

Challenges Faced by Women Administrators in their Workplace

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Abstract—The identification of challenges faced by women administrators in their workplace was carried out in this research. A total of 124 women in the public and 124 in the private agencies were interviewed in the 6th district of Pangasinan province, Philippines. The random sample method was employed. Most of the women administrators belong to early adulthood, married, with lesser children and totally hold a bachelor's degree, new on their corresponding positions, continue to improve and develop their expertise by attending seminars and trainings. With regards to promotion, the majority answered they got it on a merit basis, with equal time, and had work as much as their colleagues. The majority did not experience sexual and mental harassment issues such as sharing of sexually inappropriate images or videos, anecdotes gestures, lewd jokes, and touches. On family care issues, most of them are not granted workplace privileges such as benefits for full maternity leave, special leave, also some turned down promotions, not permitted an official time for travel or pass slip when medical check-up is scheduled during working days, and to reduce their work hours to care children / family members and to attend to their activities. They dedicated most of their time to their jobs, depriving them on the opportunities to engage in various community activities such as job-related activities, membership to registered organizations, livelihood program, non-government and joining clean-up activities. With these, organizational policies must be formulated as basis for development advocacy program to help women administrators to give their best to balance harmony in work – family and community involvement.

Key words — community involvement, family care, promotion, sexual and mental harassment

I. INTRODUCTION

During earlier days, there were boundaries for women, but now women play vital roles and are accepted for their value. Women today are breaking that boundary, it is estimated almost half the global workforce account to women and are playing the dual role of balancing household life as well as professional life, giving boost to their societal status in the process.

The role of women has changed dramatically in the past years. The ratio of women attending college, entering from graduate studies, and acquiring doctorate degrees has intensified dramatically. No

longer are women associated with low expectations both in education and the workforce. Women now seek and obtain the highest leadership roles in education, professions, and business. Global companies are making some progress getting more women into senior leadership. Report shows that the countries leading the way across the globe are France, Iceland and Norway, with more than 40% female representation on company boards. Studies prove that having females in leadership roles can help organizations forge a deeper connection with their customers, inspire other women employees, and boost employee engagement.

However, based on reports, at the other end of the scale, Japan, Indonesia and Korea currently have the lowest percentage of female leadership roles. Women in management and leadership positions are only about 27%. There is still a significant gap between male and female employees in management, though opportunities for women have grown in the workplace. Discrimination face females, many still struggle to keep senior-leadership positions.

According to several research studies, the different age group of women administrators have different kinds of challenges faced at stake in the workplace. Some challenges encountered are mental and physical stress such as promotion issues, sexual harassment, family care issues and involvement in various activities. That's why it is necessary to build an environment where women can breathe freely without fear of oppression, exploitation, and discrimination.

OBJECTIVES

This research was conducted to find out the challenges face by women administrators in their workplace which pose difficulties for them and what credible solutions and coping mechanisms can be formulated to help them lessen such challenges, so that women administrators can understand their own value and ability to face these complications in different ways. Specifically, it sought to: (1) determine the profile of the respondents that posed challenges in their workplace; (2) find out the work-related challenges faced by women administrators on: (a) promotion

issues, (b) sexual and mental harassment, (c) family care issues; and (d) community involvement.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Socio-demographic Profile of the respondents. Women occupying administrative positions decline as they get older, this may indicate the higher likelihood of women to withdraw from the labor force for marriage, childbirth and childrearing [Cabegin and Gaddi, 2019]. Findings on economic research have shown that career interruptions related to motherhood may make it harder for women to advance in their careers and compete for top executive jobs, moreover, few adults point to this as a key barrier for women seeking leadership roles [Pew Research Center, 2013]. Also, a woman with leadership aspirations is better off having children until she is well established with leadership roles [Pew Research Center, 2015]. Likewise, acquisition of a diploma increases the likelihood of a female's participation in the labor market with the most significant uptake observed for those who have completed a college education [Cabegin and Gaddi, 2019]. Besides, the pipeline for female leaders seems to be widening. Women have made significant gains in educational attainment in recent decades, better positioning themselves not only for career success but also for leadership positions. Since the 1990s, women have outnumbered their counterparts in both college enrollment and college completion rates, reversing a trend that lasted through the 1960s and '70s. And women today are more likely than men to continue their education after college [Pew Research Center, 2015]. Further, success in any administrative position may not be directly attributed to the length of time that one indulges in her chosen career. Being in an administrative position, it is a vital factor to their situation to be well-rounded in their field and are committed to upgrade their knowledge and skills to enhance further their capabilities as administrators [Loyola, 2016].

On promotion issues. Despite women's ongoing empowerment, their presence in the highest leadership and decision-making positions continues to lag. As of 2012, only fifty-two women have held cabinet-level positions in U.S. history [CAWP 2012]. In 2013, a petition by the Women's Media Center urged President Barack Obama to appoint the first female chair to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) [Bruns 2013]. On the other hand, in the Philippines, there are 11 women cabinet-level positions from 2010 to 2020 [PSA, 2020]. The difference that women make is real and valuable despite performance results. However, an empirical approach is important because of the conflicting

messages about the progress of women in the zeitgeist: women are portrayed as having already achieved equality; told to work harder to overcome barriers; and asked to accept that they just cannot "have it all." Emerging research reveals that companies led by women perform better [Barsh and Yee 2011]. Public administration research examines the differences that women make. Women's contributions during the progressive era underscore the relevance of social justice to the field of public administration and have had wide-ranging implications for the field and for society. Providing evidence of the difference women make is fundamental. Without it, there are risks relegating the inclusion of the role of women to mere empowerment and a battle between the sexes, when it is in fact a meaningful and critical component of equity and justice [D'Agostino, 2019]. Performance has the potential of providing evidence of the difference women make, however, all must recognize that performance does not occur in a vacuum. Evidence should be contextualized within the broader social and organizational context to accurately determine whether women are improving agency performance. In other words, for performance to be a valid measure of the difference women make in agencies, people cannot rule out perceptions of both sexes roles and images. These perceptions are not separate from organizational and society. For example, difficulty in separating societal expectations from organizational expectations is seen in work-life issues [Alkadry and Tower 2014]. As evidenced by a plethora of research, women's increased involvement in decision-making and leadership positions [Volden, Wiseman, and Witter 2013]. Furthermore, companies with three or more women board directors outperformed those with none. Similarly, a 2011 Catalyst report found a 26% difference in return on invested capital (ROIC) between top-quartile companies, which had between 19-44% female board representation, and bottom-quartile companies, none of which had woman directors [Barsh and Yee 2011].

On sexual and mental harassment issues. Sexual harassment is more prevalent for women supervisors than for women employees. This pattern holds in the 3 studied countries – the US, Japan, and Sweden – where women supervisors are between 30-100% more likely to have been sexually harassed. Among supervisors, the risk is larger in lower-and mid-level positions of leadership and when subordinates are mostly male. Findings showed that harassment of women supervisors happens despite their greater likelihood of taking action against the abuser, and that supervisors face more professional and social retaliation after their harassment experience. Therefore, sexual harassment is a workplace hazard that raises the costs for women

to pursue leadership ambitions [Folke, et.al., 2020]. Another research has highlighted how women's advancement may involve a "paradox of power": rather than reducing exposure to sexual harassment, power in the workplace seems to put women at greater risk. In a pathbreaking study of 300 US women in their thirties, sociologists found higher rates of harassment among women who had reached supervisory positions. Moreover, women supervisors may experience higher rates of harassment either because they find themselves in settings with more men and therefore more potential perpetrators—however, a small portion of perpetrators might be of the population—or, more insidiously, because some men use harassment as a way to bring women down [McLaughlin, et.al., 2012]. Furthermore, women face increasing levels of sexual harassment as they gain workplace power. The workplace hazard of sexual harassment adds a burden for women who pursue supervisory positions, as evidenced by the hundreds of empirical studies showing that sexual harassment damages, among other things, the victim's psychological well-being, productivity at work, and sense of belongingness in the workplace [McDonald, 2012]. Thus, this suggests that power in the workplace does not protect women from sexual harassment [Travis and White, 2018].

On family care issues. $Work\ Life + Family\ Life = Busy\ Life$ is a constant formula wherever you go in the world. Managing a dynamic career alongside parental obligations is a balancing act that nobody would ever call 'easy'. According to Professor Jean Lee "the biggest challenge for women in leadership who also want to be parents is Chinese deep-rooted traditional belief that 'women should take care of the family while men should earn the living for the family'" is still perpetuated, even though female participation in China's labor force participation is one of the highest in the world at around 60%. Regardless, the primary responsibility of family and childcare still largely lies on women's shoulders. There remains an assumption that balancing these obligations with a career is the 'women's problem', rather than, 'our family problem' or even a 'company talent challenge'. Moreover, the professor points out the added pressure and frequent frustration attached to double standards when it comes to measuring women's success. For a woman to be seen as successful in the eyes of her family, colleagues and society, she must be highly engaged, competent and 'present' in both roles [Sandberg's 2013]. Career interruptions related to motherhood may make it harder for women to advance in their careers and compete for top executive jobs, relatively few adults point to this as a key barrier for women seeking leadership roles [PEW Research Center 2015]. Only about one-in-five say women's family responsibilities

are a major reason there aren't more females in top leadership positions in business and politics. And an analysis of women's impact in terms of organization and purpose—shows that their influence leads to greater motivation and better results. One benefit of female leadership is an increase in measures to promote work-family balance, which is important for country development as well as for improving families' quality of life. The presence of women on management teams has a positive influence on the social motivations and achievements of organizations. With women at the helm, companies are more inclined to introduce family-friendly policies [de Castro, 2018].

Community Involvement. Human resources policies might be the first area targeted for change, with the aim of fostering work-family-social activities balance. It should come as no surprise that multiple studies have concluded that women in organization prefer to maintain a balance between work-family-community life, delaying, in some cases, their growth as company leaders. Similarly, an organization's composition influences its objectives, with the social component accounting for a larger share of its main challenges. These sensibilities also spread to other aspects of the company, such as respect for the environment and operational ethics. Given this profile and the equality gap at traditional companies, it seems clear that the formula is a better fit for female leadership. The idiosyncrasy of these enterprises—their collective corporate spirit and community participation in decision-making—is well aligned with women's management style. An increase in the number of female executives would have a social impact by boosting motivation and performance. This impact would translate into greater participation in decision-making by all members of the organization, assistance for people in the community, self-management, and greater environmental awareness [de Castro, et.al., 2018]. Sustainable development and leadership meant to women leaders, explicitly linking these two concepts to their feelings of empowerment. They felt empowered by their capabilities in education, leadership, community service, value and action [Kusnandar et al., 2019]. Recent feminist practices in development projects is further detailed by Jaquette [2017], the result indicate a refocusing of attention on issues key to women's wellbeing, such as women's work, individual agency and ability to engage with the state. Her analysis suggests that a women's role in sustainable development is hindered by focus on women's work, wellbeing and being heard at local and national level.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The respondents consisted of 248 women administrators in government and private agencies in the 5th District of the province of Pangasinan, Philippines consisting of eight municipalities (Alcala, Bautista, Binalonan, Laoac, Pozorrubio, Santo Tomas, Sison and Villasis) and one city (Urdaneta City). The sample was divided into two groups of 124 each belonging to working in the public and private agencies. A sample random method was applied for this research that involves floating questionnaires and face-to-face interviews to collect data. The questionnaire composed of 3 parts. Part 1 dealt with the socio-demographic profile of the respondents. Part 2 dealt with the challenges faced by working women with respect to promotional issues, sexual harassment, and family care issues. Part 3 dealt with the respondents' involvement in the community. The data gathered were tallied, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted using descriptive statistics such as the frequency count and percentage distribution. It is computed as:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100$$

Where:

- P - is Percentage
- f - is the Frequency
- n - is the Total Frequency
- 100 - is a constant

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

Profile of the Respondents. Findings of this study revealed that most of the respondents belong to early adulthood (26-35 years old) and those with more than 50 years old registered the least. Also, result shows that women occupying administrative positions decline as they get older. On civil status, most of the respondents are married followed by single, separated and widow in decreasing order, respectively. This shows that being married is not a hindrance for administrative position besides, majority of them prefer to have fewer children. On the highest educational attainment, they are mainly BS degree graduates followed by with masteral units and masteral graduates. While the least have doctoral degree and with doctoral units. This shows that these women administrators both in public and private agencies are educationally qualified to their position. In terms of length of service, generally the respondents are new to their corresponding administrative positions (1-5 years). Accordingly, as to the seminars attended by the women administrators, these are rank from the highest to the lowest: regional seminars, local seminars, national seminars, provincial seminars,

and international seminars. The result implies that being in an administrative position is a vital factor to their status to be well- rounded in their field.

Promotion Issues. Women administrators in comparison to male counterparts for the promotion of the same position, answered mostly with equal time and on merit basis. Respondents work and handle jobs as much as to their male counterparts. This is due to some considerations in the promotion process such as educational qualification, seminars attended and others.

Sexual and Mental Harassment Issues. Most of the co-workers do not share sexually inappropriate images or videos, do not tell lewd jokes, sexual anecdotes, and make inappropriate sexual gestures. Moreover, majority of the co-workers do not stare in a sexually suggestive or offensive manner, or whistling and make sexual comments about appearance, clothing, or body parts as well as they do not touch, pinch, pat, rub and brush the women administrators. This shows that the women administrators exude power in their position, thus resulted to the very low incidence of sexual harassment.

Family Care Issues. Most of the respondents are not granted workplace privileges such as benefits for full maternity leave, special leave for family matters such as attending children/family members activities, also some turned down promotions due to family care issues, not permitted/granted an official time for travel or pass slip when medical check-up was scheduled during working days, and not granted a privileged to reduce their work hours to care for their child or other family members. Results show that majority of the women administrators encountered challenges on family care issues.

On Community Involvement. Mostly, the respondents are not involved in various community activities such as joining clean-up activities, job related activities, membership to registered organizations, livelihood programs, and non-government activities. Nearly all of the respondents did not contribute to community development due to inability to balance work-family-community involvement owing to their desire to get promoted by merit basis they work hard.

CONCLUSIONS

1. Most of the women administrators belong to early adulthood, married, with lesser children and all of them hold a bachelor's degree, new on their corresponding positions, continue to improve and

develop their expertise by attending seminars and trainings.

2. With regards to promotion, the majority answered they got it on a merit basis, with equal time, and had work as much as their colleagues.
3. Almost all of them did not experience sexual and mental harassment issues such as sharing of sexually inappropriate images or videos, anecdotes gestures, lewd jokes, and touches.
4. On family care issues, most of them are not granted workplace privileges such as benefits for full maternity leave, special leave, also some turned down promotions, not permitted an official time for travel or pass slip when medical check-up is scheduled during working days, and to reduce their work hours to care children / family members and to attend to their activities.
5. The respondents dedicated most of their time to their jobs, depriving them on the opportunities to engage in various community activities such as job-related activities, membership to registered organizations, livelihood program, non-government and joining clean-up activities.

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