

# Key Position Achievements By Female Academics In Higher Educational Institutions: A Case Study Of The Private Universities Of Karachi

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## Abstract

This study is all about the female academics, their experiences and perceived hurdles in their way reaching leadership positions in faculty and administrative positions in universities. Intersectionality approach was used for theoretical framework that expressed gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic issues that discussed in the literature as to avoid the generalization. Face to face interviews were conducted as to explore the barriers perceived by the female academics in their way to advance leadership position in academia. Hence, the study explored the journey of three female academics who reached their leadership positions like, head of department, president and director level respectively at ZABIST University Karachi, Hamdard University Karachi & PAF KIET University Karachi.

**Keyword:** leadership, gender socialization, gender barriers, ethnicity and socioeconomic barriers.

## 1. Introduction

World over leadership traits are constantly growing particularly in respect to females (Gould et al., 2023), whereas, females are confronting numerous issues in their individual capacity, or some time on some political, professional and religious grounds, therefore, it requires speedy attention to cope these issues regarding advancement of female academics in their leadership positions. Nonetheless, females have been awakened from their conventional level, and are making major decisions to bring about changes in all spheres of life, inclusive of

academic leadership. However, there are many issues, one of them is that the male academics are paid more salaries than female academics across the higher educational institutions (Van et al., 2023). Second hiccup is that the female academics are lesser in number than the male academics in universities. The third one is that the female academics are not good in number in administrative ranks at higher education, and are holding lesser senior positions (Walters et al., 2022). It is also a growing concern throughout Pakistan that female academics are underscored in all higher educational intuitions

(Akbar et al., 2023). Although, numerous studies have been conducted on female leadership in higher institutions. On the other hand, female education ratio is also a major issue likewise female academics, that's why they are lesser in number (Civera & Meoli 2023). Although, the cultural norms, values and gender discriminations are the key barriers regarding under-representation of female academics in Pakistan (Mousa et al., 2023). Whereas, Pakistan ranks second worst in respect to females' supervisory and leadership positions, worldwide. Pakistan is also categorized as the least performer in terms of gender equity which is 55% against India's 72%, and the Bangladesh who is at 68% (Chatterjee & Purohit 2023). This is also the worst phenomenon in Pakistani society that the gender disparity perception hinders females to demonstrate their capabilities, self-awareness, self-esteem & future ambition-goals, therefore, they perceive themselves not competent as the male counterparts are (Faridi et al., 2023). So the issue must be resolved as the gender discrimination can be dealt at satisfactory level specially in the countries like Pakistan.

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

It is vital to explore the female academics individually, however due to lack of interest their individual social identifications cannot be explored yet (Mousa et al., 2023). This is also a different phenomenon that who the leaders are within the academics, and how the leaders perceive themselves or relate and compare themselves in context to other male academics (Ramachandaran et al., 2017). The required components of individual identity consist over racial identity and different social classes. Further, the gender fairness, class orientation, inclination of religiosity and age factors are considered as the factors for the individual identity (Clauss-Ehlers et al., 2019). Therefore, the objectives of this study were to explore the

individual social-identities. In addition, to explore their gender discrimination, ethnicity differences and their social classes. Although, female academics are facing many other issues and experiencing different problems regarding academic leadership roles. Hence, leading theorists of intersectionality have deliberated the geographical location, individual identities, ethnicity groups, social classes, gender and sexuality representations. Furthermore, the theories have intermingled and exposed the systems of oppression that how such identities have created hurdles for female in the society (Trevenna 2023). Hence, female academics in higher education need to be heard, as the landscape of the higher educational institutions may be streamlined (Goriss-Hunter et al., 2023). Henceforth, the policies and procedures in higher educational institutions can be set out, so that the female academics in higher education can be accommodated for leadership positions (White 2023). Additionally, the interested female academics may perceive the barriers placed in their way. And moreover they can comprehend that how their pertinent issues can be resolved, and how they climb the ladder of the success specifically in poor countries like Pakistan.

## **1.3 Research Questions**

Intersectional theory was adopted as the required research guide/questions can be developed easily. Therefore, the following research questions were set out to guide this study:

1. What kind of hurdles did female academics encounter in higher education at leadership positions? And how they reacted.
2. What are the perceived resemblances and varied difficulties faced by female academics at administration level? And how they encountered them.

3. How did ethnicity, social class division and gender discrimination impact female academics' journeys to leadership? How they handled them.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Leadership

Leadership is considered as a masculine domain due to the largely male-dominated cultures, world over (Matos et al., 2018). The rules for the academic promotions favors the male, so that the biasness has challenged legitimacy of female academics (Lipton 2015). Historically, leadership was considered inherent, and apparently led "Galson" to develop this theory in 1869. According to this theory, only male members of the society were happened to be the leaders. Considering its nature being intrinsic, the concept did not have any scientific base. Consequently, the following decades challenged the view of the theory and was redefined. However, due the gender differences the female academics are encountering many difficulties in their academic progress. The female academics in comparison to male counterparts are in difficult position throughout their career. The female academics also encountering the barriers of mentorship to assist them throughout their career towards leadership (Cross et al., 2019). Mostly, the barriers are based on the gender discrimination and identity traits. The female academics encounter inadequate employment opportunities, even they are facing role conflict issues towards their goals and their traditional stereotypes leaderships (Said et al., 2023). The academic promotion process needs to be transparent for all candidates, irrespective of their gender discriminations (Agrawal et al., 2020). The feminine leadership styles need to be overcome the stereotypes issues. Their leadership roles must be acknowledged rather judging them with masculine standards (Mistry & Sood

2015). Further, training opportunities be imparted at different levels to support the female academics for their career growth (Chagpar 2023). However, male academics are viewed as being better leaders, based on their prior experiences. Whereas, the female academics in context to their leadership roles are often challenged. Their gender is also questioned, that females are less proficient than male counterparts (Swafford & Anderson 2020). On the other hand, the female academics are very much cautious practicing their self-promotion. Even though, they are lacking the required skills to advance in academic leadership (Knipfer et al., 2017). The female academics need to overcome the fear of being professed as egotistical. They should not be labelled as self-centered, self-serving showoffs, as they may be labeled as violent. Since, the structural impediments have been pointed out as implicit biasness and barriers for females. (Pingleton et al., 2016). In "Barriers and Bias", "the American Association of University Females" (AAUW 2016) pronounced the "role incongruity" as a "no-win situation for female leaders". Whereas, the role of incongruity has prejudiced the basics from gender perspective, that are not comparable to work-life balance (Friedmann & Efrat-Treister 2023). The authentic-self can encourage female academic for pursuing leadership opportunities. Therefore, the higher management should avail better opportunities to female academics for the effective participation (Van & Derks 2022).

### 2.2. Gender Socialization

Gender is a composite of a range of characteristics that are socially constructed and are imparted through initial socialized behaviors (Sumerau & Cragun 2016). From the sociologist's perspective, gender socialization begins at the birth stage (Basu et al., 2017), thereupon, different approaches and treatment are done by families themselves, which shape

the behavioral patterns and define the boundaries for gender discrimination. Whereas, from the psycho analytic perspective, gender socialization begins in the start of the early childhood (Shalvey 2023). However, girls learn femininity by observing their mothers and boys learn masculinity as an oppositional construct to femininity, therefore, rejection of femininity in boys occurs throughout their life stages (Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2019). However, from the ethno-methodological perspective, gender in its routine, methodically obtain recurring accomplishment (Bencivenga et al., 2020). This is also the fact that the roles and tasks are gendered, created and maintained by the societies, individually. According to identity theory, gender has a diffusive status and characteristics (Morsunbul et al., 2016). The gender discrimination identity is developed, socialized and internalized initially in the families in their respective societal setups (Risman 2018). Whereas, the gender socialization process becomes the reference for acting in various contexts. The gendered-appropriate behavior is taught by the parents in the family settings during gender socialization process (Hussain et al., 2015). The girls are taught that the men are in authoritative positions and they are in subordination of the men in the best interest of the family (Prawitha et al., 2023). Therefore, girls' mobility and open education is restricted, and modesty and obedience are emphasized. While the boys mature in a male dominant context and thus enjoy the privileges of autonomy, mobility and opportunity.

### **2.3. Gender Barriers**

Religious, moral values, attitudes and beliefs articulate expectations for gender-appropriate behaviors. Whereas, in academia context, the male faculty members expect female to be submissive and assertive, and the female who speaks up of their own minds are considered as

“not normal” (Essig & Soparnot 2019). On the other hand, married female faculty members are respected than the single female faculty members (Mayya et al., 2021). Whereas, interaction with the male faculty is easier for the married female than the single or the divorced ones. However, the male faculty members perceive that the female academics cannot excel in research, principally, because they lack accessibility of contacts (Ntoimo et al., 2019). The female academics have very limited geographical mobility due to lack of mentors. Whereas, the male faculty members also face issues that the female academics are not in their company, because they cannot chat, sit or drink in the evenings (Oxworth 2023). However, the female faculty members believe that the time constraints are due to their family commitments and pressures, and that is the major hurdle for female academics to excel in higher education institutions (Mayya et al., 2021). Hence, the female academics are considered insensitive to their special needs e.g. maternity and medical leave or other health excuses. Whereas, marriage and motherhood affect their research productivity, job workability and other involvements (Okin 2015). However, some of the female faculty received spousal support, although their mothers-in-laws are not happy to see their spouse helping them in the household chores (Pandey & Khanna 2023). While there are variations in issues with number of female academics across the globe (Hlynsdóttir 2023). Therefore, equal representation of male and female at senior academic leadership position be made possible and convenient in all educational institutions.

### **2.4. Cultures and Ethnicities**

Traditionally cultures are perceived as the standards of living in the society (Randall et al., 2023). The culture is described as “the set of core beliefs and values”. It is underpinned with some set of basic structures, processes and

practices, that distinguishes one group of people from the other. The group of people at workplace or at educational institutions pursuing and maintaining organizational cultures, separately. Whereas the group of a people interacting each other at residential places or at national level means they are in societal cultures (DasGupta & Roy 2023). Culture itself raises barriers for the aspirations of females, because of their behaviors and attitudes, or due to their monotonous practices (Michau et al., 2015). Whereas, females of distinct color hold a higher standard, they expect greater distinction than member of any other group, cast and creed. Whereas, education and laborious hardworking-jobs are separable and distinct pair of career opportunities, that lead to social inequity (Sensoy & DiAngelo 2017). However, for minorities, the standards of society are different, even though the marginalized groups perform better at all levels than others. For the administrators, the perceived obstacles are as: lack of basic mentorship, distinct work-conditions, compensation-packages and lack of the professed professional-identities. Whereas, ethnicity, sexuality and genders are the identities need to steer up their professionalism and responsibilities. Although, the social identity is deemed as insightfulness for female academic as leaders (Su et al., 2020).

### **2.5. Socioeconomic Barriers**

Socioeconomic barriers are of many kinds, their limitations are varied, and their definitions can be different i.e. lack of power, lesser authoritative and various class and agency for females in the society. It also affects that how female administrators of distinct cast and creed perceive and participate in the structures of academia (Wright et al., 2023). Whereas, the socioeconomic status impact extensively the day to day lives of a common man. Whereas, the practices of leadership and management are also

influenced by the socioeconomic standards of the employees (Truong et al., 2017). However, social norms of males and females academic matter, that how they interact in their routine activities within the organization. However, relation to the organizational and leaderships among the employees are the two sides of the same coin. Whereas, the sensitivity of socioeconomic levels of the female leaders are rooted in societal norms (Chong et al., 2018). The socioeconomic positions of the individuals are social identifies, further how they are supported and hindered in accomplishing their senior-level positions in higher education. Even though, if the female faculty members are progressive and are committed with their task but are hindered anyway. Females are dealt differently in context to their socioeconomic positions, that is unjust in respect to their capabilities (Komalam 2023). However, there is a higher probability of racial and gender biases toward female faculties. Therefore, the socioeconomic assessments put divergent influences over career advancement. (Mayes & Cochran 2023). However, sharing such narratives of female academics can provide opportunities to value them. Further, the institutions may protect the underrepresented faculty members from the adverse fallouts of their socioeconomic positions (Salinas et al., 2020).

### **2.6. Theoretical Framework**

#### **Intersectionality Theory**

This study is underpinned by social constructionism, whereby individuals construct and interpret their realities based on their own experiences and interactions (Ernest 2023). Originally, this theory was founded in context to the black lesbian resistance movement of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Combahee River Collective 1995). Basically, it was introduced into legal scholarship by Crenshaw (1990). The theory

therefore posits that distinct social entities like, race, cast, creed, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and socioeconomic backgrounds are dealt differently (Dragomir 2023). Even though, such classes intersect at micro level and they have some certain interlocking systems for macro level classes (Dagkas 2016). This theory also puts light over the structural unjust, biasness, oppressions and systemized privileges (M. A 2019). Therefore, such predefined and ingrained status quo systems benefit some certain members of the society. This theory also emphasis that the structural injustice be resisted collectively to achieve the equity in the society (Haslanger 2015). Intersectionality theory highlights how multiple social identities intersect gender, culture and age etc. (Boveda Aronson 2019). Intersectionality theory suggests that no identity i.e. gender is prioritized over another identity i.e. culture. The theory also emphasis that the gender may or may not be the priority for the society and for the organization when they construct and represent multiple identities (Alwazzan & Rees 2016). These interactions can also shape individual experiences regarding gender inequalities in hierarchies of societal powers. By using this theoretical lens, it better situates to examine the female academic experiences in context to gender discrimination, ethnicity groups and diversified beliefs (Gutierrez et al., 2022). There was also a concern that the female academics are not adequately represented in leading roles. Primarily, the study includes literature focused on gender discrimination. It further put light over discrimination of the ethnicity groups. Therefore, the theory of intersectionality was employed, as it is sympathetic to distinct social identities, their practices and understandings (Mazibuko 2022). Intersectionality theory inclusively considers diverse identities by examining their historical and social norms. The theory also explores the differences and influences that how all the individuals represent

themselves within their circles and surroundings. (Lee & Tapia 2023). From the intersectionality perspective, the theory constructs a core foundation to comprehend the connections between the societal systems of powers and privileges (Allen 2022). The theory also elaborates that how personal narratives relate to their identity towards career development and evolvement, therefore, the theoretical framework served as a filter for female academics at higher positions. The intention of employing this framework was to thoroughly comprehend the gender and racial identities, that how they are combined to create unique experiences in career developments (Showunmi et al., 2016). In holistic view, it is said that the females in higher education institution solely considered on their ethnicity grounds. They are dealt on socioeconomic backgrounds and are promoted on cast, creed and color basis. It is therefore essential to understand ethnicity, class and gender in minority groups, and same way the females from the dominant groups of the society. The intersectionality theory also requires to create alternative means for minority groups to validate their idea of being (Addison & Coolhart 2015). The study adopted intersectional theory to explore the issues pertaining to female academics at administration level. Further, that how they perceive their career pathways and apparent barriers to their leadership journeys. Therefore, it is advocated that female voices be heard and considered, the females who aspire for leadership positions in higher education be accommodated, and allow their narratives to have an exposure (White 2023).

### **3. Research Methodology**

In this case study, a synopsis of the qualitative design approach is specified. Further, this section elaborates selection of participants, methods and methodology to assemble and examine the collected data. (Carlander &

Thollander 2023). This section consists and concludes an overview of the method which was employed to validate of the data.

### 3.1 Research Design and Sample

The research design consists over different techniques and methods for analyzing research problem. The sample size consists over three participants working in different universities of Karachi city. The researcher's goal was to select a small population group as the data may be collected properly and timely. The researcher sought the time frame for initial interviews and sent an email to the potential participants. Thereupon, the participants were asked for reasonable time for semi-structured interviews of 60 minutes, respectively. The interviews were taken to collect the required data according to the research guide for the comprehensive analysis on the basis of interview transcripts (Burns et al., 2023).

### 3.2 Data Collection

The data collection includes setting out some certain boundaries, conducting semi structured interviews basing on the observations and experiences of the participants, collection of relevant documents for fulfilling the requirement of the data, observing and examining their visual materials i.e. videos and films if available or as required and deemed

essential for the study, and establishing some due protocols for audio recordings conditional on the prior permission of the participants, as the data be collected thoroughly (Davidson et al., 2023). The researcher sent an initial email to the respective participants asking them if they would be interested to participate in the study (Hughes et al., 2019). Once the selection and process got completed, the researcher sent a "Confirmation Email/Letter" to each participant (Thornley et al., 2016). The researcher therefore provided 48 hours to each participant for respond on the given research guide/questionnaire, and return it to the researcher (Bell & Waters 2018). The prospect participants were initially briefed about the core purpose and procedure. In sequence, the desired email was sent back by the participants. Thereupon, the researcher sent a confirmation email with the date and time for face to face interview (Adams 2015). The researcher collected the data in accordance with the research guide/questionnaire, in connection to the procedure, the semi-structured interviews were conducted. Additionally, the educational and professional data was collected through curriculum vitae. Furthermore, "triangulation" procedure was completed by using data collection methods, i.e. demographic surveys, semi structured interviews and relevant reviews of the educational documents (Abdelkreem et al., 2020).

Details	<u>Participants: 1</u>	<u>Participants:2</u>	<u>Participants:3</u>
Title	Director Academic	Principal/ Professor	Assistant Professor
Age	40-45	50+	40-45
University	University A	University B	University C
Marital status	Married	Married	Married
Dependents	3	2	3
Ethnicity	Sindhi	Urdu	Punjabi
Education	MPhil	PhD	PhD

Table 1 participants' **Demographic**

The results of the study were summarized into five themes and three sub-themes, which are as follows: (a) leadership (b) gender socialization (c) gender-barriers (d) ethnicity (e) socioeconomic barriers. The study consisted over three participant working at administrative positions in private universities. According to the study requirement, it was essential of each participant to have one year of experience at executive role in higher education (Alonderiene & Majauskaite 2016).

### **Theme 1:**

#### **Leadership:**

Male are perceived as robust leaders throughout the history due to the male dominant society (Wilkinson & Male 2023). The male leaders are revered and rewarded because of their past experience, inheritance and because of their courageous characters and characteristics (Mpondi 2015). The male therefore are more task-oriented and hard workers than females. However, in context to leadership traits the females are more targeted and challenged due to their feminine gender (Levy et al., 2020).

#### **The participants shared their experiences as follows:**

**P1:** we feel that the leadership job is somehow tiring and hard in comparison to other jobs, the male treats them light and enabled to do long hours and outdoor job when there is need to have some toughest negotiations with other male counterparts or even with female **P2:** shared her views that the leadership is a position and designation apart from gender differences, however, like male-dominant society the academia is somehow perceive something like that **P3:** apart from other discriminations something lies at female's part that due to house chore jobs and bringing up the kids and dedicating them love and motherhood it

becomes even harder to dedicate full time to our jobs.

### **Theme 2:**

#### **Gender socialization and barriers:**

Gender impact professional career development, the gender cannot only be a male but sometime the female academics impact career development (Goriss-Hunter et al., 2023).

#### **Participants shared their experiences as follows:**

**P1:** nowadays, I feel that along with males, females are also creating hurdles in career development. The females are also much jealous of their female counterparts and pass ridiculous comments every time. **P2:** considered that the male and female both impacted, whereas, according to **P3:** female counterparts don't hurdle the things in their way. **P1:** told that they are criticized by their counterparts, however biases go worst for females being not part of the male group. **P2:** added that the society has different approach when male becomes successful, and it is counted as capability of male, when female gets successful, they are given different types of tags, like they used their gender as a tool for success. This is not only said by the males, however, females are also involved in creating these issues. Therefore, female always fights for such type of issues in their entire professional life and in social life as well. **P3:** discussed that the male and female positively and negatively impacted their career development and she has experienced this, "when I was pregnant and faced health issues, my supervisor supported me during my MPhil viva process and gave me much time in my MPhil thesis submission, therefore, I completed my work on time". **P1:** also supported the discussion that with her own efforts and support of the university colleagues



she got a chance to become an assistant professor in university and now she is serving as HOD there. **P2:** also spoke up in this regard that she also faced some negative behavior from her female counterparts, in her point of view the females are less supportive to their coworkers and are jealous. **P3:** added that females are not very open to discuss and disclose their self-promotion, they feel shy speaking about it, even though they don't speak of their male counterparts openly because the society is male-oriented.

### **Theme 3:**

#### **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity impacts the career development of female as well as it does with the male (Hamouche et al., 2023). Ethnicity is a social construct it does not have any scientific meaning (Hanna et al., 2020). Ethnical categories are blurred in context to social construct, however it is increasingly acknowledged (Foronda et al., 2016). Although, the race and ethnicity have some certain biological characterization and indistinct identification (Ross et al., 2020).

#### **In this regard, the participants shared their views as follows:**

**P1:** gender impacts career growth and career development not only for female but for male also, in the start I faced issues in my career development stage, but after that I resolved it by myself, I have a strong educational background, along with skills and work experiences. **P2:** I mostly worked in private sector, so ethnicity has less impacted my career development. In Pakistan when someone wants any executive position he/she has to face ethnicity issues. Therefore, ethnicity has a very significant role than meritocracy comparatively. **P3:** Ethnicity impacts career development positively and negatively, as per my experience. So the person

may get a little bit advantage being the same ethnic group. People give more attention when someone speaks of his/her language and is given more importance being the same ethnicity.

### **Theme 4:**

#### **Socioeconomic Status**

Socioeconomic factor includes education, income, occupation, they have a significant impact on the career development of individuals (Lopez-Murillo 2023).

#### **In this way, participants shared their views related to it, as follows:**

**P1:** I feel that socioeconomic status is a very fundamental issue that nurtures one's career growth in any organization and in social circle, as well. If one is an engineer and working as an administrator, then no one can match his/her position, career growth, leadership styles, or working behaviors, this has been seen as very much common here and cannot be justified with anyone's work. My socioeconomic status and working experience shaped my profession into a transformational leader. **P2:** however, socioeconomic stature supports you to make a versatile leader and differentiate you from those who have no socioeconomic stature, and it influences one's professional development as well. **P3:** As I am from the medical and administrative field, this profession seems most respected by the common people, because the common people are helped in their difficult times and are supposed to be on duty 24/7. Therefore, being a doctor I assist the needy people in their difficult times irrespective of ethnicity or gender.

### **Sub Theme I:**

#### **Support System**

In line with the support system, one is assisted in his/her professional development programs

while climbing their career ladder (Glusker et al., 2022). Therefore, in common perception, the family setup and spouses are deemed to be the initial support system.

**Participants shared their views, as follows:**

**P1:** I relied on myself and very much self-dependent, I fulfilled my dreams and commitments which I had promised to myself and with my family. I also feel that one should not rely on a support system solely. **P2:** my mother was a very supportive person she gave me an opportunity to make myself successful. **P3:** my support system is my husband, my parents and my in-laws, so that I enabled myself to work freely due to my family support and their assistance.

**Sub Theme 2:**

**Stereotype**

Overall the society is men dominated, and stereotype behaviors are very much common, therefore such behaviors will have to be faced and tolerated as a challenge throughout the career developments (Topić 2023).

**In this regard the participants shared their views, which are as follows:**

**P1:** sometimes we face stereotypes because of our gender and socioeconomic values and status. Therefore, stereotype behavior is also related to all female who are working as an executive in any organization. **P2:** If we talk about females that how they grow in their career, and how much they are criticized by those who have not performed well etc. Apart from all that I always wear abaya, it also poses different thoughts regarding female exposures and outlook. Whenever, I tried to talk to my male counterparts they realized that they were wrong about myself or in general and limited themselves with their stereotype mindset **P3:** yes, as an executive and at a leading position in

my organization, I always faced resistance at different platforms due to different reasons. My degree is not regular MBBS however BEMS (natural medicine). Normally, teaching hospitals are not ready to own the students. or they don't consider such degrees. Being a female, I faced stereotype behaviors, because I was young and new in my department. So, as a senior I was reluctant at that time because I was youngest in the entire administrative faculty. **P1:** As a younger professional my upbringing, skillset and Islamic values helped me a lot. I relied on myself and was very much self-dependent. **P2:** she said that yes, all the time such stereotype factors hindered her to do more or additional work in her professional career. **P3:** yes, the stereotype behaviors always hindered me. **P1:** added that they disturbed me in my educational field, personal relationship building, professional rank and status, but being a professional I concentrated on my given tasks on a priority basis. **P2:** there are lots of things which I have faced and experienced as a leader, every moment gave me a new challenge, experience and an opportunity to learn more and make myself stronger. **P3:** the most impactful experience was an "admission campaign" in our university. More than 100 students got convinced to get admission in BEMS medical degree profession and they took. This admission campaign worked wonders in my career. **P1:** my socioeconomic status and working experience shaped me into a transformational leader. **P2:** the problem is that I belong to a family whose socioeconomic level was very weak, because my father passed away in my childhood therefore, my mother arranged all that what a father does as usual, she made possible all the basic necessities and brought up all of us, well **P3:** even brought up in such stereotype societies, it is essential to have good appearance, patience at work places, easygoingness for every assigned task, liberty, freedom and team orientation, good decision-

making ability and leading skills which diminishes the behaviors of the stereotype male or female in the society.

### **Sub Theme 3:**

#### **Strategies**

Strategies and planning are the part of the career growth, so it is essential to identify the capabilities for the required position (Dutra 2023).

#### **The participants detailed their strategies what they were using during their success phase:**

**P1:** many a times I have faced hurdles, but realized that every organization has its different cultures and work environments. I do believe in taking hardships at my own and focused on my competencies. **P2:** I have a very strong personality, therefore, I have overcome all the difficulties with my timely planning and strategies. **P3:** social networking is very vital for everyone who wants to develop in career as a leader, therefore, the best strategies routes to growing careers.

#### **4. Conclusion & Findings**

Findings of the study are the observations and experiences shared by the three participants regarding their academic career. The required data was brought forth through the semi-structured interviews from the participants. Therefore, five main themes and three sub-themes were formed from the semi-structured interviews. The issues discussed in-depth in context to the main themes were as: leadership, gender socialization, gender barriers, ethnicity and socioeconomic barriers, and support system, stereotypes and strategies as sub theme. The findings therefore improved the awareness of leadership experiences of female executives. In addition, findings evaluated the limitations and recommendations for future research. The study took a comparative glance over females

working at executive positions by using qualitative research technique. Furthermore, an intersectional approach was employed to explore the impact of leadership, gender socialization, gender barriers, ethnicity and socioeconomic barriers of the female academics. This study examined apparent barriers for the leadership roles in higher education. Using comprehensive interview techniques, the study explored the views and thoughts to comprehend the supposed barriers in career advancement. To move forward, there is a need to have a comparative look at experiences of female faculty at administrative roles (White 2023). Yet, there has also a lack of evaluation for the social identities that influence the female executives at leading positions (Dixon et al., 2019) The researcher noted several themes, each participant spoke of their own experiences and results. Therefore, by sharing such experiences of this study, the future research may be conducted for wider perspective. The future study may enhance number of the participants and number of the institutions as the results may be taken out in more details. However, it is resulted that the female voice be heard and their issue be resolved.

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