

GENDERED CAREER PRODUCTIVITY AND SUCCESS IN ACADEMIA: A CHALLENGE TO ISLAMIC HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

People working in the academic settings aim to achieve better personal development including but not limited to an increase in remuneration, climbing up the ladder in the organizational hierarchy, and occupying higher level of positions. In return, successful attainment to these objectives will benefit organizations. Within the global competition era, universities face new challenges never encountered before. Members' expertise emerges as one of the crucial human assets to raise the bargaining positions and competitive advantages of the university. A full development of staff potentials is crucial in the efforts to produce the best labor market. Failure to fulfill this endeavor would mean not only wasting important talents the staff would offer to the organization but also opening the path to a lower performance of staff and the organization alike.

Career advancement in Indonesian academia is nationally regulated and all regulations should be adopted into practices. This, in theory, provides equal opportunities for men and women to be productive and successful. It is argued here, however, that instigating formal human resource policies alone may not ensure the associated processes and practices are equal (Loughlin, 2000). Informal structure and organizational culture may override the formal policy (Ismail, 2008). The question remains whether the implemented policy and practices affect the university staff similarly or differently, especially when gender is taken into account.

The purpose of this study is to analyze gender effects on academic career productivity and success. Seven-hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed randomly to eight Islamic Higher Education Institutions in seven provinces, from which 220 (Men = 57.7%, and Women = 42.3%) respondents returned the questionnaires with an analyzable quality. Descriptive and multivariate analyses were employed for analyzing and presenting the results. The study found that women in Islamic Higher Education Institutions were less productive in terms of publications, held lower academic rank and leadership positions, and earn significantly less than men. The results suggest that Islamic Higher Education Institutions should provide specific empowerment for women by, for example, providing support for their continuing education, professional development, and career opportunities.

Keywords: gender, academia, career productivity, career success, Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Within the global competition era, fueled with the advances in technology, universities face new challenges never encountered before. Members' expertise emerges as one of the crucial human assets to raise the bargaining positions and competitive advantages of the university. Career management is and should be a significant component in the policy development of the university because the value and the quality of the university are often evaluated on whether their staff members are productive and whether their products are accepted and contribute the best in the labor market. A full development of staff potentials is crucial in the efforts to produce the best labor market. Failure to fulfill this endeavor would mean not only wasting important talents the staff would offer to the organization but also opening the path to a lower performance of staff and the organization alike.

Career advancement in Indonesian academia is nationally regulated and all regulations should be adopted into practices. This, in theory, provides equal opportunities for women and men to have academic products equally and, then, to achieve an equitable success. It is argued here, however, that instigating formal human resource policies alone may not ensure the associated processes and practices are equal (Loughlin, 2000), thereby resulting in equal productivity and success among staff members. In addition, informal structure and organizational culture may override the formal policy (Ismail, 2008). For example, the equally perceived distribution of resources may end up in favoring a certain group of staff members. The question remains whether the implemented policy and practices affect the university staff similarly or differently, especially when gender is taken into account. The purpose of this study is to analyze gender effects on career productivity and career success among men and women academics in Indonesian academia.

Gender and career productivity. Generally, career productivity in academia is measured through three pillars of academic activities: teaching, research, and community service. The evaluation results of these activities are often used as a basis for promotion; however, the weighing approach applied to the three activities depends on the university system. Similarly, in Indonesian academia staff members are evaluated against the basic purpose of university management and operation, called *Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi* (Three Main Duties of Higher Education) (Indonesian Govt., 1999). The activities should be performed by all academic staff members are detailed which include education, teaching, research, publications, community service, and supporting activities (Coordinating Minister, 1999). Thus, all academic staff members are expected

to meet these standards during their career. Academic staff failing to meet these criteria may be subjected to being unproductive.

Academic career literature indicates that women are less productive than men. In publication, for example, several studies revealed consistent results; men publish more than women in most of the scientific fields (Hemmings, Rushbrook, & Smith, 2007). D'Amico and Canetto (2010) found that men have a higher publication rate and impact than women, as well as have more publications. In the field of ecology and evolutionary biology men published almost 40% more papers than women on average (Symonds, Gemmill, Braisher, Gorringer, & Elgar, 2006). Another study found that women have up to 35% fewer publications than men (Kirchmeyer, 2006). In addition, Hancock and Baum (2010) found that men scored modestly higher than women in the publication of articles and book chapters, but not books. The most recent research also found that women published fewer articles throughout their careers than men (Reed, Enders, Lindor, McClees, & Lindor, 2011).

Previous research also indicates that compared to men women faculty members prefer to spend a greater percentage of their time on teaching, while men prefer to spend more time on research; and to spend a greater percentage of their workweek on teaching and a smaller percentage on research than men (Winslow, 2010). There is also a tendency that women face a difficulty in attending academic conferences due to domestic arrangements, especially when the conference takes few days (Berges, 2011). What these literatures suggest is that women are less likely able to meet the academic work compared to their male counterparts.

Gender and career success. Career success has been defined as the positive psychological or work-related outcomes or achievements individuals have accumulated as a result of their work experiences (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, & Feldman, 2005, p. 368). Career success is typically conceptualized along two dimensions: objective (extrinsic) and subjective (intrinsic) (De Pater, 2005, p. 12).

Objective career success is the structural and public aspect of a person's career, as measured against objective, verifiable and measurable (in an interpersonal way) criteria such as span of control, income or salary level, advancement or promotion rank, and occupational status (Kern, Friedman, Martin, Reynolds, & Luong, 2009). Subjective career success, on the other hand, is the individual's assessment of both objective and subjective rewards in his or her career, i.e., the meaning that individuals attribute to their career and its evaluation according to personal criteria such as satisfaction. The subjective judgment is influenced by both objective criteria and individual aspiration levels, social comparisons to relevant others, and situational constraints such as opportunities for advancement in a profession (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001).

Women holding lower leadership positions can be explained from leadership selection process, organizational bias, and individual factor. The selection of leadership position involves a degree of political activity (Davey, 2008; Tiao, 2006) and to succeed as senior leaders in the political environment, political astuteness is an inevitable and indispensable requirement (Cantor & Bernay, 1992). However, in many societies, women are encouraged to take on the supportive and nurturing roles instead of the competitive and aggressive roles; they are socialized not to desire power; and tend to be less trained in the skills needed to play the political workplace games (Tiao, 2006). Because of lacking in political socialization and training, many women may not only view words such as “politics” and “strategies” as dirty, but may also feel uncomfortable talking about them openly (Albino, 1992). A further effect is that women may have less desire for power; will not often admit to want to battle for a position; appear reluctant to play the game in the system; and are likely to lack confidence and competitiveness when it comes to the political game (Oplatka & Tamir, 2009).

The workplace has been male dominated for a long time, thus they are organized around and support men’s work styles and life cycles, even those that appear to be “gender-neutral” and meritocratic (Acker, 1990; Ely & Meyerson, 2000). This leads to the so called “old-boys” networks which is reluctant to let women join in (Wenniger & Conroy, 2001), and often ignores and discourages women from seeking leadership roles within universities (Crampton & Mishra, 1999). The prevalence of a more dominant masculine culture will generate gender bias, prejudice, and discrimination towards women (Ismail, 2008). Women may feel less attracted to leadership position, especially the top ones, not because of their ability, but because of their organizational (male) culture preferences (Vianen & Fischer, 2002). Male domination may lead the next recruitment of future leaders to conform to the gender of the majority of existing leaders.

Finally, due to the lower qualification (education and productivity) women were more likely to self-limit because they felt they were not fulfilling the requirements for a (higher) leadership positions. In contrast, because more male than female have higher qualifications, the number of men fulfilling the requirements would higher. When more male applicants outnumber female applicants, men are more likely to be recruited for a leadership position.

Women earning less income than men may be explained by their lower academic rank and leadership position. The salary scheme operated in the state universities is solely based on the levels Public Civil Servant (PCS) rank and academic rank. There are automatic two-yearly salary increase and the incidence of salary adjustment by the government that is provided for all lecturers regardless of gender. Thus, the income of men and women in the same levels of PCS and academic ranks would have to be the same. An income gap between men and women may be explained

from the differences in the levels of academic rank and of a certain position they may hold, and frequency of other income-generating activities they perform, such as publications. Thus, it is unlikely that gender background *per se* produces income gap.

Women and men in are equally satisfied with their career. This finding did not support early findings (e.g., Okpara, et al., 2005; Sabharwal & Corley, 2009) that generally men are more satisfied with their academic work than women. The result of this study also did not confirm early finding by Baş and Ardıç (2002) that in general lecturers in state universities are less satisfied with their jobs compared to those in private universities. Lecturers in this study may perceive their work environment and outcome as having matched their need and expectation.

Previous studies indicate that women are less engaged in work than men (Burke & El-Kot, 2010; Otwori & Xiangping, 2010). We found that female and male academics have equal level of work engagement. This suggests that expectation of organization towards women and men are the same. Thus, gender base expectations on work for men and women are not prevalence in ISHEIs. Men and women academics put similar efforts during their career, despite their productivity and success are different. Finally, academic work seems to provide flexibility (Beninger, 2010) so that pressure of home can be managed as such that men and women are able to fully engage in work.

IMPLICATION

The findings of the present study have contributed to the better understanding of career productivity and success among female and male academics in Indonesian academia. The literature on careers has not paid much attention to gender-based career dynamics in diverse cultures, and particularly in third-world countries such as Indonesia (Kim, 2004). The present research attempts to fill the gap in research about career productivity and success by supplying empirical career research for Indonesian academia. In fact, this study represents one of the first to investigate comprehensively the nature of gendered-academic career in Indonesia, and more specifically within the Islamic State Higher Education Institutions (ISHEIs).

The results of the present study should lead to a better understanding of men and women career productivity and success during their career in academia. The fact that women publish less, have lower academic rank and leadership positions, and earn less than men deserves a comprehensive policy. The policy makers in the central department and the individual university should take necessary measures to make the organizations better facilitate the growth and the development of all members. The Islamic State Higher Education Institutions (ISHEIs) could introduce specific training for women in writing skills and provide financial and motivational support for publications. Partnership in publishing between women-men or women-women need to be encourage

