South African Higher Education Criris on Rising Women in Positions

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Post democracy after 1994, women in South Africa were appointed at leadership positions in all sectors, specifically higher educatrion. Before the year 2,000, in most organizations, women were underrepresented in positions due to men domination and previous discrimination of women. The study seeks to analyses aspects of Women's positions, which gives them a stable and secure position in the higher education, beyond walls of previous gender discrimination. Women who dominate holding positions offer distinctive viewpoints that contribute to workplace positivity, innovation, and decision-making. This study examines the challenges faced by women in their leadership positions and the influence of higher education practices. This investigation employs a secondary research methodology. A variety of reference sources, such as books and prior research, in order to establish a theoretical framework regarding women's leadership was applied. Content analysis is employed to synthesize and interpret pertinent data from sources published within the past decade, thereby guaranteeing the reliability of the information through expert commentary. The study finds that approximately 50% of rising women perceive barriers that prevent women for entering management positions and lower advancement rates for women. Women in leadership bully and humbles younger black females in subordinates' positions. The lack of mentors, lack of supportive policies and practices, overrepresentation in decision-making hampers women progress and Narcissistic behavior of women in leadership. The recommendation of the study encourages organizations to aim at good training programmers, strategies involve survey to know how subordinates are treated at work, leadership programs for women, and flexible work arrangements. Women in top positions needs skills, such as high emotional intelligence, empathy, democratic leadership style, sincerity, and ability to make decisions under critical circumstances. This study will contribute to influence the future of the organization to progress women leadership.

Keywords: women, leadership, effectiveness, career, future

Introduction

South African women and women in global higher education were previously discriminated in most developing countries before the down of democracy but through this upward dynamic reflects deliberate policies, advocacy, and social movements aimed at correcting previous gender imbalances and promoting equity in employment, education, and leadership though Commission for Gender Equality (CGE), was established in 1996 in terms of section 187 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa to address previous gender imbalances (Centre for Global Education, 2021). South African constitution promote goal of gender equality and it

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emphasizes equal opportunities for women to be appointed in leadership positions at all levels and in the other parts of the world like United States and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) countries (Saab, 2014). In early 2000s, the gap between men and women in top leadership positions in business organizations it was very alarming (Cannito, Naldini, & Santero, 2023). UNHCR (2021) states that 31% of senior leadership positions globally were held by women.

According to Grant Thornton (2015), women continue to be concentrated in management support functions, such as human resource director rather than in leadership roles, such as chief executive officer or chief operating officer. The key fact is that 24% of senior leadership positions is held by women, as shown in the respected source of The Institute for Women's Leadership's (Thornton, 2021). According to UNHCR (2021), 33% of women held leadership roles globally, however, the situation in Pakistan was much different. Even though women in Pakistan Parliament held 17% seats, but a report by Punjab Commission on Status of Women (2017) stated that the government presented 26 bills in the parliament in the year 2016, and out of all 26 bills, only one was proposed by women in leadership. The huge gap difference of gender imbalance in leadership was also identified in the women leaders' conference on Global Health in 2016 concerning women in health leadership positions as well as their demand on 50% gender based equal representations in global health leaderships by 2030 (Ottsen, 2019).

Scholars raised issues of lack of women in organization and to this date, there is a significant transformation that women have occupied so many organizational senior positions in South Africa institutions. The woman in leadership is becoming more popular and acceptable in the public eyes, because more women hold leadership positions as women have to make decisions and more sacrifices for parenthood and family care to progress in organizational goals. The competition of women to be known as the first woman to be a leader of a certain organization have influenced many women to take senior positions in organizations disregards public and media negative criticism (Thornton, 2021).

Research Methodology

This paper used qualitative research method. The investigation employs a secondary data collection. A variety of reference sources, such as books and prior research, in order to establish a theoretical framework regarding women's leadership was applied. Content analysis is employed to synthesize and interpret pertinent data from sources published within the past decade, thereby guaranteeing the reliability of the information through expert commentary. The study has obtained data from government websites and international organizations' reports, civil societies publications, books, articles, newspapers, and government documents.

The study is grounded on Feminist theory (Liberal and postmodern Feminism). Liberal feminism provides a lens of understanding historical marginalized of women at workplaces and their progressive rise into positions and authority (Friedan, 1963). Postmodern feminism question binary gender roles and brings attention to how leadership is gendered. The application of this theory explains the system efforts made to integrate rising women through affirmative action and gender equality policies (Hooks, 1981). It highlights how leadership ideals and institutional values are shifting to reflect more relational, inclusive, and empathetic approach often claimed to be associated with women. It raises questions about whether the institutional prioritization of female advancement might unintentionally overshadow gender-equitable development strategies, particularly for young men development.

Positivity on Women Advancement in Higher Education

It has been a standard that most organizations function effectively with a leader who symbolizes humility and a positive spirit towards it but with strength to take decisions in an institution. Leadership entails influencing people to achieve organizational goals with certain leadership styles (Daft, Kenrick, & Vershinina, 2010). Effective leadership is considered universal that included leaders as team players, value-based participative, and humane while rejecting autonomous leadership that is based on competition status-conscious and self-centered. Most women who are in senior positions leads effectively and efficiency to increase profits and productivity in organizations due to their ability to improve the quality of management and diversity due to their abilities of multitasking and pay attention into details (Han & Noland, 2020). The effectiveness of women in leadership is seen due to their charismatic leadership style and trust relationships that they build with their team members, which enhance employees' achievement of goals in organizations (Akkaya & Bagieńska, 2022).

Many women face a lot of challenges that might affect their positions effectiveness, because they are judged harshly if they use the same type of language that men do (i.e., have a loud voice and domineering manner), their performance is evaluated differently, and they are not supported by their peers (Porter, 2023). Another challenge is that women's involvement in both executive and political leadership, is often determined by the attitude of society that observes women as housewives and caregivers in the days of female's slavery (Fanning, Williams, & Williamson, 2021). These challenges reduce women's opportunities to obtain leadership positions, particularly, because there is a need to behave based on what others expect a leader looks like (Dessie, 2021). The underlying factor that management of organizations do not pay attention is a matter of women in senior positions gate keep young females to pursue their careers and be promoted to better or senior positions while they are still young (Wu et al., 2021). The daily bullying and creating red tapes that prevent young females to excel knowing there are no consequences on their names, but it affects the organization (Post, Latu, & Belkin, 2019). Holding a young vibrant woman down on same position for decades has affects the organization negatively. While the Woman in leadership practices such bullying behavior for their own selfish gains (Cannito et al., 2023).

Barriers Affecting Women's Advancement in Positions

Most females are labeled hysterical or psycho analyzed whenever they are assertive and speak louder, and it has not happened with men (Heilman, 2001). This results in suppressing women in leadership to be humble and lower their voices when addressing employees of which it is received in a light feminine energy that may be disobeyed (Heilman, 2001).

There are three different levels on barriers of rising women challenges at workplace, challenges in the home, and challenges at the individual level. The data under different themes are presented below:

Workplace Challenges

Dealing with gender stereotypes. Some traits that are linked to men and women, such as men displaying self-assurance, aggression, and autonomy, while women display empathy and kindness. These mental associations are also linked to leadership roles, and these mental barriers as discrimination in advancing women in their careers (Akkaya, 2020). The results revealed traits like strengths, ambition, and self-confidence for men and dedication, and team players for women, which supported these stereotypes. In addition, women were also thought to be more attractive, empathic, optimistic, dedicated, and attentive (Heilman, 2021). Men's attentive

behavior is always emphasized, while women who exhibit the same behaviors are not. In the same way, men's unhelpful behavior is ignored, while it is not the case with women. In this case, rising women today, often rely on venting all these challenges over young females' employees, because they are fragile, kind, and tolerate the burden at work than males (Saab, 2014). Men tend to overestimate their skills while women tend to underestimate them (Post et al., 2019). Some participants emphasized the gender stereotypes that women experience when working in their current leadership positions, including the women always talk and think about relationships, and men often discuss politics and sports.

The most challenge of rising women is the hard pill to swallow that women are emotional, and it is easy to deal with because the competition with them is not at the same level (Wolfram, Alfermann, & Athenstaedt, 2020). Therefore, they lead with emotions that may swing according to how they feel that time even when they are taking decisions, women often take decisions based on their emotions which most of the times damages the reputations of the organizations. Women involve continuous questioning, judging, and facing prejudices in their careers by those women in senior positions (Fanning et al., 2021). It is a silence norm that women leaders managing men as colleagues, subordinates, and bosses is itself a challenge, and men take this as a challenge to their masculinity and behave very strangely. They are not receptive to accepting women as bosses (Eagly & Carli, 2003).

Challenges at Home

Work family imbalance. Most woman has to go through and fulfill the demands of family life during her career. Women in leadership continue to work after their jobs in the household which is more than a man. Eagly and Carli (2003) further stated that women in leadership spend more hours on household chores or guiding the helper at home in a week than men. The household chores and childcare are the responsibility of women in South Africa and most practiced in developing countries mostly in Africa and married women having children do double or sometimes triple childcare and household work (Fanning et al., 2021). The women who hired helpers in the household, turns to be the females and only women interact or supervise them than males (Cheung & Halpem, 2010). It is a known norm that even if they are outside from home for office work and the husband had to take care of the children, in case of sickness, they asked the child to call your mother and get advice from her. This is not equal balance of men and women in leadership but a challenge for women in leadership positions and it is difficult to think about equality in this regard (Porter, 2023). Most women think that childcare and household is their responsibility, and at the same time, men also think that it is women's responsibility to take care of the household and children (Wolfram et al., 2020). Modern women in leadership positions are not only supporting the family financially, but also they must look after the household which is a double or triple burden on women (Johnson & Lacerenza, 2018). It is likely to be women's duty to do household chores therefore women in leadership are not exceptional to such activities. Women are always pointed by the family if they enter late at home and asked me to lighten my work and spend more with the family and it is not the case with men as they worked late hours, it is expected to be late (Porter, 2023). It is because of the expectations that women in leadership ended up with more to family than their careers as compared to men in leadership positions. When women in leadership have small kids, they try to reduce their workload and do not participate in any official outside activities and spend more time at home (Heilman, 2001). Their work schedule changes, and such women turn to become less productive at work and focus on home and children (Wu et al., 2021). There is a challenge of work-family imbalance that women leaders faced particularly women who are in managerial positions, heads

of departments, directors of the centers which is already time-consuming and important positions in the institutions and women in these positions still have to take care of their families and households (Post et al., 2019).

Cheung and Halpern (2010) argued that women in leadership positions who are mothers are considered multitasking and they never take work and family experience as two separate lives. If it can take different and the responsibilities can be balance and household chores are shared by both men and women, it could be an opportunity for women in leadership to pursue their careers in a possible way further. Children learn to model behavior by admiring their loved figures and in childhood, the modeling figures are mostly their own parents before they turn to look outsiders inspirational (Wolfram et al., 2020). They learn to behave about how their parents behaved during their childhood. Looking mothers at work, show their children that women can work and have a family while the sexist education confuses them about their future life. Most children wanted to do a job as they saw their mother working (Porter, 2023). Meaning women in leadership turns to become their own children's role models. African educational system does not train men to do household chores and help working women by sharing their responsibilities (Johnson & Lacerenza, 2018).

Challenges at Individual Level

Physical appearance for upward mobility. The most challenge facing women in leadership is physical appearance is another gender bias that women in leadership faced at workplace Eagly and Carli (2003). The physical appearance of women is associated with their job as women in leadership positions are judged on their dressing, hair styling, and they are asked to change their dressing and hairstyling as compared to men in leadership positions at their workplaces, as no one comments on men's physical appearance (Fanning et al., 2021). These women in leadership faced comments on their dressing. Women in leadership also faces challenges on their weights, things that are not necessary to the employment progress (Fapohunda, 2018). All these comments actual not only feel women devalue in their work contribution, but also play a role as an obstacle to advance in their career in leadership positions (Heilman, 2001). All these demerits of women in leadership positions faces and causes a serious problem in showing their leadership skills as these are the problems that men in leadership positions do not face at their workplace.

Obstacles for family oriented rising female. Most obstacles that affect rising women in positions in South Africa, the average family size range from four to five persons, and women bear the extra pressure of society to have children within the first year of their marriage (Porter, 2023). This leads to an increase in the family size and the larger the family size, less the chances to manage positions for rising women as compared to men in leadership would excel in their positions. It is seen that women in leadership without children face less prejudice in their positions like men in leadership positions (Heilman, 2021). It was realized that women who remain unmarried often reached higher position and excel in leading the higher education like men in their leadership's positions due to lesser pressure of children and time sharing at home and at office (Wu et al., 2021). That is why if women who cannot multitask will find it difficult to maintain effective in their positions as these challenges are not confronted by men in leadership positions (Eagly & Carli, 2003).

Fapohunda (2018) defined the term glass ceiling as refers to the undetectable barriers that prohibits women from progressing in their leadership positions inside the organizations they serve. Most women in leaderships are faced with a unique obstacle as a result of this occurrence, which hinders their advancement to positions of leadership and restricts their effectiveness in their positions of authority and influence at higher levels within the

organization (Wolfram et al., 2020). Although women need to achieve their leadership roles in their positions, they frequently have to overcome the glass ceiling, which is a persistent and systemic challenge (Johnson & Lacerenza, 2018). This phenomenon is also connected to the sticky floor effect, which takes place when women who are unable or unwilling to break through the glass ceiling are confined to low-paying occupations that are dominated by women and have few chances for flexibility (Porter, 2023). When referring to the need of avoiding the glass ceiling, which may result in a lack of possibilities for many women to move beyond entry-level employment, the metaphor of an adhesive floor is used to emphasize the significance of this issue.

In spite of these, it also shows that there are certain women who may be able to overcome these obstacles and gain positions of greater authority. Kaftandzieva and Nakov (2021) emphasised that first step in a woman's career as a leader is frequently her success in breaking over the glass ceiling. In addition, breaking through the glass ceiling involves more than simply the efforts of individuals, it also demands the adaptation of organizations and the backing of those organizations. It is found that most women in leadership are reluctant and turns to delay providing women with assistance in overcoming these obstacles requires the implementation of policies that promote gender equality, as well as mentoring programs and leadership training to reach leadership positions in the organizations (Fanning et al., 2021). By cultivating an inclusive culture that places a high priority on a variety of leadership styles, organizations have a responsibility to actively work toward the elimination of these invisible barriers. Both the glass ceiling and the sticky floor effects can be addressed by businesses in order to establish a more egalitarian atmosphere in which women are afforded equal opportunities to achieve success and take leadership roles without being prevented and sabotaged by women who want to be called "irst black woman" to lead respective organizations (Akkaya, 2021).

The gender stereotypes characteristics with women in leadership. In line with this preconceived notion, women in leadership were not seen to be appropriate for positions of authority. It is seen as, masculine stereotypes are typically associated with agency, whereas female clichés are frequently associated with communality (Beehler, 2023). According to Porter (2023), in developing countries, women previously have traditionally been regarded as caregivers who are not prepared to participate in the workforce especially in leadership. The women in leadership positions are said to perpetuate and contribute to gender biases through the imposition of certain limits and expectations on themselves (also known as "should" or "should not"), according to prescriptive gender stereotypes regarding women and starts developing females and hoping male leaders will be develop young males (Wolfram et al., 2020). That in the past resulted in women being subjected to discrimination on a consistent basis, even in workplaces leadership positions where the gender ratio is equal (Saab, 2014). As a result of a woman's deviation from the stereotyped gender norms, there is a lack of compatibility between the woman and the job or task that is being evaluated. Fanning et al. (2021) emphasised that this contributes to the perpetuation of cultural expectations surrounding gender roles, which in turn influences the evaluations of persons who demonstrate diverse attitudes and behaviors. A woman in leadership position who is forceful and takes on leadership responsibilities, is likely to be seen as less warm and inviting than a woman in leadership position who exhibits typical feminine features (Johnson & Lacerenza, 2018). Thus, is seen as if aggressive women tend to lead by example. It is possible that she will be subjected to discriminatory treatment and poor assessments (Porter, 2023).

The challenge on self-gender stereotypes that women in leadership positions have a tendency to tolerate discrimination and prejudice that is based on gender stereotypes (Wu et al., 2021). So as, women in leadership have a tendency to underestimate how others perceive them, whereas men in leadership positions frequently have a tendency to exaggerate how others perceive them. Akkaya (2020) revealed that implicit biases against women

continue to exist within organizations, particularly with regard to the manner in which the outcomes of men and women in leadership positions differ based on their own judgments. While women who underrate their leadership activities earn higher scores on perceived risk of derailment and poorer performance evaluations from their supervisors, women who overrate their leadership behaviors receive higher scores on both of these metrics (Wolfram et al., 2020). Male leadership, on contrary, are less likely to suffer adverse effects when they are overestimated. As a result of gender stereotypes and the role congruity hypothesis of prejudice, which suggests that women who underrate their leadership conduct may achieve better outcomes, there is a bias against women who hold leadership positions (Saab, 2014).

The think manager—think male mentality on the competency and leadership style of a leader in senior positions is a contributing factor in the challenges that women in leadership faces when they are in positions of leadership authority (Post et al., 2019). Another reason that men in leadership are favored in organizations is because of the subjective attributes of leadership that are associated with masculinity. When women in leadership positions are usually viewed as being more democratic, transformative, and interpersonally focused due to their motherly nature (Johnson & Lacerenza, 2018). Men in leadership are more likely to embrace authoritarian and transactional leadership styles that are in accordance with masculine stereotypes. Authoritarian leadership, which is a style of leadership that is both directive and powerful, and in which the leader is the one who makes decisions for the group, has been shown to be more strongly related with traditional male gender roles and values (Johnson & Lacerenza, 2018). Due to a consequence, civilizations in African countries that are dominated by men tend to support it. Wolfram et al. (2020) contributed that men in leadership are more likely to be considered as important leaders when they demonstrate forceful and robust behavior. When, women who exhibit comparable behavior may not be viewed positively. African way of leadership is embraced through force, aggression, and masculinity.

The think crisis—think women preconception says that women are more adept at managing crises and hard conditions due to their nurturing and compassionate natures (Porter, 2023). This is because women are good in negotiations with their polite soft voices and in African countries it is not associated with leadership. According to Post et al. (2019) women in leadership positions were more likely to be appreciated as leaders during times of crisis. That is in terms of the fact that emergencies require leadership attributes that are not normally associated with man in leadership. It is important to note that the perception of the suitability of leaders for crisis leadership jobs is significantly influenced by gendered characteristics as well as the nature of the Problem and women in leadership traits, such as assertiveness and empathy, are vitally importance, and it contributes to a significant influence on the perception of leadership suitability in times of crisis (Wu et al., 2021).

Findings

The study finds that in South Africa, higher education have appointed a lot of rising women in willing based on quantity not quality, to balance the gender transformation than appointing women in senior positions who qualifies obtaining leadership skills post 2020 as a results of gender transformation. Such have consequences in higher education when employees are bullied and made to compete. It is hard to have a leader who make you their own competitor when they are above you and having to work under their leadership. Women suffer challenges of emotional swings that often get into their way of decision making and results into playing the man not the ball. Rising women in sernior positions target young black females at institutions to take advantage of as they are not reported and often ignoring the victim, because there is a public believe that a woman cannot abuse or bully a person. Women are mainly judged on what resources they utilize at the organizations, who they are

dating than the progress they make at work. Public and media should judge rising women in positions with their skills and competencies for the position of leadership and progress of the institutions.

Conclusions

The South African rising women in positions are facing challenge of continuously required to negotiate between competing expectations with men in leadership of which is not possible due to different gender responsibilities outside the organizations, which can contribute to severe psychological stress for them. This mental health may have an impact on their overall job performance as well as their level of happiness with their profession. It is the responsibility of the organizations to acknowledge and address these challenges by cultivating a culture that supports various leadership styles. These women in leadership would lead effectively and efficiently in their positions with the implementation of supportive policies, such as mentorship programs and leadership development initiatives. These policies make it possible for women in leadership positions to serve in an effectively without the need to comply to competing stereotypes or bullying subordinates due to their emotions and other mental disorders that can be triggered by home and work stress. By doing so, companies have the ability to create an environment that is more inclusive with the goal of allowing all leaders in the organizations, regardless of gender, to flourish. In addition, rising women challenges are significantly impacted by internal factors. The women's self-gender stereotypes and internalized biases influence their self-efficacy, career choices, and self-evaluation. The dread of confirming negative stereotypes and the pressure to conform to gender expectations can erode the confidence and aspirations of women in leadership positions. These challenges are further exacerbated by gender stereotype threats, as women in minority positions frequently endure increased scrutiny and psychological burdens from fellow rising women in positions.

Recommendations

1. Rising women in positions needs training programmes to tolerate and have empathy to view their subordinates' young females as a future for the higher education;

2. There should be fair judgement on women by the public, employees, and media to focus on their work not private life issues;

3. The targeted young black females taken advantage of by female leaders needs to be heard and be protected;

4. Employees in higher education should attend training that includes embracing women in leadership to be treated with respect like men in leadership;

5. Rising women in positions needs consistent training for emotional intelligence balance. To be able to control their emotional swings in the higher education;

6. Higher education should not appoint women in senior positions because they want to balance the gender but appoint women according to proven skills.

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