated preserves in which women were excluded from power; denied opportunities for career advancement and victimized through sexual harassment and discrimination. So, in essence, within organizations there are mechanisms that are deliberately put in place to actually exclude certain types or categories of employees. Thus, individual males and females become cut off from full involvement in the organization's activities or programmes. This social exclusion points to new sources of inequality as people get denied opportunities.

Within formal organizations leadership positions are presumably reached through recruitment, selection, meritorious service and promotions based on objective criteria. Thus, it is assumed that organizations are neutral and objective yet work itself has a masculine blueprint (Mullin, 1999:334). The reality of the situation on the ground is that, within formal organizations cross-culturally male domination of privilege and power is a clearly identifiable feature. The often talked about "glass ceiling" concept which refers to working structures and practices which prevent women from rising to the top and assuming leadership positions is very prevalent in these social settings. So, it could be argued that, it is not by accident that women have occupied different positions from men, not only in content (horizontal segregation) but also in power and responsibility (vertical segregation).

Giddens (2001:359-360) has cited an old but significant 1977 study by Rosabeth Moss Kanter "Men and Women of the Corporation" in which she examined women in bureaucratic settings. She investigated the position of women in corporations and analysed the ways in which they were excluded from gaining power. She established that women got shut out of the social networks and personal relationships that were crucial for promotions. This came out after she had examined what she called "male homosociability". This is the way in which men successfully kept power within a closed circle and allowed access only to those who were part of the same in-group. She argued that, perhaps, the problem was one of power and not gender' and went on to expound on this somewhat liberal feminist perspective that people were in a disadvantaged position not because they were women per se, but

because they did not wield sufficient power within organizations. In such situations, gender inequality is created by a system that restricts women's access to the public sphere by burdening and isolating them with private sphere responsibilities – such as home responsibilities and child care (Higgs, Higgs and Wolhuter 2004:276). For them, the priority is to ensure greater access, equality of opportunity and affirmative action for women in the public sphere including higher education. She thus concluded that as greater numbers of women came to assume powerful roles, the imbalances would just go. This has always been countered by more radical feminist arguments from writers such as Ferguson (1984) in The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy. He argued that having more numbers of women get powerful roles will not necessarily change the situation because modern organizations are fundamentally tainted by male values and patterns of domination. Similarly, Mannathoko (1999:453) posits that radical feminists perceive society as oppressive to women, while at the same time regarding every institution in society as a vehicle by which men dominate women resulting in gender oppression. Consequently, women would always be relegated to subordinate roles within such structures. Ozga (ed) (1993:4), in a way, tends to subscribe to the above position as she argues that the perspectives on the issue of women's absence from management range from deficit theories that stress women's inadequacy or incapacity to more structural explanations which stress issues of power and control and the patriarchal construction of society which also permeates formal organizations.

4.0   The Nature of Educational Institutions as Organizations

Educational institutions have very specific settings. Their major objective is to educate. They are social institutions of particular subtlety and sensitivity. The question of the significance of the organization's culture arises here because it describes the environment of the organization. The environment, in turn, gets shaped by the organization's history, experiences, traditions and language which are all shared by its members and bind them together. This culture also explains how the organization functions. Its activities including recruitment, orientation, training and the rewards systems are all very strongly influenced by the culture. In

educational institutions, however, there often exist large distances (organizational and psychological) between the teacher/lecturer and others who make up the larger educational system. So, with teachers/lecturers pre-occupation with subject curricula and examinations often takes priority over issues such as policy and organization and even resources as long as they do not have a direct negative impact on what they do. This situation notwithstanding, the need for effective and efficient management of educational institutions cannot be overemphasized. Institutions, therefore, have to exploit the management potential and expertise of both their male and female employees to ensure quality management of both academic and administrative programmes and processes.

5.0   The Gender Participation in the Management of Higher Education Institutions in Lesotho

A casual survey of the current gender representation in the management of institutions of higher education in Lesotho shows that with the exception of the National Health Training Centre (NHTC) and the Centre for Accounting Studies (CAS), the top management is predominantly male. The Lesotho College of Education (LCE) features male officials in the three topmost positions of Director and the two deputy directorships. What is worrying is that these male officers were handpicked/nominated. They did not have to compete for these positions. For a good three year period, prior to their coming into the picture, an Acting female Director had successfully led the institution on, but she has had to revert to her lecturing position to make way for her male counterparts. According to the MOET Gender Audit Report (2003), the situation within the MOET itself is not very encouraging. The report confirms male domination of a majority of critical senior management positions with the exception of that of the Principal Secretary and a female Assistant Minister. As pointed out earlier, women constitute the majority of the workforce in education yet they continue to be underrepresented in its management. This situation obtains across countries, institutions and sub-sectors. Almost invariably, women are more visible in the management of education offered to younger pupils in the pre-schools and junior grades of primary schools. In higher education, especially in the universities, women managers are such a small proportion of

management that they are almost invisible. The same is the case at policy-making levels.

The current gender landscape in the top management of NUL is very telling. As is the case with institutions of higher education elsewhere in the world, gender participation in the management of NUL has always favoured male managers. Several studies cited in the background section to this paper corroborated this situation. The 1993 UNESCO/Commonwealth Secretariat study on "Women in Higher Education Management" identified quite a number of obstacles or hurdles that militated against women attaining senior management positions within universities. They include discriminatory appointment and promotion practices, family attitudes, career interruptions, cultural stereotyping, alienation from the male culture and continued resistance to women in management positions, propagation of glass ceiling syndrome which privileges covert criteria for advancement and absence of adequate policies and legislation to ensure the participation of women. These continue to be the major barriers preventing meaningful participation of women in the decision-making arena.

The situation at NUL is no different from the one presented above. In its 60 year history, the university has never had a female Vice-Chancellor. NUL was once led by a woman when it had an acting female Vice-Chancellor for the whole of 1996. A top most woman who served about four 2 year terms as Pro-Vice-Chancellor could not be appointed Vice-Chancellor when she applied for the job when it fell vacant. Given the exposure and experience she had gained (often acting as Vice-Chancellor in the absence of the substantive) we felt she deserved to be given a chance just like the powers that be were prepared to take a gamble with one of the inexperienced male colleagues she was competing with for the job.

NUL has also boasted a female Registrar who unfortunately got sidelined when she proved too efficient and knowledgeable for the liking of her bosses. She has since been re-engaged to serve as an acting Registrar.

Examples of Critical Management Hiccups that NUL Recently Experienced

Examples cited below represent the first hand experiences that the writer of this article had to live through as an active participant in the several "consultative meetings" attended in one's capacity as the Dean of the Faculty of Education. During the period 2000 – 2004 the top management at NUL was 100% male. It consisted of the inner circle of the old-boy network that displayed overall worrying deficiencies in the very basic management skills so critical to keep the institution going in the face of the hurriedly introduced ill-fated transformation programme. Although a good idea in itself, the transformation process had not been properly rationalized and was consequently very unprofessionally managed. A few examples would help indicate the flawed managerial vision of the institutional leadership of the time.

> ➢ The quality and gender unrepresentativeness of the very membership of the NUL Strategic Planning Team left a lot to be desired. For instance, the Public Eye (May 3rd: 2002:13) stated "some observers claim the team was appointed haphazardly with a very feeble attention to competencies while the process would have benefited from some form of consultation."

> (a) The process itself was tainted by unilateral and autocratic decisions and actions taken without prior consultation with and participation of other stakeholders.

For instance, the so-called consultative meetings were convened only for participants to be informed of senior management's decisions which were said to be "Non-Negotiable". My faculty staff and I often got told that by our then Acting-Executive Dean." Also relevant were a litany of complaints cited in NUL Information Flash Vol.9 #29 of October, 10th 2003.

> (b) There was a total disregard of established University statutes, regulations and procedures. For instance, as argued in the NUL Gazette vol.8, No.11 of November, 11th 2003 the creation of positions and appointment of

Executive Deans in the faculties as well as Institutes and the Library and the Chairs of programmes were unstatutory.

(c) There was persistent overriding of democratically reached decisions by academic departments, faculties and institutes[1]. For example, management caused the University to operate without a Registrar while a legally powerless corporate secretary was put in place. This terribly compromised the capacity of the institution.

- Staff recruitment and promotion procedures followed were equally flawed. For instance, interviewing panels for appointments into senior positions such as Executive Deanships were deliberately composed of very junior inexperienced staff as in the case of considerations for the then "Faculty of Humanities and Education".

- The selection processes were generally manipulated and sometimes tainted with elements of nepotism in order to ensure that targeted preferred male and female candidates who towed the line got appointed. It is important to remember that organizations will often guard against drawing in potential deviants for management positions.

- Very unscrupulous tactics were employed to ensure that very strong potential male and female candidates got their enthusiasm dampened to the extent of them losing interest to run for senior management positions.

- While top management went out of its way to officially solicit advice from some colleagues, other

---

[1] Note that the above a, b and c have also been cited directly from page 1 of the July 1997 PRESS RELEASE BY THE LESOTHO UNIVERSITY TEACHERS AND RESEARCHERS UNION (LUTARU) EXECUTIVE entitled "MANAGEMENT CRISIS AT THE NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO". It was pointing an accusing finger at the top NUL Management Team that had preceded them 1997-1999 – (just before their tenure of office started in 2000. As fate would have it the very strategic Executive Members of LUTARU who had released the statement were the key top Managers of NUL during 2000 – 2004; similarly guilty of the same mistakes/management errors as their predecessors).

> staff would instead be preached to about having to demonstrate good will by volunteering professional advice because management claimed it held an open door policy. So everyone had to feel free to come forward with advice. What was surprising was that even such volunteered good advice would just be ignored for the worst management options particularly affecting academic structures, programmes and procedures. Those staff who raised concern were dubbed "a network of cowards" opposed to the university transformation process (Public Eye vol6 # 12, March 22-28, 2002).

This whole confused situation provoked a strong reaction and intervention by the Minister of Education and Training. He directed the Vice-Chancellor, through the Chairman of Council as per the Principal Secretary of Education letter of 19th March, 2003 to stop with immediate effect all expenditure on structures which did not comply with the NUL Act 2002 as amended and its statutes. On May 31st, 2004 the NUL Council duly decided to reverse the restructuring process sparked off by transformation (NUL Circular Notice of June, 22nd 2004 by the Acting Registrar).

It is significant to mention that during the period referred to above, a few women featured as co-opted members of the top management team. It could be argued that, in social groupings including the organizational environments it is not uncommon to find skewed groups in which there is a large preponderance of one type over another. For instance, in a group of 15 Principal Secretaries there could be one or two females. It has been argued that the numerically dominant type also controls the group and its culture. This proportional scarcity is not unique to women. Men can also find themselves alone among women. Women often face this situation with respect to leadership/management positions in organizations or in the public life in general. Hence, the concept Tokenism which is defined as the appointment of single, individual or a very small number of women or men by an organization to deflect criticism of its insensitivity to gender, ethnicity and disability (GOL, 2003:IV). Thus tokenism and tokens do not often convey positive signals. Individuals who find themselves in a token status often find that they are under pressure to accept stereotyped

roles than fight them. By falling victim to this trap, the token's range of expression or demonstration of task competence get limited. The acceptance by the group offers tokens comfortable and certain positions since they do not rock the boat as it were. Tokens are very visible. Commenting on the question of tokenism, especially as it relates to women, Mullins (1999:35) notes that token women have particular difficulties in that they are forced to play a role which is constrained by male rules and strategies. They are often excluded from informal relations and thus from important formal networks and communication. This impacts negatively on the quality of influence they would otherwise have.

So, such has been the situation at NUL during the above cited period. This took the toll on the credibility of the culture that this University had had for years not withstanding the problems it had to contend with.

Could Positive Quality Involvement of Women in the Top Management of NUL have made any difference?

Yes it could have. Some of the female NUL staff colleagues used to remark that "top NUL management was at risk because it lacked a female touch". It is a fact that involvement of skilled female managers does bring a positive impact on the overall management of an institution. Management literature makes reference to a variety of leadership styles. Management and organizational theorists (Stoner, 1989; Van der Westhuizen, (ed), 1991; Wood 1997; Kreitner, 1998; Mullin, 1999 and Giddens, 2001) do argue that leadership styles are gendered. Thus, there are styles that are preferred by male and female managers respectively. Hence Ozga's (ed) (1993:34) claim that gender is immensely important in the selection of the style of management and in shaping relations. She posits that the different management styles are predicated on different values. Unlike male managers who seem to settle for hardcore managerial and leadership criteria of conducting everything strictly by the bureaucratic rules and aggressiveness heavily punctuated by authoritarian tactics and inflexible procedures, female managers tend to favour more facilitative and participatory approaches. They prefer more social and consultative interpersonal less hierarchical modes of management. So, for them, transformational leadership style, which allows for information

sharing through consultations and is more inclusive, is much preferred. It should, however, not be categorized as necessarily "weak", but rather as bringing in the desired critical stabilizing element into the whole management equation.

Mama (2003:101) argues that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that, despite institutional and managerial claims of administrative neutrality, the institutional and intellectual cultures of African institutions are, infact, permeated with sexual and gender dynamics that often disadvantage women. These dynamics reproduce gender inequality through the process of exclusion.

Giddens (2001:360-361) observes that organizations now want to introduce female style management into contexts which have long been dominated by male culture, values and behaviour. They want to be more flexible, efficient and still competitive in today's global economy. To achieve this, they have relied less and less on male top-down rigid management. They have gone more for the so called "soft-management" and leadership styles associated with women as they are more flexible in their operations, delegate responsibility, communicate , share information and resources, consult and spent time on fostering cohesiveness and integrative culture and climate to get consensus. It is hoped that this approach promotes team work which guarantees collective goal setting and pooling of energies to achieve. The male and female management styles are essentially complementary and are both critical for the survival of educational institutions.

Conclusion

As earlier indicated, this is a concept paper which has attempted to highlight the need for gender balanced participation and adoption of gender sensitive approaches in the management of higher education institutions. The paper has focused on NUL's experiences.

Education is one of the major empowering instruments for all people (male and female) – because "Knowledge is Power". It opens up opportunities and enhances the chances of individuals' assumption of managerial/leadership positions within organizations.

However, educational qualifications by themselves are not enough. They are mere tools. Women and men alike need a different form of education. This is "anticipatory education", which does not only help people prepare to take up jobs but most

importantly to be able to think about managing and anticipating operating beyond the level of just "technically" getting the job done.

This process has to start very early even as individuals get socialized within families and communities well into the start and duration of the schooling career. Gender-mainstreaming in education is equally significant so is the development and operationalisation of mentoring mechanisms within the institutions.

Gender mainstreaming entails the interaction of gender equality in analysis, planning, performance, personnel policy, monitoring and assessment thereby changing the content and direction of prevailing gender insensitive practices at organizational (project and programme) and institutional levels (Lesotho Gender and Development Policy 2003: v). Institutions should demonstrate restored confidence in the managerial capabilities of both men and women to assume leadership positions. There is dire need for actual role-models who can have an impact and influence, hence true that appointment of women to senior management posts acts as a powerful stimulus for more women to aspire and apply. So, gender planning remains a strategy for reform within academic institutions.

It is important that institutions of higher education promote the enabling factors that would help increase participation of women in higher education management. These would include:

1. Gender sensitive strategic planning. This requires the institution to develop its policies within the legislative framework of international conventions and government legislation. The Lesotho gender and development policy is a good start to guide NUL. Integrated and holistic approach to planning has to be adopted.

2. The institutions should establish and sustain institutional support structures to facilitate mentoring and management skills training for the members.

3. Maintaining transparency in the recruitment and promotion procedures. Strategies should be devised and put in place to enable both men and women to meet employment and promotions criteria. Consideration has to be given for "indigenization" of some of these processes/procedures.

4. Building an up-to-date gender disaggregated data base which is compiled consistently to determine trends and inform planning. To add to this, Mama's (2003:120) submission that at the academic level there is need to design

rigorous and gender competent qualitative analytical and biographical methods becomes very critical. She contends that it is this kind of research that would unearth and map the institutional dynamics of inequality and the complicated manner in which these inequalities interconnect with other major social divisions to augment and mitigate the dynamics of gender inequality.

Higher education institutions are desperate for quality management skills and capabilities of both their male and female employees. Indeed, this paper is not suggesting that women have a natural capacity to manage better; but it argues that the styles of communication and organization with which women are familiar are effective management styles with relevant application to educational institutions and the education environment in general. Ntimo-Makara (1985:205-207) cites Basotho female respondents' appreciation of what they felt were empowering rearing practices employed by the parents within the Basotho socio-cultural environment. More than 50% of them had argued that the rearing practices instilled in them, virtues such as patience, honesty, humility, getting along with people, hardwork, diligence, punctuality, deference and respect for authority. They felt they were reared to become independent and able to stand on their own and getting things done through hard determined effort.

Barnes (1993:5-6) reporting to the ACU about "Strategic Development Plans to enhance the contribution of Women to universities in Southern Africa" argued that as organizations, university structures are so complex that "the same individual can play different roles in various structural arrangements within the same university and appear at different points in different hierarchies". She further points out to tensions that are "likely to develop as people cross boundaries between departments and hierarchies in the course of fulfilling their roles. This is the very experience that enhances one's growth as a tutor, head of department, deputy dean, dean and a member of such and such committees that run the institution's business.

It is important that NUL embarks on deliberate gender sensitive capacity building of male and female managers in higher education. The empowering role of education has to be fully exploited.

References

Barnes, Jane. 1994. *Strategic Development Plans to Enhance the Contribution of Women to Universities in Southern Africa.* (Report to the ACU).

Government of Lesotho. 1996. *Sixth National Development Plan 1996/97 – 1998/99.*

Government of Lesotho. 2003. *Gender and Development Policy.* Maseru: Ministry of Gender, Youth and Sports.

Government of Lesotho 1993 Lesotho Constitution. Maseru: Government Printers.

Higgs L.G.; Higgs, P. and **Wolhuter, C.C.** 2004. *Re-thinking   Gender (in)equality Within the South African Academic Profession*: in The South African Journal of Higher   Education. Vol.18 No.1 pp.273-289.

Kimane Itumeleng; Ntimo-Makara, 'Matora and Molise Ngoakoane. 1999. *Socio-Cultural Phenomena Related to   Population Development in Lesotho.* Maseru: Ministry of Development Planning.

Kimane Itumeleng; Ntimo-Makara 'Matora and Mapetla, Matšeliso. 1992. *Gender Planning Strategy: Enhancing the   Participation and Performance of Both Female and Male   Civil   Servants   in Lesotho.* Maseru: Ministry of Public   Service.

Kreitner, Robert .1998. *Management.* Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Lemmer, Eleanor. 1993. *Gender Issues in Education* in Dekker Elise,   I. and Lemmer Eleanor, M. *Critical Issues in Modern   Education.* Durban: Butterworth Publishers (Pty) Ltd. pp.

LUTARU. 1997. Press Release – "Management Crisis at the   National University of Lesotho".

Mama, Amina. 2003. *Restore, Reform But Do Not Transform: The Gender Politics of Higher Education* in Journal of Higher Education in Africa. Vol.1 No. (1) pp. 101-125.

Mannathoko, C. 1999. *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender in Education: The Case of Eastern and Southern Africa* in International Review of Education. 45 (5/6) pp.445-460. Ministry of Education and Training 2003 *The Gender Audit Report.* Maseru.

Moser, Caroline. 1989. *Gender Planning in the Third World: Meeting Practical and Strategic Gender Needs.* World   Development Molyneus, Vol.17 No.11 pp.1799-1825.

Mullins L.J. 1999. *Management and Organization Behaviour.* Edinburgh: Pearson Education Limited.

National University of Lesotho *Strategic Plan 2002/2007*; Reconnecting with the Nation.

_____. Annual Statistical Bulletin 2003.

NUL, 2003 Information Flash. Vol.9 # 29. October 10th.

_____ 2003. Gazette. Vol.8 # 11, November 11th.

_____ 2004. Circular Notice June 22nd.

Ntimo-Makara, 'Matora. 1985. Educational Opportunity and Management Roles: A Study of Women in Lesotho. Unpublished Ph.D Thesis. University of Hull, UK.

Ntimo-Makara, 'Matora. 2003 *Higher Education in Lesotho* in Teferra, D. and Altback, P. (eds) African Higher Education. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. pp.371-380.

Ntimo-Makara 'Matora. And **Makara, Motsoakapa**. 2002. *Higher Education in Lesotho: Lesotho Country PPrepared for the First Meeting of the SADC Technical Committee on Higher Education and Training and Research and Development.* (25th – 26th February) WITS Technikon, Johannesburg.

Otti, Pauline and **Motebang Maria**. 1997. *Review of Gender Activities in the On-going UNDP Supported Programmes.* Maseru: UNDP.

Ozga, Jenny. (ed) (1993) *Women in Educational Management.* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Singh, Jasbir, K.S. (2002) *Women and Management in Higher Education: A Good Practice Handbook.* Paris: UNESCO.

Stoner, James, A.F. and Freeman Edward, R. 1989. *Management.* Prentice-Hall International.

The Public Eye; 2002 May 3rd:13.

UNDP. 1995. *UNDP Development Co-operation Lesotho Report.* Maseru.

_____. 1997. *Human Development Report.*

Van der Westhuizen P.C. (ed). 1991. *Effective Educational Management.* Pretoria: Haum Tertiary.

Wood J.T. 1997. *Gendered Lives: Communication, Gender and Culture.* Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.