

GENDER AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES IN
PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF THE PUNJAB, LAHORE.



AMANI MOAZZAM BAIG MIRZA

In partial fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
Administrative Sciences (Management)

Institute of Administrative Sciences,
University of the Punjab,
Lahore

CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the following thesis by Ms. Amani Moazzam Baig Mirza has been done under my guidance and supervision. The candidate has followed all the rules and regulations stipulated by the University of the Punjab. The research conducted has followed all the steps of a good research which have been carried out under my supervision. The research in this thesis is an original work of the Scholar and has not been submitted in part or any other form for publication. According to my knowledge any part of the thesis has not been reproduced or has been part of any other research work.



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Abstract

The thesis presents the finding of a case study conducted to explore the gendered organizational practices in Pakistani organizations using Punjab University as a case in point. Taking organizational practices prevailing in the university and using a gender lens a comprehensive analysis was conducted. Punjab University being the oldest and the highest seat of learning was selected as a case to analyze the organizational practices in a public sector organization with 70% female representation into different academic programs. Drawing from the concept of the Gender Organization System (GOS) (Fagenson, 1990 and Jabeen, 2001) and another conceptual framework offered by Camilleri (2007) the study discusses the implementation of an indigenous model specially developed for Pakistani organizations. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative measures for data collection and analysis. 280 respondents from the faculty of the university both male and female filled out the survey questionnaires. The survey was also supported by semi structured interviews conducted of the faculty and was supported by other secondary sources of data. The study explored and analyzed the reasons why there were so few women in the top echelons of higher education particularly when the number of female faculty is on the rise. All the data collected provided a holistic view of the HR practices of the university with the results pointing at three levels i.e., of Organizational, Individual and the societal level. With the societal factors being one of the top reasons for the lack of female representation at the top levels of academia. The findings revealed that the major organizational practices of Organizational Commitment (OC), promotion opportunities, motivating factors, equal representation, diversity management, political skill and networking are all affected by gender. It was also observed that meritocracy was an issue irrespective of gender, however, subtle biases existed towards representation of females, though overt discrimination was not observed very

obviously at least not in major cases. At the individual level the self perception of an individual and the academia were one of the major factors which led to the lack of female representation in public sector university. Familial support has also been recognized as an important factor for possible female progression in careers of their choice. At the societal level, the basic culture of the country and its values has been recognized as a main contributor to female underrepresentation in academia. Eventhough the Government of Pakistan has initiated programmes and passed legislations to make the workplace harassment free, their implementation is yet to be seen.

The study presents useful recommendations to combat covert forms of discrimination such as greater number of female administrative staff, increase in representation of females in different bodies, gender sensitization of major educational departments along with student sensitization, in view of equitable gender participation in academia.

Key words: GOS Model, HRM, Public sector organizations, University of the Punjab, Gender in Academia, Glass Ceiling.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For the development of any country human resources play a vital role. Be it the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (2000) or the Plan of Action for Sustainable Development (2002) and other development strategies planned at international, regional or national level, it is essential that these goals and plans be in the hands of capable human resources. It is only through capable human resources that commitment towards sustainable development and poverty reduction at the global, regional and national levels can be realized.

Employees working with the public sector are the epicenter of the performance of a country because they plan the services and also deliver them in line with the critical innovations and needed reforms. Hence a strategic position is enjoyed by the public sector human resource managers in the development of a country. In the public sector human resource managers and especially female managers many a times are not professionally aware of the strategic and critical role they should play for the formulation of strategies.

Inspired by the concept of NPM (which includes modernity, change, and efficiency which leads to improved quality) public organizations are increasingly challenged. New ways of governance, increased efficiency and customer orientation leads to administrative reforms being introduced in Public sector organizations which include HR, Structural and financial areas. The reforms based on HR are undertaken in the public sphere, including decentralization by delegating responsibility to first-line managers', and balance is created through skill development, between quality and performance in the public sphere; and through contractual appointments and performance based managerial system etc.

According to the NPM reform model the traditional bureaucratic approach of public organizations is expected to change by softening it. Public personnel are expected to be quick to respond to and be aware of the feelings of the general public and other stakeholders at the local, regional, and national levels (Hood 1991; Lynn 1998; Pollitt 1988 as cited in Vigoda & Meisler, 2010). A famous and important terminology of NPM equates citizens to clients, and it propagates a feeling of compassion and empathy towards public needs and demands including their representation and participation in public sector organizations equitably irrespective of gender.

This study thus addresses the issue of gender equity and their representation and participation at various levels in academia in the cultural specific context of Pakistan. It investigates gender inequity in academia, or discrimination faced by female faculty in the form of overt, subtle, or institutional. The study also suggests specific recommendations which might help change the existing culture and practices towards more egalitarian, professional, and congenial work environment in public sector organizations including the University of Punjab in Pakistan.

Academia is considered a highly individualized workplace long before other organizations discovered the 'individualization' of their highly qualified labor force. In academia the commitment of the individual to the organization is low, as compared to their commitment to the discipline and individual accomplishments that are considered the key to their professional identity. Thus model academic careers are built on networking, not only within the organization but more importantly also across organizations (Enders & Kawlisch, 2006, p.4)

Professional women and men show significant differences in terms of pay gap, and also differences in employment and salary figures suggesting that differences exist between women and men even in academia.

Return on equity and return to shareholders are the proven benefits organizations enjoys for promoting women (Catalyst 2004), as well as increased diversity which can promote creativity (Nemeth & Wachtler 1983) and better problem solving (Jackson 1992; Nemeth and Kwan 1987). Despite all these benefits women are consistently under-represented in upper management (Catalyst 2007; Gutek 1993; Wells, 2001) and receive less compensation when controlling for career type, level, age, education, etc. (Schneer and Reitman 1995; Stroh, Brett, and Reilly 1992). For example, although women make up nearly half of the nonagricultural workforce, they hold only 16.4% of corporate officer-ships in the Fortune 500, 14.7% of Fortune 500 board seats, and 1.6% of Fortune 500 CEO positions (Catalyst 2007a). Moreover, college educated women between the ages of 21 and 30 earn 89% of what men earn (Roberts 2007); and perhaps surprisingly, the gap in salaries between all men and women has widened slightly in the past decade (Cotter, Hermsen and Vanneman 2004; Leonhardt 2006 as cited in Tinsely, Cheldelin, Schneider and Amanatullah, 2009, p.3).

Women are prominent in human resources, health care, and education administration. They are in managerial positions ranging from 60 percent to 70 percent but only 26 percent of general manager and operations manager positions are filled by them, with less than 19 percent of chief executive position (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2002). Only 29 percent of lawyers, 28 percent of physicians and surgeons, and 22 percent of dentists are female. Men usually get high profile jobs

with better pay as compared to women. Same trends are observed in academia with males dominating all high status positions with power and remuneration.

It is observed that there is fair play at the lower levels but there is greater gender inconsistency among positions with higher salaries and greater powers (Monroe, Ozyurt, Wrigley and Alexander, 2008).

Women and men start their career in business and other professions with the same level of education, intelligence, and commitment but few reach the top levels of their respective fields. As the world has an increasing need for more professional leaders the difference between male-female representation at top echelons is troublesome. Hence, men and women irrespective of their gender, should be encouraged to fulfill their potential and leave their mark with brains, and the desire and perseverance to lead (Barsh, Cranston and Craske, 2008). As a result of such gender disparities 1) women lack human capital in the form of relevant knowledge, skill, and expertise, 2) they lack social capital in the form of relevant networks, and are stereotyped to be unsuitable to male organizational culture, and 3) they are underrepresented at all decision making levels, that is societal level. Tharenou (1999) notes that women incrementally develop fewer of the above characteristics as compared to men which leads to their less advancement to the top.

Studies have shown that women are generally seen as aggressive, selfish and uncooperative when they promote their interests (Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky 1992; Heilman 2001; Heilman and Okimoto 2007; Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, and Tamkins 2004 as cited in Tinsely, Cheldelin, Schneider and Amanatullah, 2009). Women are put in a position where they are required to choose being likable, in other words to behave in a "feminine" way which comprises of attributes as caring, cooperative, and nurturing; or being thought of as proficient which is termed as