



Leadership Management

Elixir Leadership Mgmt. 54A (2013) 12799-12802

Elixir
ISSN: 2229-712X

Gender & leadership among female student

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ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 15 July 2012;

Received in revised form:

15 March 2013;

Accepted: 18 March 2013;

Keywords

Leadership,
Gender,
Female.

ABSTRACT

The number of females appointed to leadership positions is small compared to males. This phenomenon happens not only in developing countries but also in developed nations. Various barriers are mentioned and this includes limited educational opportunities for females. However, in Malaysia, the numbers of females in institutions of higher learning far exceed the number of males in the ratio of 70:30. This paper will explore the question related to the position of female students in students' associations in one public university. Data are obtained through document analysis, focus group interviews and in-depth interviews with students involved in associations. The questions attempted to be answered include the number of female students involved in associations; the leadership positions held; factors that motivate and prevent them from participating; and the challenges faced by them. The analysis shows that there are many female students appointed as representatives in associations but the numbers holding the positions of President are disappointing. What are the factors contributing to this situation? Further, several recommendations will be discussed to assist students in improving their leadership skills.

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Introduction

Student involvement in decision-making process in the university and college traceable to the beginning of tertiary education and formation student nations in Bologna. Initially that so stimulating, student pemerkasaan increasingly decline in accordance with evolution undergone by university which currently be more business enterprise. Their involvement in decision-making process only occurred in year 1970 an where academic freedom is term and concept that really implemented.

Nevertheless, we do not can deny on interest student to join association. Through participation like this student's interest will get more serious attention because they also can function as part of university. Participation of students in university can happen in various form and can fill various purpose. That most important are they can become a system check and balance with faculty management or university.

Apart from that, Astin Leland (2002), has compiled many research which showed correlation between involvement in academics and association with student's success. It can be considered that university is training site for student in providing self to face society. Student that get to hold post in association actually received practical training to advance in career in leadership level. Student involvement level in university on the other hand depend on various factor, among them degree of commitment to institutions, motivation to join, university's culture, community expectation, parents' expectation and others more.

Background : Woman and Leadership

In the keynote addres in conjunction with Woman Proceeding 2004, former Women , Family and Community Development Minister, Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil says women participation in decision-making level and corporate still low especially among those holding member post and government-linked company namely only 14 or 86 persons from

total amount 613 persons. Increase him more, based on study carried out by his ministry found only 17% leading position such as Chief Executive Officer, President and Vice President of company listed in Malaysian Bursa stock year 2004 held by women while only 10.6 percent of the women become the Ahli company Board of Directors.

In public service , as many as the 46% staff is comprise from womenfolk but from this number only 15% only which hold post in level JUSA. In Ministry of Education, senior manager number is very small whereas overall women involvement is high. For example since year 1957 from six people Education Director-General, only one person is a woman.

Obstacle Factors

In literature review on said matter, scholars have tried identify and categorize to several major factors, among them is role expectation based on male leader stereotype; institution obstacle, less self confidence and responsibility effect on family. Dines (1994) on the other hand, identified several obstacles such as opportunity obtain education in high level that is limited, discrimination in appointment and promotion, two responsibility that is different in tradition's role and professional, life partner attitude, interference in career, stereotype, isolation from male culture, opposition on woman divtahap management by man, policy absence and legislation to ensure women participation and ceiling phenomenon.

This factors have some similarities with findings study carried out in Malaysia by (Ahmad & Ismail, 2010) namely family responsibility, attitude stereotyping employer, less career planning, working environment and priority to masculinity compared femininity.

Jasbir (2007) explain lack of reasons woman in decision-making level with categorize to three perspective as follows:

(i) Individu centered - own attribute psiko-sosial woman where alleged less woman motivation and confidence to accept challenge to go up the ladder.

(ii) Structure centred - Real problem located to organisational structure. It embedded in structure and only can be improved through changes on policy and practice organization. This including discrimination in appointment and promotion, opposition (resistance) man on ladies with position in organization, policy absence and legislation to ensure women involvement, opportunity that is very limited to get / accept leadership exercises also lack of opportunity to demonstrate their efficiency due to power structure at workplaces.

(iii) Culture centred - in this perspective what make heavier was social construct on gender and division role that is certain and also society's expectation towards women and male. Usually role based on this gender would be brought to workplace cause them which involved (a man and a woman) would be maintaining expectation because social reality and organization itself. Overflow concept gender in many situations would be detrimental woman in their career enhancement.

One of the important factors which influenced culture something organization is founder or the leader. Because most founder or organisation leader is man so by organisational culture the logic is much inclined to their value. Dines (1994) then added currently is sufficient evidence which showed that organisational culture is major obstacle of woman to reach leader level.

From the previous research, those are quite just show that male organizational value also resulted the matter continuous. Although debate on this matter already rather long discussed but lately nature and cultural effect men was studied and explained systematically (Maier, 2004).

From all factors identified, that consistent is factor organizational culture and own woman attribute. This is two obstacle should give attention in whatever effort to increase number woman total leaders.

Conclusion that can be done from this literature highlight is because norm and organisation value is based on norm and man value so culture masculine this that is culture hidden that underlying communication form, self-assessment, approach to conflict resolution way, leadership image including leadership style, organisation value, definition on success and good run and others more (Maier, 2004). Because gauge used in matters related to leadership is based on male culture so woman often considered unsuitable to be appointed to leader posts.

Research Procedure

Because this research is a case study so study carried out is limited to a public university only. Researcher has involved document analytical method, deep interview and interview focusing to get data. Interview held at place determined by own student in campus vicinity. Interview focusing involving by 3 groups EXCO of College.

Apart from that, researcher also held deep interview with eight people graduate and four people student that consisting of member EXCO some associations (for education session 2011 / 2012) where interview protocol which contains six questions was invoked. Each interview takes time between 45 minutes to an hour. Main purpose is to get opinion study participant about what causes which propelled or prevent graduate from appointed as President of Association. Other than that, researcher has also conducted three interviews focusing with student leader which represents residence colleges. The purpose also is to get information that about. Each group contains 10 persons. And

every interview takes place for two hours. Interview data was recorded, typed and consequently analysed by method used constant comparative. Answer to research questions tabled in form themes identified.

Research Findings & Analysis

Based on document, there is 61 unit association and club have registered officially in this institution. These associations considered active as long as they send reports Annual Grand Meeting that need to be carried out each year. Nevertheless, until February 2012 only 25 unit association / club that sent annual report such as is wanted. 12 people study participant which agreed to also and in this study is consisting of fellowship or clubs.

From documents analysed found association or club can be divided into few groups namely association / club based on Faculty or learning field respective, association based on state, association based on common interests such as Red Crescent Society and cultural group.

Activity carried out by these associations is activities related to academic, member welfare, community service also for penjarangan purpose and tighten relationship among members.

Graduate As A Leader

From 25 unit association were analyzed, only an association which choose undergraduate as the president. Graduate found many appointed as Deputy or President (2) (21 unit association) and also as Secretary (although association that is by the tradition monopolized by class of men like engineering and accounting). For the associations, although the majority of the member is female student, they more prone to choose male student as pemimpin. Kebanyakan female student be appointed member committee or EXCO. From 25 unit association, as much as 23 units have women committee total membership exceeding from committee-man.

What which caused the matter happen? There is what occurs within campus reflect attitude, thinking and overall woman behaviour until causing numbers of women be appointed such leader small the number until unbalanced with woman total increase in labour market where 30% to 40% workforce in services sector consisting of woman and 70% to 80% in manufacturing sector.

Capacity and Readiness In Order To Be Leader

Woman students which hold this post the majority say that they uncertain whether they qualified to be elected or not. Some also said they had to accept nomination because no one is willing to carry out task. What sure, when appointed by them feel has been given a responsibility and they has carrying out responsibility that with best possible.

According to several people male participant, graduate that with role as usually so committed chief in design task. They also very hardworking and disciplined. In fact according to a senior officer in Division of Student Affairs that often deal with this student leaders, from appearance aspect and efficiency, graduate more glowing. Although, association President may be a student but which always forward is graduate that may just usual member EXCO.

In general graduate chosen as this leader have in common in some features. Among them are as follows:

- (i) Having personal confidence level that is relatively high.
- (ii) Can articulate nicely idea.
- (iii) Considerate in current issue.
- (iv) Behave positively.
- (v) Sees problems as a challenge that may be dealt.
- (vi) Having capacity to work by group.

Reason Join Associations and Appointed As Leader

Graduate involved as usually committee indeed very interested to involve in association. This interest originated in primary school level, furthermore most of them get support and encouragement that strong than parents. When seniors organise so that they take active part in association so they more easy to be influenced. Different reason why this graduate got involved with association is to get new knowledge, leadership training, organized and manage time effectively; knowledge that not obtained in lecture room. Through association also those can apply what learnt at lecture room in real world. For example, how as their chief can affect other member to do something that planned. There is also participant who say that he tend in order to be committee of ensure resume that is more valuable. According to one of the participants "having association can avoid bored, empty feeling and miss in family in village". Conclusion that can make is capacity and graduate readiness to hold leader's post certainly not doubted. Most of them set for develop themselves to highest level in hierarchy Maslow.

Challenge / Problem As Leader

Problem mooted can be divided into a few themes as follows:

i. Handle student and people who are older

How is dealing with male student and at the same time care their ego so that not affected? Most of them do not like accept order from graduate that with role as chief. Apart from that there are also students that think that because the lady soft, they can behave played at and not view seriously order, reprimand or task given. According to them more, only student that is confident and disciplined can work by comfortable with mahasisiwi that with role as leader. In many situations, as leader, they do not can communicate with more assertive and produce situation all win (win-win situation).

ii. Show real true potential as leader

In function as leader, this graduate had always conflict in themselves on right behavior. Issue that often revolve in their mind is "what male student word when happy woman giving direction or act dominant?" Anxiety to be labelled as which in turn alpha female affect future to get couple has caused among those potential to highlights as leader do not want or fear show their true potential.

iii. Graduate which hold President's post on the other hand say his major challenge is handle graduate with jealous attitude, jealousy, difficult to give cooperation and always look dishonest towards him. The success in academic field frequently associated with the position as President that is closer with lecturer. He also labelled as too ambitious. According to him, this case give heavy pressure to him because he feels marginalised. For time future, he may be do not want anymore become leader. In this matter, challenge for he is to convince other graduate that the earnest aspiration is to aid other undergraduate and they should give help.

iv. Other challenges

Other challenges stated is difficulty to get member join activity carried out, get new member because not many student that want got involved with association and also run out of time due to academic demand.

Suggestions

Among move that could be taken to increase female student total leaders is by hold programmes as follows:

(i) Awareness programme and sensitization how organisational culture created, structured and maintained, and how power is used to form value and behaviour especially relating gender.

(ii) Programme to give comprehension on organization's politics, effect and the role.

(iii) Develop a strategy and leader skill so that they can become effective leader in current organisation culture.

(iv) Understand and use leadership style that suit with socialization process pass through by women and various leadership style choice that there is.

(v) Develop a strategy and skill to sell and change present culture.

(vi) Develop self confidence and skill articulate opinion.

(vii) Develop skills programme about ICT usage.

(viii) Evaluate and check what is wanted by related to work female employee and their career and help them drafting strategy to achieve what is wanted.

(ix) Provide training self development as follows:

(a) How become one that strict (assertive) - female way communicate (including delivering idea) mutually misinterpreted as indecisive or uncertain. Training like this would help women get, maintain and strengthen personal power and organization.

(b) Leadership courses / management for women - other than course about time management, negotiation, management stress, decide, budget, motivation and so on, subject like power including organization's politics, organisational culture and self-image (self presentation) need to also given attention.

(c) ICT and implication towards women - skill in this area will give image that is positive and suit with current development which requires exchange and information mastery that fast.

(d) Planning life and career development - this subject imperatives to aid woman understand and handle necessity that conflict in two woman's career (work and family).

(e) A man and a woman as colleague - objective to this training is to increase comprehension on equation and difference between women and men as employee and awareness of how structure and organisational culture spread and strengthen norm and value on gender.

(f) Different subjects – mentor mentee program.

Conclusion

This paper main purpose is narrated current situation on female student involvement as leader in university. Their number that be appointed supreme leader in organisational is extremely small. Although many that be appointed Vice President or Deputy and as exco but they more functional as employee or executive. This study data also supported study findings that after.

However information on factors which prevent is a little are unlike explanation given previously. Graduate involved indeed interested and had good confidence in order to be leader. Deterrent factor that is biggest is organisational culture (association). Their decision to choose leader still influence a lot by tradition although power to change well off at hand they.

A research finding that is most interesting is factor horizontal violence that all this while not have been raised before. This factor can be affected long-term in case allowed. It also is one thing that is heart-rending because to succeed a graduate have to contend with challenge mooted not only by student but also among his own that should be helpful him. The matter should give attention in studies that is future.

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