

Challenges Encountering the Participation of Women in Senior Administrative Status at Higher Education

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Abstract

In recent decades, the number of women participating in higher education has dramatically increased. Women have been participating mainly as the students, faculty members, and support staff for higher educational institutions. Research shows that, the number of women is not fairly proportioned in the top administrative positions. In addition, women who have aspiration for top administrative positions encounter numerous challenges. On the other hand, the potentiality of this type of human resource is staying futile in High-ranking positions of higher education. Over and above, the paper explores the probable external and internal factors by reviewing relevant studies, which can facilitate women's career development. By considering the factors, the university developers and managers can equip to make strategic decisions in order to promote participation of women in senior administrative positions.

Key words: Administration positions, Career development, Women participation, Higher Educational.

1. Introduction

Education is accepted universally as the underpinning for achieving the target of social justice. The justification for developing women's participation in top senior position of universities is based on the quality, equity, and development (UNICEF, 2013). Although over the decades, the progress has made globally in improving the status of women in administrative positions of higher education (Group, World bank, 2012) and women in higher education have received varied treatments by the United Nations and its specialized agencies, gender disparities still exist, especially in regard to participation in top executive positions female suffering from multi-faceted discriminations in occupying high ranking positions (Rezai-Rashti, 2011; Li, 2014). The fact that women are under-represented in administrative positions of

higher education (as Chancellor, Vice Chancellor, President, Vice President, deans of faculties, directors of institutes and heads of departments) is well recognized in the literature (Dominici et al., 2009; Lam, 2009; Wajcman, 2013; Lie & Malik, 2014). According to UNESCO (2012) in the field of higher education in the world, women in teaching and management still need to be more involved than men. Women in higher education administration position have failed to achieve equality with men. So that hardly can be said that 5 to 1 ratio of men to women in middle administration and senior administration is 20 to 1 (UNESCO, 2012).

The higher education has made notable improvement over the last three decades (Group, 2012). Recent statistics show that in 30 western countries on average 21 percent of full professors are women, while 47% PhD graduated is female (Ledin et al., 2010). In all world countries the same pattern can be observed the top level executive position (UNESCO, 2012). However, higher education in administrative positions has faced with an absence of managerial women (Lie & Malik, 2014). Although many women have the drive, education, and experience to be successful and effective in Academic executive and managerial roles, women often find that others challenge their authority and question their intelligence (Morley, 2013a). Consequently, women because others struggle due to society's perception of management as being masculine-oriented continue to feel the demand to prove their authoritative power to fit in a role that society typically ascribes to men (Eagly et al., 2008). The problem is one of equal representation of women in administrative roles, and this condition is prevalent and persistent across occupations (Noble and Moore, 2006; Morley, 2013a). The low participation of women in these positions affects the progress in improving the legal and regulatory situation for promoting equal opportunity.

One way to remain female is by helping them to expand their own participation to top level executive positions. This paper critically reviews the influencing factors that lead women to hold in top senior administrative positions at higher education.

2. Literature review

The study on women in educational administration within countries has become a significant field of research since 1980s. There also is a large volume of literature that identifies the challenges and facilitators for women assuming executive and management positions, in society generally and in higher education institutions. Over time, scholars have addressed issues of external and internal influencing factors for women's development in higher education career structure (Acker, 1989; Shakeshaft, 1989; Walsh, 1996; Blackmore, 1999; Young, 2002; Luke et al., 2003; Oplatka, 2006; Dominici et al., 2009; Lam, 2009; Wajcman, 2013; Li, 2014; Lie & Malik, 2014;).

Scholars have attempted to analyze the persistence of a gender discrepancy in higher education administration through varied lenses and approaches (Ladson-Billings, 2009). Some researchers have examined this issue by using structural perspectives (Johnsrud & Heck, 1998), socio-cultural perspectives (Noe, 1988; Lee, 2001; Ramanan et al., 2006), or even multiple perspectives (Luke, 1998b; Oakley, 2000; Oplatka, 2006; Lam, 2009; Nguyen, 2013).

Scholars such as Eagly (2007, 2011), Glazer-Raymo (2008), Madsen (2008) and other prominent writers such as Luke et al. (1997) and Oplatka (2006) who focus on women's experiences in higher education have presented more reasonable insights on the gender inequality in administrative positions. In result, researchers both outside and inside higher education agree broadly that women who aspire to top management positions counter paths with full of 'twists and turns' (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Based on literature, scholars have used numerous terms to describe 'twists and turns' as the barriers related to women's development. Based on the reviews of literature two terms are prominent; 'Glass ceiling' and 'Labyrinth'.

The most usually used term is the 'glass ceiling' (Glazer-Raymo, 2001). The glass ceiling seems to be a widespread phenomenon that explains why women, despite of their qualifications and abilities cannot progress to the top administrative positions of higher education administration worldwide. (Luke, 1998a, 1998b; Umbach, 2006; Beck, 2008; Lam, 2009).

Another key term, Eagly & Carli (2007) used the term 'labyrinth' to explain the circuitous paths that female have to navigate in order to achieve top positions in societies. She argued that many women are able to break the ceiling and make it to the top level positions. Although the paths

exist, but the barriers have become more invisible and more difficult to detect; thus, she named the path to achievement a labyrinth.

3. Methodology

Methodologically the study has been done under qualitative approach. Reviewing literature papers in order to elicit the factors affecting in women participation at top senior administrative positions .The papers have been reviewed and constricted chronologically from 1995 – 2014.

4. Finding

This review paper focus on challenges encountering the participation of women in senior administrative status at higher education within Western and Eastern countries, based on literature review three major factors have emerged: cultural factors, organizational practices, and individual aspects. The literature provides evidence on how cultural, organizational and individual factors disadvantage women in their career participation.

4.1 Cultural Factors:

The review of literature on the impacts of cultural practices on development of women participation points to two important factors: cultural values and societal factors. These provide evidence on how cultural structures challenge women in their career participation.

4.1.1 Cultural values: The result of studies has shown that women, specially in traditional societies are expected to follow particular cultural traditions imposed by their society (Luke, 1998b; Cubillo & Brown, 2003; Oplatka, 2006). Doherty & Manfredi (2006) and Luke (2003) argues that women may have even internalized a sense of ‘gender neutral meritocratic idealism’, but with the demands of conformity with societal “norms”, values and roles, women may feel that they need to adhere to the social expectations of their roles. As a result, women in yearly competitions for promotion or professorial conferment are unwilling to come forward and display their achievements.

Another key point, the stereotype ideal of women's roles is as dutiful mother, wife, care taker and child bearer, and they are probable to take more household tasks than their men (Luke et al., 2003; Stevens, 2013). Such role expectations have been recognized to be a main barrier in academic career development for female in Turkey (Neale & Özkanlı, 2010), Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaysia (Luke 2003), Kenya (Orser et al., 2012), in Vietnam (Nguyen, 2013), and even for Asian American Pacific Islanders (Chen & Hune, 2011) and African American women (Blackwood & Brown-Welty, 2011).

As an illustration, Ballenger found that women leaders often confront cultural rules and patriarchal ideologies of feminine propriety that link womanhood with marriage, unpaid work and the family, and justify women in lower executive positions with partial authority and chance.

The literature also describes the function of stereotypes in women participation in managing careers. Stereotypes 'think manager—think male' attitude is a deep-rooted view, particularly among males (Schein, 2001). Desai et al., (2014) found that gender stereotyping has a reflective impact on women's behavior and attitude. In other words, women have long been the sufferers of the culturally and socially generated values that describe them as weak and dependent on men. As a result, many women do not aspire to management positions because, they believe themselves unable. Therefore, women are more unwilling to demonstrate their management skills in public or to socialize with colleagues to build professional networks. This restricts professional opportunities and development for women academicians in higher education institutions.

In contrast, Cubillo & Brown (2003) showed that women in European culture and society did not perceive cultural values as obstacles. Women who grew up in developing countries such as Middle East or Africa were more sympathetic of their culture that still considers women generally as homemaker and child bearer.

4.1.2 Societal factors; Another cultural perspective that may influence women's development in academic administrative position is societal systems. The 1994 World Yearbook of Education, titled, *The Gender Gap in Higher Education*, highlights societal factors that may influence the development of women in academia positions: the egalitarianism of the public culture and the relative successes of women in gaining access to high-status positions in higher education (Ozga et al., 2013). Thus, social equality may enhance the potential of women's career

development. While these societal factors may increase the chance for women, restriction in women's freedom of action in comparison to men, restriction in establishing connection with others, social complications and difficulties may reduce the potential of women's career development.

4.2 Organizational Factor

The literature provides evidence on how organizational structures shortcoming women in their career participation. The review of literature on the impacts of structural practices on development of women participation points to two important factors: mentoring and appointment practices.

4.2.1 Mentoring: Both formal and informal mentors serve as a helpful source of information about the organizational culture, how things are managed and accomplished in particular institutions (Moore, 1988; Johnson, 1998; Wolverson and Gmelch, 2002; Hansman, 2002; Palgi and Moore, 2004; Brown, 2005; Harris, Hausmann, Tyson, and Zahidi, 2010; Wright, & Msengi, 2011; Airini et al. ;2011; Nguyen, 2013). Also, mentors serve as role models, because women who enter the academic and educational profession need support from other people to adjust to their profession and to understand the culture of the institutions (Beck, 2008).

The results of studies on mentoring in North American and New Zealand universities have found that mentorship plays a significant role in developing women college presidents up the administrative positions (Olson & Jackson, 2009; Neale & Özkanlı, 2010). However, research focusing on Asian universities is less conclusive. Researchers have found that some women academics stress the importance of an informal mentor (Luke, 2002), while other findings have contradicted the view that mentoring is one of the mediating factors for women's career aspirations (Luke, 1998a; Lam, 2009). The review of literature on mentoring in the West and the East reveals differences in mentoring practices between Western and Eastern universities (Luke, 1998b, 2002). Literature on mentoring in Eastern universities reveals that it is mostly informal (Luke, 1998b, 2002; Özkanlı & White, 2008; Lam, 2009;).

4.2.2 Promotion practices: The major universities and institutions were historically the dominion of a certain class of men, so universities practices and norms are constructed base of men's life

experiences (Meyerson & Kolb, 2000). Because these practices are well established and they are taken for granted and very difficult to modify (Bailyn, 2003). Although women have entered the workforce and have added enormous significance to the balance of power within organizations, it still is in favor of men. Consequently, female academics are often disadvantaged in pay and promotion (Airin, 2010). Poor policies on women return from leave; and discrimination against women in selection and promotion through the syndrome of supporting 'people like us' (Nguyen, 2013).

Some scholars also use the term 'sticky floors' to explain how women tend to be fixed in low-skilled and low-paid positions (Iverson, 2011). In the United Kingdom, women were less likely to get concerned in the informal networking required to get noticed, the initial informal search was considered lacking in transparency and possibly a form of indirect discrimination (Doherty & Manfredi, 2006). In Malaysia and Hong Kong, training specifically for women managers is often not a university priority. Or if a general management training program is provided, it does not fit well with women's schedules (Luke et al., 2003).

Acker (2011) suggested that bureaucracies serve to consciously hide the fact that solely masculine traits are needed to be successful in their organizations. The highly masculine's culture at universities can act as another barrier for women interested in leadership and management positions (White, et al., 2011; Chen & Hune, 2011).

The purpose of gender equity programs and legislative actions such as Affirmative Action and Title IX in the United States and Bill for the development for Women Students is to ensure that men and women receive equal treatment in recruitment, hiring, appointment, and promotion in higher education. Nevertheless, these policies have not completely improved gender equity.

In short, policies and processes in higher education can act as barriers against women assuming management positions, but the organizational structure and culture of higher education institutions vary greatly between countries. These differences are clearly present in the way institutions establish policies and practices that address the gender discrepancy.

4.3 Individual aspects

The literature provides evidence on how individual factors disadvantage women in their career participation. The reviews of literature on the impacts of individual factors on development of women participation points to three topics prominent: personality traits, Leadership and Gender, and professional skills.

4.3.1 Personality traits: Personality traits are a strong determinant of success for an academic administrator. One of the most consistent themes in studies on women's career development worldwide is that women's personal attributes can be a motivating or an impeding factor to career development.

Women's internalization of barriers may also contribute to their underrepresentation in management. Some examples of these barriers are lack of competitiveness, limited access to professional training, lack of qualification, lack of confidence, and a fear of failure (Cubillo & Brown, 2003). For this reason, some women refuse to fight their way to the top because of their lack of self-confidence (Gray, 2011; Nguyen, 2013)

On the other hand, several personal attributes that are likely to help women in reaching top positions are networking skills, Flexibility/adaptability, resilience, sense of humor, determination, self motivation, confidence, and independence and a high level of job commitment (Johnsrud & Heck, 1998; Madsen, 2008; Lam, 2009; Wajcman, 2013). These studies demonstrate that women with the above-listed personal attributes are likely to survive in the male-dominated world of higher education.

4.3.2 Leadership and Gender: An invisible ceiling for women ascension to upper leadership positions in higher education administration may be stereotypes associated with these perceived differences in men and women (Coleman, 2005).

Moreover, Eagly & Carli (2007) wrote that studies on gender and leadership elucidate the concerns about relationships between leader characteristics and gendered stereotypes. Society commonly relates leader characteristics to stereotypical male traits such as ambition, confidence, dominance, and assertiveness. However, female stereotypical traits, such as kindness,

helpfulness, warmth, and gentleness do not make women effective leaders(Tritt, 2009;Reishus, 2012;Glazer-Raymo, 2001;Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009; Zhuge, et al., 2011).

4.3.3 Education and training:A significant amount of literature on women's participation development in the West has discussed the impact of education and training on their career development(Aziz et al., 2013; Guskey & Huberman, 1995; Henry et al., 2005). Some scholars have used theories from sociology such as human and cultural capital to examine the effect of education on career aspiration, career trajectories, or career mobility(Bourdieu, 1986, 2008; Rosser, 2003; Umbach, 2006).

Women faculty members benefit from graduate education to achieve professorships. Ismail and Rasdi(2006)discovered that in countries where women with doctorate degrees are scarce, experiences in graduate schools, especially overseas, will benefit women by providing more access to local, national, and international networks. Literature on women's career development in Asia has discussed the role of a college education for women in building their career path.

However, more studies need to focus on leadership training for women who already hold top administrative positions(Ross & Green, 2000; Bickel et al., 2002; Van der Boon, 2003).

5. Conclusion

The aim of this paper is to examine barriers, as well as opportunities, that administrative women in higher education encountered in their career paths to the highest leadership position in higher education in previous researches. Studies focusing on Western universities and non-Western universities are uniform in their findings. In particular, studies on the gender discrepancy in higher education have demonstrated that many countries have made only minor progress due to socio-cultural, organizational and individual barriers. On a global level, women are still underrepresented in many fields and especially in top administrative positions. The literature review on development of women participation in higher education identified three key factors that account for women's upward mobility in higher education: cultural factors, organizational practices, and personality. But cultural factors more likely block women's career participation than organizational practices and personality. Because, base on previous studies; cultural values affect women participation in the top administrative positions from many ways

such as family, society norms, organizational culture and personal traits. These factors are interrelated but their influences on development of women participation vary depending on the characteristics of an individual country, such as the differences within social, cultural, and historical contexts within countries.

Acknowledgment: The authors would like to express their appreciation for the support Universiti Teknologi Malaysia for providing the overall facilities to propel the reported research work.

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