Organisational Factors Affecting Female Academic's Performance at a Higher Education Institution in South Africa

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Abstract – This paper aims to identify the organizational factors affecting female academic performance at a higher education institution in South Africa, amidst the longstanding challenges women face in academia. Despite being often categorized as underachievers, female academics are significantly underrepresented in leadership roles. This study employs an exploratory research design with a qualitative methodology, involving semi-structured interviews with fifteen female academics. Thematic analysis was applied to identify key factors affecting their performance. The findings revealed that resource allocation and accessibility, training and development, leadership style and supervisor and financial support for projects are factors affecting female academics' performance at a higher education institution. The paper recommends that institutional management critically review employment policies and establish programs designed to empower female academics. The paper contributes to the body of knowledge on gender equity in higher education, and strategies that institutions and policymakers can use to enhance and optimize the performance of female academics. By fostering more equitable working conditions, this study seeks to promote greater representation and success of women in academic leadership roles.

1 Introduction

In the education sector, the performance of academics is a critical factor in contributing to the effectiveness of higher education institutions, especially for women. Shukla (2023) pointed out that without value-oriented, dedicated, and capable human resources, higher education institutions cannot achieve or sustain excellence in teaching and learning. The productivity and efficiency of any organization heavily depend on the performance of its employees, with human resources being a crucial component (Omar, et al, 2022). Academics play a pivotal role in ensuring quality education for students and addressing societal challenges (Dongwe, 2018). Their performance in areas such as teaching, research development, and community engagement significantly influences the overall success of higher education institutions (Namutebi, 2019). Previous research has shown that higher education institutions in sub-Saharan Africa often operate in under-resourced environments, with academic employees managing heavy workloads that significantly affect their well-being and performance.

The underrepresentation of women in academia remains a significant issue. Olutayo and Adebayo, 2021) argued that the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles within higher education institutions has been extensively studied and documented. It has been a global issue, and numerous actions have been taken to combat it through employment policies and other programs. South Africa like the rest of the developing countries is not an exception particularly because of political, cultural and religious backgrounds. Moss-Reilly (2024) argued that women remain significantly underrepresented in top leadership roles within South Africa's tertiary education institutions. According to the former South African Minister of Higher Education, Mr Nzimande, women remain under-represented in permanent academic staff as they comprise approximately 43% of public higher education institutions. This inequality becomes even more pronounced in senior academic positions where women account for approximately 18.5% of women professors and 29.8% of associate professors (Nzimande, 2023).

Naicker (2013) argued that women academics have faced numerous obstacles in pursuing careers in higher education. Naicker (2013) articulated that female academics were covertly denied an opportunity to participate in the South African higher education system and to establish a spot for themselves during the apartheid era. Furthermore, the preconception that a male should pursue a career in academics and leadership roles is thereby reinforced by the underrepresentation of women in these fields. The work environment and the historical background have created a perception where female academics are labelled as underachievers and underperformers. Women still deal with several concerns and difficulties (Mittal, et al, 2015) in various aspects of life including their careers.

Organizations must accept that women are just as important to the nation's economic growth as men are, and their contributions are substantial. Organizations invest huge amounts of money in the recruitment and selection process. However, the return on investment becomes questionable when employees feel unappreciated and neglected. This affects their performance and

that of the organization. Rusmiati et al, (2021) define performance as the outcome of a person's work or the performance of a person's work in carrying out his or her tasks and responsibilities. Employee performance is one of the most dominant factors in improving organizational performance. According to Mathis, et al, (2013), three main factors influence performance, (i) abilities, which include, interests, and personality factors; (ii) efforts, including motivation, work ethics, attendance, and assignment design; and (iii) organizational support, including training and development, equipment and technology, performance standards, and management and coworkers. This paper aims to identify organizational factors affecting female academic performance at a higher education institution in Limpopo province, South Africa. The findings will assist higher education institutions in reviewing employment policies, and strategies and developing programs to empower female academics and motivate them to improve their performance.

2 Literature Review

This section discusses Vroom's Expectancy Theory and the empirical literature on the organizational factors affecting employee performance.

2.1 The Vroom's Expectancy Theory

This Expectancy Theory was developed by Victor Vroom in the 1960's. The theory states that people will be motivated to the degree that they believe that effort will yield acceptable performance (expectancy), the performance will be rewarded (force/instrumentality), and the value of the rewards is highly positive (valence) (Vroom, 1964). Suciu, et al, (2013) postulate that Vroom's Expectancy Theory is described as a process theory that aims to clarify how motivation happens, what influences it, and how these components interact. This theory illustrated how female academics may undertake certain tasks with the expectation of receiving a reward in return for their dedicated efforts. It highlights the link between the anticipation of rewards and the intensity of their performance. An organization has to determine what motivates an employee to perform at their highest level. These elements may consist of supplies, instruction, or assistance from a manager who boosts staff morale (Rehman, et al, 2019). Female academics may evaluate their ability to succeed in the academic environment based on available resources and support provided by the institution. However, if there are organizational barriers to performance, female academics may have low expectancy, believing their efforts will not translate into rewards (Rehman, et al, 2019).

2.2 Empirical Literature

The empirical literature focuses on organizational factors that affect employee performance such as resources, work environment, leadership style, training and development, supervisor and financial support for projects.

2.2.1 Resources, Work Environment and Performance

Organizations utilize a bundle of resources such as physical, financial, and human to gain their competitive advantage. Employees perceive organizational resources according to the position and tasks expected to perform. As a result, resources are defined as "anything perceived by the individual to help attain his or her goals" (Halbesleben, et al, 2014, p. 6). Access to resources contributes to improved performance and makes the work environment conducive for the employees. According to Bushiri (2014), the employees' behaviour is influenced by the work environment which depicts the effectiveness and efficiency of the work performance. Satyvendra (2019) added that the performance of employees is influenced by factors such as working conditions, motivation level, support and leadership. A study conducted in Turkey by Shammout (2021) measured the work environment using factors such as employee benefits, supervisors' and coworkers' support, training and development, adequate workload, and physical work environment. The results revealed that all the variables had a significant and positive relationship with employee performance. The study by Tahir (2023) conducted at the Human Resources Development Agency of West Sulawesi Province of Indonesia revealed that work facilities and work discipline have an impact on employee performance. Furthermore, a study by Rizky, et al, 2023) found that working conditions, equipment, and the availability of facilities significantly impact productivity. They added that well-maintained and sufficient physical resources allow employees to work more efficiently and effectively, leading to increased productivity levels. Ghous, et al, (2023) who conducted a study investigating the effects of the working environment on employee performance in non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan found that there is a favorable correlation between work performance and the working environment.

2.2.2 Leadership Styles and Performance

Different leadership styles can be adopted in higher education institutions. Like any organization, autocratic, democratic, transformational, participatory, and other leadership styles can work and improve employee performance. Demirtas and Karaca (2020) define democratic leadership styles as leadership in which ideas are freely expressed and openly discussed and thus define a collective style of leadership. The democratic leader has confidence and trust in their employees and encourages them to participate in the decision-making process. The participatory leadership style is considered the same as the democratic one. Participative leadership is characterized by following the process of employee participation in decision-making, where leaders and subordinates are on an equal footing and trust each other completely, and organizational issues are resolved through democratic consultation (Wang, et al, 2022). Employees feel recognized, involved, satisfied and empowered which leads to improved performance.

Al-Jubouri (2023) pointed out that the transformational leadership style occurs when a leader considers the needs of workers and generates rewards for achieving objectives that raise the interest of employees beyond their personal interests and achieve the interest of the organization. This is reflected in an increase in the level of motivation, ethics, and performance of subordinates

(Al-Jubouri, 2023). Sebastian and Hassan (2017) associated transformational and democratic leadership styles with positive employee performance. Furthermore, Demirtas and Karaca (2020) defined autocratic leadership as a style of management in which the central authority is strong, decisions are taken without questioning, and subordinates are motivated by threats, punishments, and awards. Chukwusa (2018) argued that autocratic leadership could be beneficial in some instances, such as when decisions need to be made quickly without consulting a large group of people.

In their study in a Nigerian Bank, Basit, et al, (2017) found that employee performance was positively related to transformational and democratic leadership styles. Additionally, Larik and Lashari, (2022) argued that participatory leadership styles are associated with more favourable outcomes in employee performance. They found that in participatory leadership style employees experience a sense of empowerment and confidence in both executing their tasks and making decisions. In contrast, autocratic leadership tends to foster an environment where employees may feel diminished in their roles and decision-making capabilities. Conversely, democratic leadership provides employees with a greater sense of accomplishment, which in turn enhances their performance compared to the authoritarian approach (Larik & Lashari, 2022). Sari, et al, (2021), emphasized that leadership style has a favourable impact on employee performance.

2.2.3 Training and Development and Performance

Phathi et al, (2024) argued that training aims at teaching a skill set to an individual while development aims at nurturing the innate qualities of an individual. From a Human Resource Management perspective, the term training is usually used to describe those set of activities which are specifically designed to help a worker in achieving a prescribed set of performance standards which are measurable. On the other hand, development is a gradual process of growth of an individual's skills and abilities, and it cannot be quantified (Phathi et al, 2024). To improve performance, institutions can develop employees through workshops, on-the-job training, formal courses, mentorship, and coaching. According to Fillery-Travis, and Lane (2006), coaching is a direct focus on improving performance and skill development right away through tutoring or instruction as an instructional method. Moreover, coaching is the art of using a facilitation method to help someone else perform, learn, and grow (Fillery-Travis, Lane, 2006). On the other hand, mentoring is the process of giving mentees the chance to improve their performance at work (Oladimeji & Sowemimo, 2020). Halawi and Haydar (2018) discovered that employees who receive training are equipped with the skills, information, and abilities necessary to carry out their duties under corporate policies. Employee happiness and confidence in their talents are subsequently increased because of this.

A study by Mamba, at al, (2018) asserts that training and development to equip women with the necessary skill sets as well as to provide a means for improving their job performance is highly significant. Furthermore, staff training opportunities at public organizations are hampered by several factors, including inadequate funding, partiality, delays in adopting new skills, and poor

coordination for training programs (Etim & Bassey, 2024). Moreover, the study by Paul and Audu (2019) showed that academic staff training had a favourable and significant impact on workers' performance at the Federal Polytechnic in Nigeria. The study found that efficient training for academic staff members improves their job knowledge, skills, competence, and morale while also increasing their productivity, punctuality, and quality of work. Additionally, the study conducted in the Nigerian Service sector by Oladimeji and Sowemimo (2020) found that the combined mentoring duties, the level at which exposure, counselling, and role modelling significantly affect employee performance. Employee performance in connection to coaching and mentoring is high (Ramesh, 2015).

2.2.4 Supervisor and Financial Support

Social and financial support has positive benefits in any organization. In most organizations, individuals provide and receive informational support (messages to improve problem awareness) (ter Hoeven, and van Zoonen, 2020), instrumental support (physical assistance provided by coworkers), and emotional support (interactions to boost coworker's morale) (Boren, 2014). Social connections can boost the performance of employees for the benefit of the organization. A study by Simbula, et al, (2023) opines that social connections can foster a positive relationship between social and economic resources. These relationships serve as a source of information and support that can significantly enhance employee performance (Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu, 2018). Lavy (2019) stated that supervisors and coworkers frequently share the tasks, responsibilities, and challenges employees face. Co-worker support has also been linked to decreased stress, fatigue, and burnout and increased job engagement, performance, and energy (Lavy, 2019). This proves that social connections can foster a positive relationship between the social and economic resources available at work (Simbula, et al, 2023).

Female academics might also be students who require social, financial, technological and other assistance related to their studies. Academics perform various duties including teaching and learning, community engagement, administration and research as mentioned above. During the COVID-19 pandemic, academic staff and students were sometimes forced to rely on one another for support. Working from home required access to technology and other resources. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, South Africa was battling electricity load-shedding, which affected the institutions and employees directly. Hlatshwayo (2019) argued that internet access in homes and workplaces became impossible during periods of load-shedding imposed by Eskom which compromised the quality of online learning. Eskom is an organ of the state responsible for the main supply of electric power not only in South Africa but to the neighboring countries too.

Financial support is crucial for infrastructure improvement and other projects. By virtue of their profession, academics involve themselves in research as researchers or students. Depending on the rank, they are required to raise funds through research grants. However, academics with funds in their research accounts or without a master's or doctorate may need financial support from the institutions for their research projects. When institutions offer

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sufficient financial incentives or support, employee motivation and performance can be raised significantly. Therefore, organizations hoping to optimize their human resources and boost productivity must comprehend the connection between financial incentives and productivity (Adong & Akello, 2023).

3 Methods and Data

The exploratory research design was adopted in the paper because the researcher seeks to explore a phenomenon in the everyday lives of female academics. The study employed a qualitative approach and focused on fifteen conveniently sampled female academics in an institution of higher learning in South Africa. The study included all the female academics regardless of race, age, work experience in academia, marital status, designation, number of children, and educational level. Concerning the nature of appointment, the study involved female academics appointed on full-time, part-time and fixed-term contracts irrespective of whether they were South Africans or non-South Africans. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using the interview guide which allowed the researcher to ask open-ended questions. The researchers had one-on-one interviews with the respondents to collect data about the organizational factors that affect their performance as female academics. However, it must be noted that 53% of respondents were appointed as lecturers; 7% of respondents were appointed as senior lecturers and 40% of respondents were appointed as associate professors. Thirty-four per cent (n=5) of the respondents had 0-4 years of work experience; 33% had 5-9 years of work experience, and 33% of the respondents had 10-15 years of work experience. The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder to obtain a verbatim account of the responses. Data was also collected using secondary information such as reports, journal articles etc. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis designed to identify, organize, and provide insight into patterns of meaning across the dataset. Themes and sub-themes were induced from the interview data. Data was presented in the form of tables and percentages. The ethical clearance approval and the gatekeeper's letter were obtained from the higher education institution. The study was limited to female academics only.

4 Results

To assess the organizational factors affecting the performance of female academics, each respondent was asked to identify the organizational factors that affect the performance of female academics in HEIs. The question was directed to fifteen female academics only as stated above. However, the results indicate over fifteen responses because the respondents provided several factors each, leading to the development of themes, sub-themes and a higher frequency of responses as can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Organizational Factors Affecting Female Academics' Performance.

Themes	Sub-themes	Frequency of responses
Resource allocation and accessibility	Unequal resource distribution	13
	Office space allocation	
	Malfunctioning equipment	
	Dirty offices	
Training and development	Lack of training and development	5
	Lack of coaching and mentoring	
Leadership style	Lack of participatory decision-making	7
	Lack of inclusivity	
	No implementation of institutional policies	
	Open communication Supportive environment	
Supervisor and financial support	Financial support for projects	10
	Online lectures	

Source: Authors, 2024

4.1   Resource Allocation and Accessibility

Table 1 above portrays that 37, % (n=13) of the respondents indicated that resource allocation and accessibility of those resources hindered their work performance. One of the respondents mentioned that while there seem to be sufficient resources like gadgets, internet connection, and office space, there's an issue of unequal resource distribution, particularly in terms of office space allocation based on academic qualifications and gender. Respondent 1 has this to say as per hereunder:

"…gadgets wise, we are set, we have a good internet connection, devices if you need textbooks, if you need stationery. I think we're set with office space

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as well; however, I think for almost five years I shared an office with a colleague and other people came and found us here, but they didn't get to share offices, so I think also what disadvantaged us was that we didn't have our PhDs and also because well women are understanding."

Respondents highlighted issues such as uncleaned venues, malfunctioning equipment like projectors, limited office space and dirty offices hinder effective work performance, which consequently has an impact on the overall work environment.

Respondent 9 has narrated in this fashion: "…venues are not conducive; it's not cleaned since December. Projectors do not work. Here you'll be forced to use the chalks and they're dusty, it's not healthy for some of us so because you are there to work you just compromise so you must carry your projectors and sometimes when we try to order from the supply chain office it's not always the case that they will process the order. With the issue of offices, we find that we are sharing offices. I am sharing with a male which is not a problem, it goes with the type of person that you share with."

4.2   Training and Development

Furthermore, 14% (n=5) of respondents mentioned training and development as one of the factors hindering performance. Respondent 3 acknowledges encouragement to attend training sessions, especially in areas like research ethics, but also notes instances where requests for further training or support may not be fully addressed by the management, especially on courses that will help them perform their job better. Respondent 5 indicated that while there may be limited training opportunities within the department. However, the respondent acknowledges "the availability of relevant training sessions organized by the university, particularly for new staff members". Respondent 7 indicated that "there is a perceived lack of training opportunities, which could contribute to skill gaps and hinder career development".

4.3   Leadership Style

Twenty percent (n=7) of respondents mentioned that leadership style affected their performance. Respondents felt that mentorship from senior colleagues, especially female ones, was valuable for personal growth. However, Respondent 2 pointed out that "there was a lack of effective coaching and mentorship programs within the organization, particularly from male colleagues". Additionally, there was criticism of the leadership and management style within the institution, highlighting issues such as autocracy, lack of inclusivity, and failure to address institutional policies which hinder growth and performance.

Respondent 15 mentioned that "there is a lack of participatory decision-making and potentially limited input from staff". She added that "we are not really allowed to raise our opinions in the meetings as the issues that we raise are usually not attended to".

However, on the positive side, Respondent 10 indicated that the leadership style within their department, school, and faculty is supportive and effective.

She pointed out that "employees feel that they can raise issues and concerns, indicating open communication and a supportive work environment".

4.4   Supervisor and Financial Support

Ten respondents (29%) of respondents stated that supervisor and financial support affects their performance. Respondent 2 indicated a positive experience with support from both the university and their department. However, she expressed that she "felt that the university can do even better by providing funding to postgraduate students as we are usually not funded in terms of travelling outside the university to conduct research and attend workshops that will assist us to be better researchers". She further mentioned that the ULWASA, a women's academics solidarity association, was also very helpful in assisting female academics to be effective in their work duties as they usually organize 5-day retreats for research writing which also assist with social networking with other female academics.

Respondent 6 indicated that the organization provides opportunities for professional development, such as writing papers and articles to boost compensation and career advancement. However, there may be challenges with online teaching, particularly for language instructors, which affect job satisfaction and performance. Respondent 13 stated that "in the department, we rarely have physical lessons since the COVID-19 era which affects my job because as a language instructor, I am unable to effectively illustrate some of the things to the learners using Blackboard software functions".

5   Discussion

The study aims to identify the organizational factors affecting female academic performance at a higher education institution in South Africa. The majority of the respondents stated that resource allocation and accessibility affected female academic work performance. The respondents also noted sufficient resources but highlighted issues of unequal distribution, particularly regarding office space allocation. The findings are in contrast with Rizky, et al, (2023) who argued that working conditions, equipment, and the availability of facilities significantly impact productivity. Respondents highlighted disparities in office space allocation based on academic qualifications and gender. This disparity affects nearly 5 years of shared office space with a colleague, suggesting systemic biases that hinder equitable resource allocation. The respondents argued that gender and rank play a role in office allocation. Furthermore, other respondents discussed challenges related to infrastructure, such as uncleaned venues, malfunctioning equipment, and limited office space. These issues directly impact work performance and contribute to a less conducive work environment, affecting overall productivity and employee satisfaction. Ghous, et al, (2023), found that there is a favourable correlation between work performance and the working environment. If the work environment is not conducive, it affects the performance of female academics at the higher education institution. Furthermore, according to Vroom's Expectancy

theory, motivation is driven by the expectation that specific actions will lead to desired outcomes, along with the perceived value of those outcomes. Besides enjoying equal opportunities and receiving market-related remunerations female academics can be motivated by the equal allocation of resources and can go the extra mile when performing their duties. Rizky, et al, (2023) argued that well-maintained and sufficient physical resources allow employees to work more efficiently and effectively, leading to increased productivity levels.

Furthermore, the study found that training and development affected the performance of female academics, with some acknowledging encouragement from management to attend various sessions. However, respondents also mentioned insufficient management support when interested in further development themselves which led to future skill gaps and hindered their career growth. This finding is different from a study by Mamba, et al, (2018) who highlighted the significance of training and development to equip women with the necessary skill sets and to provide a means for improving their job performance. While there may be limited training opportunities within their departments, respondents acknowledged the availability of relevant training sessions organized by the university, particularly for new staff members. However, concerns were raised regarding the adequacy and accessibility of such programs. Instances were noted where requests for further development or support were not fully addressed by management, potentially leading to skill gaps and hindering career development. Moreover, the study by Paul and Audu (2019) emphasized that efficient training for academic staff members improves their job knowledge, skills, competence, and morale while also increasing their productivity, punctuality, and quality of work. However, Etim and Bassey (2024) warned that training might be affected by inadequate funding, partiality, delays in adopting new skills, and poor coordination for training programs. Ramesh (2015) concluded that coaching and mentorship lead to high performance. Management of the institution may utilize coaching and mentorships for the benefit of female academics. Coaching and mentorship for female academics can take a few months to three years depending on the program and the institutional policies. Female academics once they receive training or participate in any training and developmental program, new skills would lead to both increased individual and organizational performance.

The findings above showed that leadership style significantly influenced performance as highlighted by 20% of the respondents. The prevalent leadership styles within the institution emerged, offering valuable insights into the experiences of the female academic staff. Respondents mentioned that there was a lack of participation in decision-making, inclusivity, and implementation of institutional policies. The findings are contrary to Sari, et al, (2021), who stated that leadership style has a favourable impact on employee performance. Based on the findings, the autocratic leadership style was adopted by management in some departments and schools within the higher education institution. Autocratic leadership foster an environment where employees feel diminished in their roles and decision-making capabilities. Demirtas and Karaca (2020) pointed out that where central authority is strong, decisions are taken without questioning, and subordinates are motivated by threats, punishments, and awards. On the other hand, Chuwusa (2019) argued that this

leadership style benefits the institution when quick decisions must be made. However, some respondents mentioned open communication and a supportive environment as factors that positively affected their performance. One can deduce that the management adopted transformational and democratic leadership styles for female academics to feel supported. Besit, et al, (2017) associated transformational and democratic leadership styles with positive employee performance. The findings are in line with Larik and Lashari, (2022) who argued that employees may experience a sense of empowerment and confidence in both executing their tasks and making decisions. Against this backdrop, female academics will perform better if transformational, democratic and participatory leadership styles are adopted by management in higher education institutions.

Lastly, the study found that supervisor and financial support affected female academic performance positively and negatively. Some respondents reported positive experiences with the support they received from their institution and supervisors. They highlighted the importance of this support in navigating the demands of their roles, particularly during challenging times such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The supervisors and the institution assisted with the improvements concerning online lectures. They were capacitated on the use of technology for online lectures. Furthermore, the respondents praised ULWASA for organizing writing retreats that foster networking among female academics. The finding is in line with a study by Simbula, et al, (2023) who opines that social connections can foster a positive relationship between the social and economic resources available at work. Work relationships in organizational settings play a vital role in providing social support and networking opportunities, which are essential for outstanding performance and overall satisfaction. According to Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu (2018), these relationships serve as a source of information and support that significantly enhance employee performance. Strong social connections at work provide the necessary emotional and practical support to help employees navigate their roles effectively.

However, regarding online lectures, some female academics experienced challenges with some Blackboard software functions as they were unable to make illustrations for the students. Blackboard is an online learning environment and a learning management system for students and academics. Furthermore, female academics were experiencing challenges due to the lack of funding for research projects including travel and workshops. This is also consistent with a study by Adong and Akello (2023) who opines offering sufficient financial support and incentives can significantly raise employee motivation and output. Organizations hoping to optimize their human resources and boost productivity must comprehend the connection between financial incentives and productivity. According to Vroom's Expectancy Theory, if there are organizational barriers to performance of the female academics, such as lack of financial support, female academics may have low expectancy, believing that their efforts will not translate into rewards (Rehman, et al, 2019).

6   Conclusion

The study aimed to identify the organizational factors affecting the performance of female academics at a higher education institution, in the Limpopo Province of South Africa. The main findings of the study revealed that resource allocation and accessibility; training and development; leadership styles; and supervisor and financial support are the organizational factors affecting female academic performance. The study revealed that female academics were particularly concerned with unequal resource distribution, office space allocation, malfunctioning equipment, and dirty offices. Other factors affecting female performance were lack of training and development, coaching and mentorship, participatory decision-making, inclusivity, implementation of institutional policies, supervisor, and financial support for projects. However, the findings also revealed that there was open communication, a supportive environment provided by some supervisors and networking within the institution. Based on the discussion above, higher education institutions must support female academics to improve their performance. However, the study is limited to one higher education institution in one of the nine provinces of South Africa. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized as female academic performance might be affected by different organizational factors in other institutions and provinces.

6.1   Theoretical Implications

The following are the theoretical implications of the study. The current study:

- contributes to the body of knowledge concerning the organizational factors affecting female academic performance.
- displays the gap in the support and opportunities provided to female academics which affect their work performance.
- highlights specific challenges faced by female academics concerning their performance.

6.2   Practical Implications

The following are practical recommendations for the higher education institution involved in this study:

- the management must review and improve policies and programs regarding resource allocation practices to ensure equitable access for all employees, regardless of academic qualifications, rank or gender.
- institutional management must enhance support for training and development opportunities to address skill gaps and better meet female academics' performance needs and expectations.
- Institutional management must promote participatory leadership styles in the departments, faculties and schools to enhance

> employee engagement and improve performance among female academics.
> * institutional management must also provide supervisor support and financial support for research-related travel and workshops to enhance performance and development opportunities for female academics.

In that way, female academics would reach their potential and their performance would improve, leading to improved overall organizational performance.

7 Authors

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