

Women and Leadership in Higher Education: Faculty Members' Voices in Jambi

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Abstract

Gender equity in the higher education context is a crucial issue. This study aims at investigating the issue of women and leadership in higher education. Further, this study explores factors impacting their efforts to take up the administrative positions and become university leaders. In this study, a qualitative design with a case study approach was employed to investigate the research questions. Data were collected through semi-structured in depth-interview with ten faculty members from four higher educational institutions in Jambi Province. All interviews were audio taped and transcribed for coding by using a constant comparative analysis method to identify the key themes. The data highlight the absence of women in higher education management due to personal problems, participation rates are still low and reflect in equalities in terms of women, and the representation of women in senior level position in higher education is still scarce. Majority of participants expressed that they are ready to receive opportunities for administrative positions. Further, the findings of this study also indicate that the opportunity for women to become university leaders is widely opened, but commonly they find various barriers to take up senior leadership. Recommendations to promote the readiness of women to take up senior leadership are discussed.

Keywords: *Comparative, Gender equity, University leaders*

1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, there has been a rapid increase in higher educational attainment worldwide. The reversal of the gender gap in education accompanied the dramatic increase in educational attainment. Much of this growth is due to the increase in women's educational attainment. Over time, women caught up with men's education levels and progressively attained higher levels of schooling than men. Whereas decades ago, there were more males than females enrolled in and graduating from tertiary education, a greater increase in women's educational attainment over the past decades led to the convergence of female and male attainment patterns, first in most industrialized countries and then in a growing number of developing countries (Heath & Jayachandran, 2016). The data, disaggregated by gender, show that educational attainment in industrialized countries not only

converged to relatively equal levels between genders but that female attainment continued to rise faster than male attainment. This rise allowed women to outperform men in tertiary educational attainment and led to a growing gender gap between women and men in higher educational attainment (Plötz, 2017).

As the issue of women and leadership is closely related to gender relations, it is important to look at gender theory, especially in the context of developing Muslim countries like Indonesia. In the context of Indonesia, it is equally important to analyse factors that lead to the concept of state gender ideology which has a considerable impact on how gender relations is perceived by society. Although the quality of women's development in Indonesia increases day by day, it has

not been comparable yet with the men's development (Kementerian Pemberdayaan Perempuan dan Perlindungan Anak, 2019). Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (Badan Pusat Statistik) reported that, in 2018, the ratio of gender in Indonesia is 101,0. This indicates that almost half of Indonesian citizens are women. However, the report also reveals that women's roles in society are not optimal (Badan Pusat Statistik,

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2019). A large number of Indonesian women have the potential to become a huge development capital. This is because the success of national development depends on the roles of all Indonesian citizens, both men and women. Qualified women can contribute to human resources development, both nationally and globally (Riniwati, 2016). Therefore, the women's roles should be optimized to improve human resources and country development in Indonesia. To achieve equitable development, women's involvement is a necessity. A study states that a country is unlikely to achieve prosperity if its women are left behind, marginalized, and oppressed (Manembu, 2017).

Gender equity in the educational field is one of the most crucial issues because of its significant effect on other fields. Well-educated women are expected to create more qualified and competitive young generations through their reproductive function (Hughes, 2016; Munfarida, 2020). This research focuses on gender equity in education, particularly Indonesian higher education. Men still dominate educational institutions. Men are still the majority in various top-level positions as strategic policymakers in higher education institutions (Alghofaily, 2019; Morley, 2013; O'Connor and Irvine, 2020). Therefore, the role and opportunities of women in achieving leadership positions in higher education need attention from various parties. So that, they have a role in influencing gender mainstreaming-based institutional policies. Although there have been several studies that analyzed the importance of women roles in higher education, it is still difficult to find a clear and comprehensive description of gender equity in Indonesian higher education, especially that is dealing with women's college graduates, due to the limited studies focusing on that issue. Most Indonesian universities graduate more women than men (Kementerian Riset, Teknologi, 2019). Besides, it cannot be denied that the quality of female graduates also cannot be underestimated. This can be seen from the number of high achieving female graduates. The existence of well-educated women who graduated from higher education opens enormous opportunities for them, both economic and social status. The high level of education they have may posit them in strategic positions in higher education institutions as leaders. Unfortunately, there are only limited studies focusing on women's roles, in which there is a great possibility that they can create a better generation through sharing knowledge, insight, and skills with their children. Besides, as leaders in higher education institutions, they are expected to significantly influence designing programs, activities, and policies that do not gender-biased.

This study aims at investigating the issues of gender and leadership in Higher Education, particularly at four state and private universities in Jambi Province. It considers the situation of female academics in their attempt to pursue managerial positions at the university, and to explore factors impacting their efforts to take up these positions. In this sense, this study is interested in questions of gender equality and access to leadership roles for women within state and private universities in Jambi Province. Additionally, factors that may influence women's involvement in higher education management, their professional development and their opportunity to assume senior leadership positions are also scrutinized. It will review the current situation and practices in relation to organisational culture at the university. Also, it will develop a comprehensive insight into the elements that shape women's professional development and their involvement in the management of higher education in Indonesia. Therefore, to analyse competing powers in relation to gender and leadership issues in these four research sites, it is important to examine how organisational culture influence women's involvement in research sites and look at challenges and hindrances that women face in taking up leadership roles in public and state higher educations in Jambi Province.

When the word gender is mentioned, many people immediately relate it to the biological difference between males and females (sex). In everyday life, gender is usually taken for granted, in that we instantly recognize a person either as a man or women (Connell, 2002). Much of people 's behaviour revolves around this distinction. While sex is used to identify physiological difference, gender has an entirely different meaning. Just as sex is a theoretical way of describing human physiological difference, gender relates to the theory of men and women 's cultural difference. Different ideas about gender have varying levels of support, or currency, in a society.

The word gender has several definitions. According to Connell (2002), in its most common usage, the term 'gender' means the cultural difference of women from men, based on the biological division between women and men. Holmes develops a technical understanding of gender explaining that gender discusses both women and men and how they fit in the society, as well as describes the ideas and practices that constitute femininity and masculinity (Connell, 2009). It is also suggested by Connell that gender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social processes (2002).

Gender relations situate gender roles in terms of behaviours that are expected of men and women in

institutional situations (such as family, work, public, recreational, and other settings), based on their gender. Gender roles are upheld by ideologies (systems of beliefs) that justify the appropriateness of these behaviours (Calasanti, 2007). Primary categories of a person's perception, including the sex category, function as cultural frames for coordinating behaviour by associating category membership with widely shared cultural beliefs about how people in one category are likely to behave compared to those in a contrasting category. These cultural beliefs are shared stereotypes (Ridgeway, 2009). Ridgeway (2001) elaborates that status beliefs are also shared cultural schemas about the status position in society of groups such as those based on gender, race, ethnicity, education, or occupation.

All the regions of the world have seen a considerable increase in female enrolment in tertiary education, which tripled globally between 1995 and 2018, growing at a higher rate than male enrolment over the period (UNESCO, 2020a). This explains why the adjusted average gender parity index rose from 0.95 to 1.14. Women are overrepresented in tertiary education enrolment in 74% of the countries with available data, as well as in all regions except for Central and Southern Asia, where there is parity, and sub-Saharan Africa, where men are overrepresented, with 73 female students enrolled for every 100 males in 2018 (UNESCO, 2020a).

In short, gender inequalities in higher education worldwide have reversed in recent decades. Women have made dramatic strides in educational attainment, being more likely than men to further their education and obtain an undergraduate and graduate degree (Callister, et al, 2006). Women outperform men on virtually every educational indicator in HE, with recent statistics showing, for example, that nearly two out of every three bachelor's degrees awarded in the United States are awarded to women (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Studies in Europe (Smyth, 2005) also show that women's educational attainment exceeds men. Using time-series on enrolment and completion rates by gender, several papers show that the reversal occurred in almost all high-income countries, as well as in an increasing proportion of lower-income countries in all regions of the world, from sub-Saharan Africa to the Arab Gulf States (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2013). Numerous international studies on the impact of higher education have reported similar patterns in female advantage and persistent gender gaps in labor market outcomes (Machin & Puhani, 2003) (García-Aracil, 2008) (Williams & Wolniak, 2021).

This phenomenon has been defined as the "female advantage" in higher education (Buchmann & DiPrete,

2006) (Niemi, 2017). Since the late 1970s, the male advantage has evaporated and turned into a disadvantage. Women's overall success in acquiring human capital may be one of the major social changes in recent history (Williams & Wolniak, 2021). This reversal of the gender gap, also known as the rise of women, is unlikely to disappear soon and is suggested to grow further in the coming years (DiPrete & Buchmann, 2013). Several studies focusing on gender equity have been published from various perspectives worldwide (Aktas et al., 2019; Barnard, 2017; David, 2017; Silander, Haake, and Lindberg, 2013; Teelken and Deem, 2013). A study from South African higher education suggested that higher education institutions should foster women's freedom to freely choose their lives and future, including strictly complying with gender norms, which is a vital supporting force (Walker, 2018). A study from Ireland reported that gender equity in higher education institutions (HEI) is concerned at the organizational level. Then, there is a state initiative to tackle gender inequality from various perspectives, including the Expert Group Review, Gender Equality Task Force; Senior Academic Leadership Initiative; initiatives funding research institutions and people around sexual harassment (O'Connor and Irvine, 2020). Gender equity seen from women's leadership in educational institutions in Saudi Arabia suggests that Saudi women still face various barriers in improving their leadership positions. However, the Saudi government's vision of 2030 is expected to reduce this barrier (Alghofaily, 2019).

In Indonesia, gender equity also has been investigated and analyzed from various perspectives (Dhaniarti, Wulandari, and Setiawan, 2017; Faizah, 2013; Maula, 2020; Pandiangan, Lotulung, and Sanggelorang, 2020). Fibrianto (2016) conducted a study that analyzed gender equity in the scope of college student organizations. The findings of his study revealed that men still dominated the organization as leaders, where the majority of women function as secretaries, treasurers, and members. This implies that women are still in the second position after men. The study also remarked that college student organizations did not yet have gender equity and justice and gender mainstreaming (Fibrianto, 2016). Another study conducted by Pandiangan et al., (2020) asserts that the proportion of leaders in higher education must pay attention to gender representation and several activities are needed to increase awareness and ability of the academic community about gender issues (Pandiangan et al., 2020).

Higher education statistics in 2019 indicates that the Indonesian higher education institutions graduate more

female students than male students. The percentage of students who graduated from higher education in 2019 is 40% male, or around 705.315 graduates.

Meanwhile, female students who passed in the same year are 60% or approximately 1.050.624 graduates (Kementerian Riset, Teknologi, 2019). The data indicates that the number of female graduates is higher than male graduates at the diploma degree, undergraduate/bachelor degree, and professional and specialist degree. However, at the higher program levels, such as master's degree and doctoral degree, it was found that the number of female graduates was lower than that of men (Kementerian Riset, Teknologi, 2019). This indicates no gender gap in higher education in Indonesia, especially in the number of graduates.

Therefore, it is not surprising that the number of women who study in higher education is equal with or even exceeds that of men. This also resulted in an increasing number of female graduates from higher education institutions. The higher the level of female education, the greater their chances of getting strategic positions in higher education institutions, both as lecturers, researchers, and even professors. Getting a role in the leadership aspect of a higher education institution is also not impossible for women. Seeing the phenomenon of the quantity and quality of well-educated women who come from higher education graduates, their opportunity to have an equal position with men is not an impossibility.

2. Method

To investigate the research questions, qualitative research with a case study approach was used (Creswell, 2007). Ten participants consisting of 5 female and 5 male participants were involved in this study by using a purposeful sampling with a convenience case strategy sampling. All participants are lecturers and they were chosen based on their positions at the institute as well as their expertise in the area of investigation. Social construction theory was employed as a tool to analyse gender relations in the higher education sector in Jambi Province. The use of this theory provided the greatest change in the way gender relations were constructed as these particular relations were produced by human interaction and social organisations. Through the adoption of a gender relations approach to understanding this issue, it becomes apparent that there are a number of factors influencing women's participation in university management and leadership. These influences can sometimes be contradictory, while others support the general tenor of gender mainstreaming.

A semi-structured interview was prepared by reviewing the literature (Ballenger, 2010; Karikari,

2008; Strand et al., 2005; Tiao, 2006). The guide to interview consisted of open-ended questions in four broad areas; (a) barriers faced by women to take up a leadership position, (b) solutions recommended or implemented by women. The probes under each area were framed to achieve an in-depth understanding of the problem under study.

The qualitative information from interviews represents the views of faculty members at the level higher education in leadership positions. The qualitative information within the broader areas, from the interview sessions, was subjected to coding in order to divide into themes. To analyze the data of interview, the constant comparative method developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) as cited in Mukminin (2014) was used by the researchers to analyze the interviewing data in this study. All the transcripts among those participants were analyzed and compared to search similarities and differences.

The study was approved by the Institutional Ethics Committee (dated March 13, 2022). Official permission from the universities and affiliated colleges was obtained. Participants were assured of anonymity, confidentiality, and were requested for voluntary participation. Written consent form was obtained and signed voluntarily by the selected participants.

3. Results and Discussion

Several studies have reported that women have succeeded in closing the gender gap in higher education institutions. The number of new students tends to be dominated by women (Alghofaily, 2019). Women have outperformed men in the number of higher education graduates (Ismail, 2020; Kementerian Riset, Teknologi, 2019). There are also several studies which reveal that women also outperform men in terms of academic achievement at the higher education level, not only in Indonesia but also in various countries in the world (Crawford & Wang, 2015; Núñez-Peña, Suárez-Pellicioni, and Bono, 2016; Shoaib and Hazir, 2019; Sivrikaya, 2019; TL, Widowati, and Surjawati, 2017; Tlhoale et al., 2014). These achievements should be appreciated as the basis for the higher achievements of women, especially in higher education institutions such as occupying important positions in higher education institutions that can influence various policies.

However, based on the findings of this study, participants have varied responses in form of negative attitudes regarding to the issue of women leadership in higher education institutions. As reported by participant 1, she notes,

“Despite increasing numbers in higher education, participation rates are still low and reflect in equalities in

terms of women. Women are less likely to occupy leadership position when open selection rather than when nomination is the recruitment procedure.”

In other case, participant 3 shows the similar response with participant 1, he highlights the absence of women in higher education management, as well as showing the inadequacy of focusing only on numbers. He points out,

“Of the faculty members in this campus, they started in lower grade position such as lecturer or teacher, assistant lecturer or teacher, demonstrators, and guest lecturers. They reported career interruption. Most of them married and the demands of their husbands’ career led to some of these disruptions.”

In addition, one of participants working in a state university in Jambi Province emphasized that the representation of women in senior level position in higher education is still scarce. She mentions,

“As the case happened in many universities, men still dominate as leaders academically in the majority of higher education institutions. Consequently, this leads to difficulty for women who have the quality and competency to achieve their top careers because their potentials are often neglected and underestimated due to various factors.” (Participant 6)

Responding to this, the researchers argue that there should be a continuing concern that many women have the opportunity to get strategic positions so that they can take important roles in critical leadership in higher education. The implications of the findings previously expressed by participants are in line with the study of Hidayah and Munastiwi (2019) where there is an urgency from around the world to foster gender equity in leadership. Women’s representation can lead to various opportunities for women. Diverse leadership in higher education institutions benefits not only women but also men. Good diversity can strengthen the overall effectiveness of the institutions (Burkinshaw, 2015).

More specifically, to get a critical leadership position at the higher education level, women must receive education up to the masters and/or doctoral levels. Holding a master’s degree is an absolute requirement for anyone who wants to become a lecturer or educational staff in Indonesian higher education institutions. This is likely mentioned by a participant working in a private university in Jambi Province, he says,

“For women who are interested to get a critical leadership position in higher education, it must start from that beginning. So, all women are required to at least graduate from the master’s level, and it would be better if they can pursue the doctoral program to get a greater chance of becoming a leader.” (Participant 10)

However, it should be noted that these data cannot be inferred as valid and effective representations of women’s leadership in higher education (Alghofaily 2019). Thus, expectations that are too high to see equality in leadership in higher education which is merely based on women’s participation in higher education institutions, are likely to lead to disappointment. Further, it should also be noted that women still face various obstacles and challenges in their role as leaders (Abalkhail, 2017; Alghofaily, 2019; Hidayah and Munastiwi, 2019; O’Connor and Irvine, 2020). A study reported that women who have better qualifications and experience should not easily gain positions as leaders in higher education. Compared to male colleagues who lack qualifications and experience, women are less preferred and less selected as leaders (Abalkhail, 2017).

Issue of women’s participation in career has been hotly discussed around the world. Results from different journal sources conducted in different countries were assimilated to attain better understanding of the factors affecting women’s participation in career to take up an administrative position and ways to encourage women’s participant in career to take up an administrative position. There are five factors (sub-themes) affecting readiness to take up an administrative position based on the responses of selected participants in this study included distance from home to workplace, age, nuclear family, involved in research, and have caring responsibility at home.

In terms of distance from home to workplace, a participant (Participant 7) states,

“Due to near distance, it’s about four km from the workplace, I think I’m ready to take up the administrative positions. Some of them perhaps decline the administrative position because of staying more than 10 km from the workplace and they should travel more than 10 km for their workplace.”

While regarding age, a participant (participant 4) responds,

“As a young an energetic woman, I’m always ready to get the administration positions as far as it benefits to support my future career. I will feel very satisfied with the changes. I will break the stereotype of ‘men always underestimate the ability of women at work.’”

This stereotype sometimes has affected the participation of women in career. People always think that women are physically and mentally weak so it is not worthy of being a leader (Bobbitt-Zeher, 2011) even when their age is still young. Women are full of limitations, not as men. Men’s activities are more liberal, free, more qualified, and productive. All these stereotypes affect women in workplace.

In the last sub- theme, caring responsibility at home, some participants face dilemmas in dividing their duties in the workplace and managing household. Maternity causes working women to take career break by not taking up the administrative position in the workplace and they have to face the problem arising out of work and family balance. A participant of a state university (Participant 10) expresses,

“Women have to do a lot of household at home and have lack of time to do all the work at one time including taking care of children. In the workplace, they surely faced various problems. Women who play the role of mother and employee face the role conflicts arising from the conflict between the obligations of the family and work.”

Women will face variety of problems at work and at home. This can become the barrier for women to advance in their careers and hold high level positions in their institutions. According to Abu Bakar (2012), there is a kindergarten teacher and four clerks who stopped working because want to focus on nurturing their children.

Interviewed participants brought out how society viewed women and men differently regarding work. They indicated that women were expected to take charge of households, keep meals ready, and be home “on time.” Women were also considered “emotional” and “indecisive,” thus they were considered not suitable for leadership. Based on the findings of this study, three sub-themes are underlined for barriers faced by women in taking up a leadership position. They are discrimination from men, long working hours, and lack of on-campus facilities. As noted by participants (participant 2, participant 5, participant 7), they convey,

“Men occupied positions of power and were often at the forefront. Women were assigned to committees which according to them were “meant for women,” for instance, receiving guest, and other women’s works.” (Participant 2)

“Long working hours, inadequate leave provisions, and nonflexible timings demotivated women to seek a senior management position.” (Participant 5)

“Lack of on-campus facilities such as accommodation, transportation, health care, and other support services, sometimes discouraged women from taking a responsible position.” (Participant 7)

Negative attitudes of the participants perceived that women were deliberately left out of nominations or promotions to take up a leadership position. The barriers mentioned in the interview session were almost the same as mentioned in the responses from previous studies carried out by the researchers all around the world.

Participants expressed concern over the work environment and demanded equality, respect, understanding, recognition, and encouragement in all endeavours of the institution. Some of the participants recommended training programs on leadership, risk-taking and assessment, stress management, gender sensitization, women empowerment, and confidence building. A few others requested orientation to the institutional policies, procedures, guidelines, and job descriptions of the senior leadership positions. Some suggested on-the-job training through involvement in various committees.

One of the participants believed that development of confidence of women through training is one of ways to overcome barriers experienced in the institutions. She opines,

“Female mentors with experience and vision would be better as they may understand the specific problems of women at the workplace and may even enable women to build self-confidence.” (Participant 2)

Other response is in line with the responses listed above previously, they say,

“I assume that it’s better to have such kind of involvement of women faculty and provision of opportunity to participate in administrative tasks for women. It will help to promote females to administrative positions.” (Participant 4)

“To promote women in taking up the administrative position, it is possible to reserve some higher administrative seats for women only like Gender Research Center.” (Participant 8)

The statements expressed by selected participants offer solutions recommended by women to overcome the barriers faced by women in taking up the administrative positions in higher education. In this case, women articulated a few expectations from higher education for their readiness to take up senior management positions. They expressed that managing research, administration, and family at the same time is challenging and hence demanded that 50% of the work time per day of women in a leadership position may be allocated to administrative and research work. Flexibility in duty timings and orientation to job responsibilities in each position were sought. Improved technological facilities at the workplace and on-campus accommodation facilities to make work–life balance easier were requested.

Women in Indonesia today are well qualified and they do not leave careers because of family responsibilities (Mishra, 2013). There are invisible barriers within the structure and function of the organizations, which need to be streamlined.

Women who have made advances in acquiring senior level positions report unique difficulties in their ascension to leadership roles in institutions of higher education (Chliwniak, 1997; Mahapatra & Gupta, 2013). Women experience biased attitudes, marginalization, and lack of support and acknowledgment from male colleagues (Bamji, 2005; Drury, 2010). Drury (2010) reports an incident wherein a female officer felt offended when a male co-worker questioned her as to how she got her job. The male colleague did not expect that she had that level of expertise when she explained her qualifications. Career paths to their leadership are often slower and sometimes even blocked (Ballenger, 2010). The attitude of men demoralizes and negatively affects women's self-esteem and performance (Steele, 1997). In addition, some of women in this study expressed disregard for their opinions, nonrecognition of their work, the disparity in the professional treatment, and less speed of their promotion.

The expressions of women in interview in this study inform that women still experience socialization driven male dominance, gender discrimination, and inequality, amid the national efforts to address them through gender sensitization. This study findings reveal that equality is articulated to some extent; however, women do not fully experience it in every endeavor.

Traveling a long distance to the workplace and long hours of work and safety concerns were considered a barrier to women faculties' academic productivity or ascension to leadership (Bamji, 2005; Kurup et al., 2010; Morley & Crossouard, 2015). In this study, distance does matter for women, especially when they depend on local transport in taking up the administrative positions (Green et al., 2004).

Additionally, women in this study perceived family responsibilities as one of the barriers for their readiness to senior leadership positions. However, women of today no longer leave careers because of family responsibilities, but they await opportunities where they can show their competence (Mishra, 2013). They must use available opportunities and take risks to excel. Thus, the best and foremost intervention to overcome barriers to a senior leadership position is to invest on recognizing the limitations within self and building own strengths.

The expectations or solutions vocalized by women as the selected participants of this study to overcome barriers at societal, family, and organizational levels are noteworthy. These measures collectively may help women perceive a conducive psychosocial work and living environment. Motivational talks, especially from women leaders; effective mentoring; training on gender sensitization and women empowerment; flexible

timings; due recognition of work performance; transparency in selection and promotion procedures (Ballenger, 2010; Banker & Banker, 2017; Kurup et al., 2010; Morley & Crossouard, 2015). Women's empowerment and recommendation for reserving seats for women only are valued at the national level in Indonesia. The institutions of higher education in Jambi Province need to remain open to the demands of women and build the necessary infrastructure to enable women to realize their career advancement goals or deliver quality output. With senior leadership positions being vacant at the institutions of higher education, authorities can recruit and select women in senior leadership positions or reserve a proportionate number of seats for women based on the enrolment in the programs set by higher education.

This study also reveals that the majority of women noticed unequal opportunities, autonomy in decision-making, and loss of opportunities for a senior position due to low expectations or negative attitude of men, and that they were perceived incapable of handling tough tasks. This reflects that the work environment in academia in both private and state public universities in Jambi province should be woman-friendly.

As participants of this study were predominantly from the government institutions (state university in Jambi Province), the scenario in private universities/institutions of higher education needs to be explored in depth. Small sample sizes, selection of colleges through convenient sampling, and the inclusion of only a few faculty members in interview are the limitation of this study. FGD of successful/ reputed female faculty in administrative position to identify the obstacles and perceived solutions would strengthen the findings. A study with a larger sample size would reveal a more reliable picture of the factors associated with readiness to take up an administrative position.

4. Conclusion

The opportunity for women to become leaders in higher education institutions is still widely opened even though they face many obstacles, such as limited space and opportunities given to them. More in-depth research on gender-based gaps in higher education needs to be carried out in various aspects to provide a clear description of women's opportunities to become leaders. Thus, a balanced number of leaders can be realized, serving as a foundation for gender mainstreaming in Indonesian higher education.

The findings of the study have implications for the education sector. Although study findings reflect that a woman-friendly work environment is evolving, factors that hinder the female faculties' decision to opt out or

decline senior leadership positions require genuine attention. Administrators in academia must identify and understand the issues faced by women in higher education. Support facilities and recognition of work performed by women require due consideration. Enhancing the managerial potential of women faculty and providing the necessary infrastructure and opportunities help them realize their goals of career advancement should be an ongoing process.

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