

Attitudes of Gender Differences and High Profile Jobs in Selected Universities of Western Uganda

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Abstract: The article examines the relationship between attitudes of staff members towards gender differences and high job positions relating to employee performance and institutional development in selected Universities of Western Uganda. The study adopted an observational, cross-sectional exploration design with both quantitative and qualitative as paradigms in order to describe the data and its characteristics [6]. Questionnaires and an interview guides were employed to gather information from the respondents. Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages and bar graphs. The study findings showed that there was a positive relationship between gender differences in decision making and top management positions. The study findings recommended that there is need to ensure building the capacity of women by improving their literacy and leadership skills, give men and women equal opportunities and treat them equally and have equal access to top jobs in all institutions of learning, the study also suggested including both men and women in policy making processes, through consultative ways in high level decision making.

Keywords: Gender differences Attitudes, Employment, and Western Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

Gender inequality is natural. It is in terms of social and cultural attitudes, such as sexism and discrimination. Men are responsible for the exploitation of women through patriarchy the systematic domination of females by males. Factors such as class and ethnicity, in addition to gender, are essential for understanding the oppression experienced by women [1].

Women tend to look at what others can do to curb this issue whereas the solution lies with women. Efforts have been made to achieve gender equality but this cannot change if we do not do something about it. Women need to be confident and ambitious too and strive to do the best before they look to others [2].

Unequal treatment of women in the workplace is not a natural occurrence like rain instead, pervasive inequality in opportunity, status, pay, and external arrangements that produce inequality are all evidence of a pervasive social strategy that pays off for men at women's expense [2].

In turn, employer who holds such bias would provide less challenging and flexible work, which means less opportunity in promotion and salary increasing. Noticeably, since there are less job opportunities for female, rendering women earn less than men; bias in the society is emphasized and proved right in its reasons. Guess the point to narrow the gap would have something to do with the broken of the mode as well as the potential connections between the two [2].

A gender analysis of Uganda National Household Survey [3], data indicates that around 20% of Ugandan households are chronically poor and more than 10% of the poorest households moved into poverty between 1992 and 1999. The analysis further shows that with regards to income poverty, higher proportions of women headed households are chronically poor and move into poverty, and fewer have never been in poverty. Selling assets to avoid moving into poverty is more common in female-headed than in male-headed households [3].

Women continue to suffer very high time burdens in pursuing their livelihood strategies. The Uganda Strategic Country Gender Assessment [4] reveals that women work considerably longer hours than men (between 12 and 18 hours a day, with a mean of 15 hours), compared with an average male working day of 8 to 10 hours. Women bear the brunt of domestic tasks, in addition to agricultural and other productive work. The time and effort required for these tasks, in almost total absence of even rudimentary domestic technology, is staggering. This has a negative effect on food security, household income, children's schooling,

and participation in community life, health, and overall productivity [4].

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted non-experimental research design while using both Questionnaires and interview guide as research tools to collect data from the field. The study population covered all academic and administrative staff of all public and private Universities of western Uganda totaling to 130 people. The selected Universities include: Mountains of the Moon University, Kampala International University, Mbarara University of Science and Technology and Uganda Martyrs University. The sample size was chosen using the table of Morgan & Krejcie and it was 96 participants whose findings were generalisable to the target population [5].

Close ended questionnaires were used to collect information (quantitative data) for the research study because they gather information within a short period of time [4]. At the same time, interview schedules were also employed to collect information in form of words (qualitative data) for the research study because interviews can also collect data from facial expressions of participants.

Stratified random sampling was used to gather information from various categories of the respondents. This was to make sure that no category was left out [4]. Purposive sampling was also utilized in order to garner vital data from the focal persons in Universities in Western Uganda.

The reliability of the close ended questionnaire was reached at by cronbach alpha coefficient formula,

and for interviews was through carrying out persistent observations on the participants.

While the validity of the close ended questionnaire was arrived at using Content Validity Index and the validity of the interviews was assured by less talking and much listening [6].

Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages and bar graphs for quantitative data, while for qualitative data, it was analyzed employing categorization of data into themes and sub-themes along a story manner structure [6].

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics

This describes the age brackets of respondents and educational levels of participants that have contributed enormously to the value of the study.

Age brackets of the respondents

The study revealed that 10.4% (10) of staffs were aged between 18-24 years, 39.8%(35) of staffs were aged between 25 -31 years, while 30.7% (27) were aged between 32- 38 years and 27.3% (24) were aged between 38 and above years. This meant that most of the staffs were not too old; having a creative mind that may be good for the future of the institutions. This implied that most of the Universities in Western Uganda are dominated by those within the age of 25 and 38 years indicating that it is still a young workforce able to contribute to the growth and development of the country. All these categories of the population were consulted for a credible research study. Refer to the Table-1 below:

Table-1: The Age of respondents

	Particulars		Total
	Male	Female	
18-24	8	2	10
25-31	16	19	35
32-38	12	15	27
Above 38	15	9	24
Total	51	45	96
Grand total	96 participants		

Source: Primary Data

Education level of participants

From the figure-1 below, the study findings showed that the majority of the respondents were Masters’ holders which constituted 51.05%(49 participants for both males and females), the bachelor’s holders constituted 27.09% (26 participants for both males and females) and the Ph.D holders constituted 12.5% (12 participants for both males and females) and diploma holders constituted 9.38% (9 participants for

both males and females). In relation to gender, the study revealed that on general average males (12.76%) dominated concerning the level of education in comparison to the females counterparts (12.24%). This implied that women need to continue putting in a lot of efforts to uplift their level of education though women PhD holders were greater than men PhD holders. Refer to figure-1 below for details:

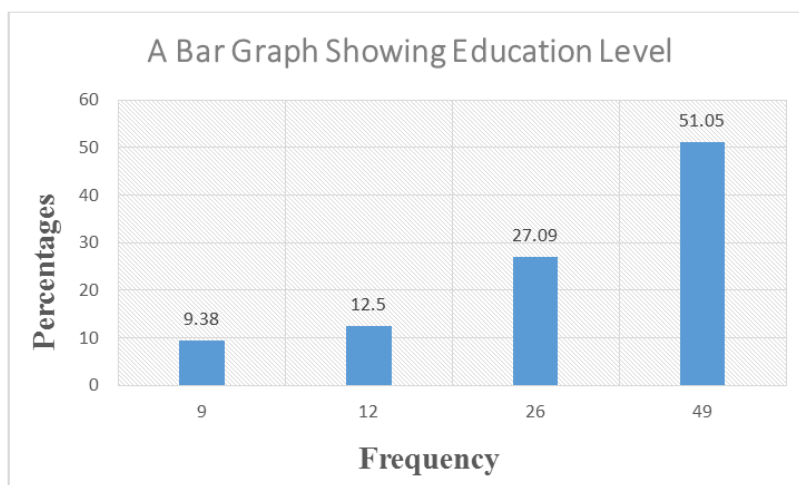


Fig-1: Education Background of the respondents in relation to gender of participants
Source: Primary data

Results from interviews

One of the human resource executive from the said universities stated;

It is not difficult for women than for men to take up high profile jobs, women can also make it to the top provided one has the required qualification and experience for a particular job position. However, what may make it difficult is, women have more career interruption. This has a negative impact on their career development and promotion prospects. It also means less financially rewarding career.

This implied that women still have other jobs like domestic, traditional, societal and cultural gender roles that call upon their energy and concentration. This limits those chances for career development especially

higher qualification attainment. The dilemma here is to which of the two they should reserve their best time between studies and domestic work.

Equal involvement of both men and women in decision making in Universities

Findings from the study established that the biggest number of the respondents (93, males and females participants) did not agree that the Universities equally involves and reorganizes both men and women in decision making. This suggested that there are gender imbalances when it comes to putting members on board in terms of decision making, this implied that women lack same qualification like those of men to compete for management positions, which may not favor them into decision making. It may also mean that either of the sex is disadvantaged when it comes to decision making [7].

Table-2: The University equally involves and reorganizes both men and women in decision making

		Male	Female	Total
The university equally involves and reorganizes both men and women in decision making	Agree	1	2	3
	Disagree	40	53	93
Total		41	55	96

Source: Primary data

Results from interviews

One of the Senior lectures from the said Universities stated

There are still far fewer women than men with the power to make decisions in higher institutions of learning. Even when women are involved, they are often kept on the margins of decision-making or are confined to soft policy areas. In the highest decision-making bodies, Women are often excluded from decision-making, from the household up to the highest levels of policymaking. This may be attributed to low educational attainment, constraints of motherhood, gender biases of hiring panels which are dominated by

men, and lack of personal traits like confidence in leadership

This suggested that, the working arrangements and high profile jobs of different institutions are usually inflexible, making it difficult for women to balance their work with unpaid caring responsibilities. In turn, the processes designed to engage members in decision-making – such as participatory budgeting – can exclude women by failing to provide crèches or other facilities.

Dominance of one sex on most of high profile jobs influences rapid university performance

A large number of the respondents (53 participants) strongly disagree and think that the

dominance of one sex on most of the high job positions does not positively influence rapid university performance. This implied that one sex dominance may mean gender differences and this may limit good performance or the quality of work because performance varies in men and women. Respondents

think that men and women should be equally represented in high job positions to ensure best performance of the University. So, if more gender-equality in higher job positions is promoted, i. e. gender mainstreaming, then performance could improve.

Table-3: Dominance of one sex on most of high profile jobs influences rapid university performance

Serial		Male	Female	Total
1	Agree	1	2	3
2	Strongly agree	26	14	40
3	Strongly disagree	17	36	53
4	Total	32	64	96

Source: Primary data

Results from interviews

One of the Vice chancellors from the said Universities stated

In our cultural societies and institutions, women are perceived as less competitive and less flexible in carrying out field work, less reliable in performing their tasks and are less committed due to other domestic and caring responsibilities.

Women experience greater difficulties than men when it comes to balancing work and private life. Family, care and domestic responsibilities are still not equally shared. The task of looking after dependent family members is largely borne by women, far more women than men choose to take parental leave.

This implied that, an employer who holds such bias would provide less challenging and flexible work, which means less opportunity in promotion and salary

increment. Noticeably, since there are less job opportunities for female, rendering women earn less than men; bias in the society is emphasized and proved right in its reasons.

Dominance of one sex on most of the high profile jobs negatively hinders University performance

From the study findings, (56 respondents) strongly agree and think that the dominance of one sex on most of the high job positions negatively hinders university performance. This implied that, women have inadequate skills, discrimination in formal labor markets, and difficulties of combining employment with care-giving, particularly, to children and the sick. Most vital positions need highly qualified persons and men are still leading generally in general qualifications emanating from our traditional societies where our forefathers used to educate boys at the expense of the girls

Table-4: Dominance of one sex on most of the high profile jobs negatively hinders University performance

Serial		Male	Female	Total
1	Agree	9	18	27
2	Strongly Agree	16	40	56
3	Strongly disagree	4	9	13
4	Total	29	67	96

Source: Primary data

Results from interviews

One of the deans from the said Universities stated;

Segregation of women in high profile jobs in the labor market is frequently linked to traditions and stereotypes. Societies perceive women to be less power-oriented than men. Women have more negative attitudes toward holding power, they are less likely to pursue power-based influence strategies, they are more bothered by and disfavor hierarchical relationships, they are perceived to be less motivated to dominate

others and they are less likely to take actions to attain power.

This suggested that gender inequality has been there since time immemorial, but this can be changed in respect with women empowerment at all level ranging from our traditional societies and institutional. Because when this problem continues, it will result into low institutional development, decisions will be biased in favor of one gender and will not be the best because one perspective is not considered and the institution will miss out on opportunities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings of the study, it was indicated that the level of gender inequality indecision making, stereotyping and traditional beliefs were the leading factors which contribute to attitudes of gender differences in top profile jobs placement in higher institutions of learning in western Uganda. Given the fact that women have been left behind for a long time [2], the following policy implications have been suggested by the researchers for different governments all over the world to take charge. These may include; that governments should give more scholarships to female students so as to pursue higher levels of education and be able to qualify for high profile jobs, the population should be sensitized further by statesmen to avoid segregating the girl child in her pursuit for education, and that women should be given more financial support in their associations to enhance their incomes for development and being almost at the same level with their male counterparts in communities in the world for development.

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