Barriers Faced by Women Managers at Universities

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Abstract: Management is an occupational area where women are severely underrepresented. The lack of women in top management position has been the subject of much debate in developed countries. The study explores the barriers that undermine the women's representation at top management positions in universities of Pakistan. Quantitative method was used in the study. The objectives of the study are to overview the existing situation of women in management of universities and to identify the barriers that cause the underepresentation of women. Both primary and secondary data was used in the study. Simple random sampling was used to collect the data. The analyses was done through SPSS applying correlation and chi-square test. Findings show that structural factors such as mentoring, networking, selection and promotion practices and gender equity are the barriers to the career advancement of women. The result of the study may help to throw light on the factors that undermine the women's representation at top management and to provide directions to address this imbalance.

Key words: Higher Education · Management · Stereotype · Glass ceiling · Gender Discrimination

INTRODUCTION

Universities all over the world are facing vital challenges and some appealing opportunities in a progressively competitive worldwide context. Women as managers and their roles in management has become a focus of special attention and got importance in this era. The continuous underrepresentation of women at more high-ranking and management echelons of the global higher education sector is being paid attention with the recognition that universities as well as countries cannot afford to neglect women's management capabilities as well as their leadership potential reported by Ramsay [1]. Gender imbalance in universities seems to be a global phenomenon reported by Benschop & Brounds, & Foster [2, 3].

Women are new comers to administrative positions in all organizations as well universities. Women have accomplished specialized and administrative decision making positions at lower and middle levels of organizational ladder. It is still challenging for women to get executive positions in the universities reported by Denton & Zeytinoglu [4].

Women's low number in certain disciplinary areas and specially at professorial grades and in position of authority and administrative position is a recurring theme in higher education research indicated by Gunawardena [5]. Gender still has great importance as a category for analysis in the organizational study. Women and men are equal and have equal rights as well as equal access to and equal representation in public life Gender equality theory focused on the equal opportunity or equal treatment perspectives. Gender equality focused to enable women and men to compete as equal in the workplace and the labor market and to create equal opportunities by eliminating structural barriers to women's success reported by Calas and Smircich [6]. With hardly exception, "the global picture is one of men outnumbering women at about five to one at middle level management level and at about twenty to one at senior management level" reported by Dines [7]. According to commonwealth Higher Education Management Report by Lund [8]. In the top positions women consist of only 6.9% of the executive heads. In less developed countries as Pakistan women lecturers were 16% while 8.5% were women professors as well as 8.6% were associate professors" reported by Lund

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[8]. "Glass ceiling term was coined more than twenty years ago by wall street journal to define the obstacles that women face in the place of work". The word "ceiling suggests that women are obstructed from progressing in their career and the word glass is use because the ceiling is not always visible. Glass ceiling is distinguished from formal barriers to advancement" (EEC, 2004). Glass ceiling and sticky floor is a great barrier for women. There are individual, institutional and societal obstacles to women seeking top educational management and leadership position reported by Amondi [9]. The presence of women in higher academic positions was found to be crucial due to organizational barriers indicated by Neale & Ozkanli [10].

The Objectives of the Study Are:

- To identify the existing situation of women in universities in Pakistan
- To identify the structural barrier that undermines the women's representation at top management position

Literature Review: A study of women in the professoriate indicated that they had learnt to give preference to research to tackle the male –dominated culture head on and to some extent reaped the rewards. The inequality of women in professoriate level is due to the promotion criteria, lack of access to information and distribution of work load. Other factors that impact on this imbalance of women at the top in academia have been new managerial globalization and redefinition of the role of academics. Reported by White [11].

Ruth [12] indicate significant differences in opinions about and perception of the composition and distribution of academic work, it is such difference that effect the achievement of equity and more females than males felt teaching should be evenly distributed and difference is even more significant for administration, academia reflects the larger social condition in which women's work goes unrecognized.

Wallace [13] examined the front line women academics and senior managers with respect of sectoral and organizational restructuring. The conflict is that women show resistance against these management roles that are not humanistic and not so authoritative; their women's way of managing is also coopted to organizational end. Women are put aside to undertake management roles. Discipline specific work offers another identity closer to that established by the more traditional humanistic academic culture. Female participation in management is decreasing through both restructure and disinclination of some women to continue in their paradoxical roles. Women's work unrecognized in the male dominated culture of the organization and took them away from other activities such as completing PhD, building a research profile.

Neale & Ozkanli [10] indicate that presence of women in higher academic positions was found to be crucial due to organizational barriers. Beson & Vimol, Chesterman [14, 15] agreed with Neale & Ozkanli [10] that organizational factors support many of these obstacles.

Lack of support system such as mentoring and networking for women in institution disadvantaged women to progress their career reported by Schein [16]. Good mentors can provide intellectual and emotional support The presence of mentor greatly supports career development indicated by Cooper & Strachan, Nagy [17, 18].

Djajadikerta & Trireksani [19] found that exclusion from network had a great impact on career advancement of women academics. Organizational back up and social networking are playing dominant role.

Bagilhole [20] indicate that ambiguity/unfair in recruitment and selection processes at all levels in Australia even for vice chancellor positions is a barrier for women's progression.

Amondi [9] indicated the personal, structural and societal obstacles to women seeking top educational management positions. The strongest barriers are institutional followed by socio-cultural while the individual barriers were least.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Both primary and secondary data was used to explore the factors that restrict the women's career progression in the university. The primary source includes the questionnaire while secondary source included a review of documents, reports and websites.

Data was collected through questionnaires. The questionnaire was prepared in two parts. The part one of questionnaire consists of background information such as age, marital status, children, education and occupation of respondent and experience were obtained. The second part included the questions related to the structural barriers.

A five point likert scale was used ranging from strongly disagree to Strongly Agree that indicate the strengths of respondents against each statement.
Strongly Disagree-1, Disagree-2, Undecided-3, Agree-4 and strongly Agree-5.

Theoretical Framework
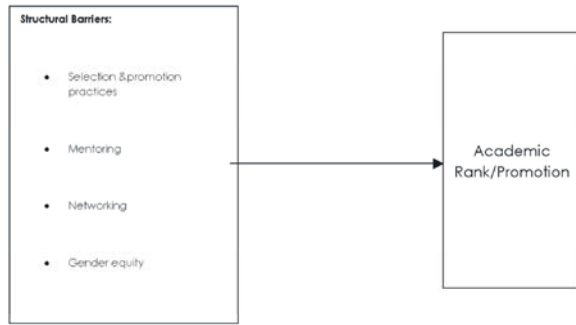
To identify the factor that undermines the women's representation at top management positions, the study puts academic rank of women academics (AR) as the dependent variable. And relate it with its four independent variables: Recruitment& selection policy, promotion policy, Mentor, lack of network, Gender Equity. These variables are developed from various prior works of Foster [3], Djajadikerta and Trireksani [19], Easterly Pemberton [21], UNESCO (1998).

Analysis of Data: The data was analyzed through, chi square test. SPSS was used to analyse the data.

The chi-square value was 57.330 with an associated significance level of .000 which is less than 0.05. The minimum expected count is 12. We conclude that recruitment and promotion practices are associated with the rank/position of women.

The chi-square value was 23.305 with an associated significance level of .025 which is (p<0.05) less than 0.05. The minimum expected count is .21. We conclude that academic board has significant effect on the dependent variable Rank.

The chi-square value was 21.896 with an associated significant level of 0.039 which is less than 0.05. The minimum expected count is 0.23. We conclude that Gender inequity has significant effect on the dependent variable (Rank).

The probability of chi-square test statistics (Pearson value) 119.190 with an associated p=.000 which is less than the significance level of 0.05. The minimum count is 0.45. We conclude that AM has significant effect on rank/position.

Table 1: *sb3 university's selection and promotion practices are fair (MSP) * bi5 Position Chi-square tests*

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	57.330(a)	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	60.175	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	22.479	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	412		

a 12 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .12.

Table 2: *sb6 University is not facilitating gender equity (GE) * bi5 Position Chi-square test*

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.896(a)	12	.039
Likelihood Ratio	22.599	12	.031
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.885	1	.002
N of Valid Cases	412		

a 10 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .23.

Table 3: *sb7 you are continuously guided by senior member of your dept. on academic matters (AM) * bi5 Position Chi-square test*

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	119.190(a)	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	68.898	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	39.455	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	412		

a 9 cells (45.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .45.

Table 4 *Chi-square test Networking*

	Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	62.196(a)	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	40.973	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.642	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	412		

a 9 cells (45.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .52.

The chi-square value was 62.196 with an associated significance level (p) .000 which is less than 0.05. The minimum count is 0.52. We conclude that Network of colleague is significantly associated with the dependent variable.

The chi-square value for career advice was 237.587 with an associated significance level of .000 which is less than 0.05. The minimum count is 0.35. We conclude that career advice has significant effect on dependent variable.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The study concluded the factors that undermine women's representation at top educational leadership and administrative ranks in the general public sector universities of Pakistan. Higher education commission determines the policies concerning selection and promotion in academic employment. Higher education commission (HEC) has taken measures to make the recruitment & selection as well as promotion policy fair .Academic selection and promotion policies of public sector universities are similar. But administrative positions even professoriate position are occupied by men. The women reported that more men are in academic board and they want status quo and masculine culture of institutions restricts women. Lack of transparency in selection and promotion processes is an obstacle. Women in spite of fulfilling criteria are not being promoted.

Promotion system largely depends upon the publication record so due to lack of publication women are not promoted because domestic responsibilities limited the women's research activities. The result showed that recruitment and selection practices are discriminatory such as interviewing committees are mostly consists of men only. Monitoring and practice of selection and promotion policy is discouraging. Women in spite of fulfilling criteria are not being promoted. Women's exclusion from network is significant in influencing the career advancement of women. The women (68.5%) reported that lack of mentor and especially female mentor is a another barrier that undermines the women's representation at top management positions. The mostly influencing factors were mentoring, networking and gender equity policies and then recruitment & selection process. It does not matter how effective selection processes, women are not appreciated and supported in the organization.

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