

Hong, 2018

Volume 4 Issue 1, pp. 343-359

Date of Publication: 23rd March 2018

DOI-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2018.41.343359>

This paper can be cited as: Hong, L. H. (2018). Does “Glass Ceiling” Or “Slippery Ladder” Lead To The Scarcity Of Women In Academic Leadership? An Approach of Q-Methodology. PEOPLE: International Journal of Social Sciences, 4(1), 343-359.

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DOES “GLASS CEILING” OR “SLIPPERY LADDER” LEAD TO THE SCARCITY OF WOMEN IN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP? AN APPROACH OF Q-METHODOLOGY

Lily- Hue Trinh Hoang Hong

*Public Policy and Administration Department, National Chi Nan University, Taiwan (ROC)
Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam*

trinhhoanghonghue@gmail.com

Abstract

Gender equality and gender parity has been the central issue for countries. Lack of senior women leaders, in general, frequently been the heated subject of debate in many countries and Vietnam is no exception. Despite of recently women have made great contributions both in the academia and social life, they still remain underrepresented in the top levels of leaders both in public administration and higher education institutions. This study aims to explore the main reasons leading to the scarcity of women in academic leadership, in the case of Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh city (VNU-HCM). Based on using the Q methodology-introduced by William Stephenson in 1935, this study asked eighteen women of VNU-HCM to rank-order a set of different forty statements about causes limited the advancement opportunities of women from “most disagree” to “most agree”. By identifying disagreement and consensus among participants, four diverse perspectives on the root causes for the persistence of gender inequality at the highest ranks of academic leadership were uncovered including factor 1 - family orientation, factor 2- alternative choices, factor 3- traditional cultural social values, and factor 4- workplace attitude and structure. This study also finds

out that most of female managers at the VNU-HCM maybe face ‘slippery ladder’ than a “glass ceiling” because they by themselves skip the advancement opportunities.

Keywords

Women Leadership, Gender Inequality, Higher Education, Q-methodology

1. Introduction

A considerable amount of literature has been published on academic leadership in higher education. Academic leadership not only has general features of leadership, but also has special characteristic because it refers to leaders in an academic setting or institutions. It requires breadth and depth of knowledge and skills, and is defined as a whole by a complex suite of behaviors (Vilkinas & Ladyshevsky, 2009). Women in academic leadership refers to reaching and understanding high-ranking academic leadership positions (Dean, 2009). Until now, the relationship between gender and leadership has also been considered as one of the most attractive issues for researchers. The continuing lack of senior women leaders in higher education institutions has, in general, frequently been the heated subject of debate. Traditional Western theories supposed that university teaching and administration are usually male domains (Ruijs 1993). Although recently women have made great contributions both in the academia and social life, they still continue to under-represented in academic leadership. Based on the case of the University of Costa Rica, Twombly (1998) explored that women in his study and other women are oppressed and discriminated against in their quest for academic careers. Kloot (2004) used a case study approach of South Western University to explain for the absence of women in leadership positions in Australia and find out the difficulties in retaining their leadership positions. Additionally, Bilén-Green and et.al (2008) found out that representation of women not only is scarce at professorial ranks but on also on the administrative career ladder. In fact, few women advance to highest positions in higher education institutions such as dean, provost, president or chancellor. According to Airini and et.all (2011), they identified what factors that helps or hinders women to attain leader’s role in universities in New Zealand to support their advancement. Commonly, five general areas are blamed for women’s failure to reach the upper echelons of leadership within higher education: domestic responsibilities, gender stereotypes, gender biases, double standards, and inflexible workplace attitudes and structures (Rhode, 2003). In fact, this issue has happened in many countries, and Vietnam is no exception. In Vietnam, at present, the number of women as the leaders of the universities just has counted on the finger. Although lots of research explain the scarcity of women at the senior positions in Western and Latin American universities, there

has been little discussion about this issue in Vietnam. Nguyen T.L.H (2013) asserted that in Vietnam, the main barriers are strong family obligations, negative gender stereotypes regarding females as leaders, and female academics' unwillingness to take management positions.

Unlike other research concerning women leaders in higher education, this study uses the Q-methodology to explore the main reasons leading to the scarcity of senior women in academic leadership roles, in the case of Vietnam National University – Ho Chi Minh City (VNU-HCM). This is one of two largest universities in Vietnam, which has currently belonged to the government instead of the Ministry of Education. In fact, with over 5,680 staffs (of which more than 50% are female), until now, there are just two women have trailed in the top academic leadership in VNU-HCM. Additional, there has had not any woman offered in the board of presidents of VNU-HCM since its foundation. All of these issues raising questions about the root causes for the persistence of gender inequality at the highest ranks of academic leadership. Why then, in VNU-HCM, has there not been more women promoted to the upper levels management and out of the middle ranks?

2. Methods

Q methodology was introduced by William Stephenson in 1953, which is a research method that combines the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methods. Thus it can provide a scientific foundation for systematic study of subjectivity through characterizing shared opinions among groups of individuals. Generally, in Q-methodology, participants are provided with a set of stimuli (known as the Q-sample) which they rank via a process known as Q-sorting (Excel and Graaf, 2005). The Q-sample is usually represented by statements, although it can be pictures, works of art, or even musical composition (Danesh, Baumann, & Cordingley, 2008). Items in the Q-sample are arranged by Q-sorter according to his/her subjective viewpoint from positive feeling to negative feeling, with a mid-point of zero depicting a neutral or no feeling. Then, the results of Q-sorting exercise are examined by a by-person factor analysis.

2.1 Development of the Q samples

To discover the main reasons that limit women's opportunities to advance into leadership position at universities: in the case of VNU-HCM, a comprehensive review of literature is conducted. This research identified 141 statements related to the absence or scarcity of women in senior leadership roles. After extracting, the final set of 40 statements



that potentially described and sufficiently represented the root causes for the persistence of gender inequality at the highest ranks of academic leadership were selected.

2.2 The P samples

This research was conducted at VNU-HCM, in Vietnam. To maximize the possibility of various perspectives, this study selected participants with different characteristics representing different age groups, different leader positions and different degrees. Therefore, the sample was purposively selected to include both single and married women at junior, middle and senior level managers with different academic degrees (Doctorate and Master degree) Thus, a total of 18 women in positions of academic leadership of VNU-HCM were interviewed.

2.3 Q sorting

The selected women were invited to participate in interview that undertaken from 15th May to 30th May. Each participant was asked to sort the cards into 11 piles from -5 (most disagree) to +5 (most agree), regarding her perception about different reasons leading to the scarcity of women at high ranks at VNU-HCM and according to the following Q-sort table.

Most disagree ←   Most agree

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

2.4 Q analysis and factor interpretation

From the 8 factors rotated, The PQ Method data analysis program identified 5 distinctive factors (categories) using the Eigenvalues greater than 1 (Table 1). Those with less than this amount is regarded as insignificant and generally of too little interested to warrant further investigation (Brown 1980a: 40). Although Factor 4 had an eigenvalue of more than 1, it is not considered for interpretation. Because it was defined by the only viewpoint of one participant (Q sort A4). In Q methodology, an interpretable factor must ordinarily have at least two Q sorts that's load significantly upon it alone. Therefore, in this study, a four-factor solution was selected. Those Q-sorts that achieve a factor loading of $0.4079 \left(\frac{1}{\sqrt{N}} * 2.58, N = 40 \right)$ or above on a given factor were considered to have loaded significant onto that factor.

Table 1: The PQ Method data analysis program identified 5 distinctive factors (categories) using the Eigenvalues greater than 1

No	Eigenvalues	As Percentages	Cumul. Percentages
1	<u>6.8728</u>	38.1822	38.1822
2	<u>1.9062</u>	10.5901	48.7724
3	<u>1.3674</u>	7.5964	56.3688
4	<u>1.1335</u>	6.2972	62.6659
5	<u>1.0484</u>	5.8246	68.4905
6	0.9405	5.2253	73.7158
7	0.858	4.7665	78.4823
8	0.6596	3.6647	82.147
9	0.6156	3.42	85.5669
10	0.5109	2.8382	88.4051
11	0.4535	2.5192	90.9243
12	0.3799	2.1104	93.0347
13	0.3536	1.9644	94.9991
14	0.2936	1.6309	96.63
15	0.2418	1.3431	97.9731
16	0.1628	0.9047	98.8778
17	0.1072	0.5955	99.4732
18	0.0948	0.5268	100

3. Results

Analysis of the participants' Q-sort resulted in four distinct viewpoints, accounting for 62% of the variance in the correlation matrix (Table 2). Factors were interpreted using the rank number of statements that were considered significant at $p < 0.01$. The 4 factors were defined by 17 women, which accounted for 94% of the total number of participants. One female participant (Q sort A4) did not load significantly on any of the factors.

Table 2: Statement and factor scores

No.	Statement	Factor			
		1	2	3	4
1	Women can't leave too late from the meeting because of taking care her family.	4	1	-1	-1
2	For women, career choices still revolve more around family than they do for men.	4	2	1	1
3	Women are usually the primary parent caring for children and other family members during their peak years in the workforce.	3	4	-1	-2
4	Women also take more time off for family commitments than men do.	5	5	2	5
5	Women faculty do face unique challenges from family: try to balance family responsibilities and career aspirations.	5	4	0	5

6	Because women are still not represented in roles of leadership in large numbers, most people still imagine the role of leader as male.	-1	2	-1	-2
7	It is difficult to accept the “president’s husband” stand-in at an event whereas the “president’s wife” is.	-2	-1	-2	-5
8	Compared to male faculty, women faculty spent more time on teaching than on research	-1	2	1	-4
9	Women with familial responsibilities often do not get important works like men.	-1	0	0	-3
10	It is common for women to be paid at a lower salary than a man with equal rank.	-5	-5	-5	-5
11	Women are less likely to gain tenure than their male counterparts although both of them become mothers and fathers at the same point after having doctorate degrees.	0	1	5	1
12	To be recognized as competent, women must out-perform and be innovative than men.	1	3	-2	4
13	Women with feminine traits are seen as lacking strong leadership qualities whereas women with masculine traits are seen as unfeminine.	-1	-2	-3	0
14	Women are evaluated more stringently than men at the same positions.	0	-1	4	2
15	Women are considered to not tough enough to become leaders.	-4	-3	-4	-1
16	Stereotype threat makes women vulnerable when facing with leadership tasks.	-2	1	4	0
17	Social expectations often put men in roles of leadership and women in supporting roles.	-3	3	4	1
18	Professional ambition is expected of men but not for women.	-2	-1	2	2
19	Women are required to individually balance biological and career conflicts because the career period in academia coincides with prime reproductive years for women.	3	0	-5	4
20	The amount of time required in the presidency is unpredictable, so women do not have enough time, stamina and energy to do.	0	-4	1	2
21	“Leaders are available to work at any time” that makes leadership roles are less attractive to women.	2	-1	-3	1
22	For women, leadership roles are not the only way to have profound impact.	3	4	5	0
23	Women are more reluctant to take on challenging tasks because of risk averse.	-3	-2	3	-3
24	Because of lack of confidence and “not being heard”, women often avoid leadership roles.	-4	-4	-4	-2
25	A pre-condition for being appointed to leadership roles is through academic promotion and being a full professor; whereas only approximately one in five full professors is female.	-3	2	2	0
26	Women are restricted to building their careers in one institution and lack of career mobility to increase productivity and to be promoted to full professor.	-1	-2	1	-1
27	Lack of transparency leads women to become dispirited and decide not to seek further career progression.	-2	-1	-2	-1

28	Women are less often recruited into the starting administrative ranks, so it is difficult for them to climb these ranks sequentially.	0	0	3	1
29	Women have been subjected to bullying from senior male colleagues.	-4	-3	-4	-4
30	Few senior female leaders support younger female faculty.	0	-4	0	-3
31	Women leaders did not usually receive the understanding and support from family and colleagues.	1	1	-1	-1
32	Women are passive and often wait for someone to tell them what to do.	-5	-5	-3	-4
33	Women faculty are less likely to desire the college presidency than men.	1	0	-2	-2
34	Women in academic administration in higher education often desire other priorities, such as family, research and teaching rather than advance beyond their current position.	2	5	0	3
35	Women feel highly motivated and pressured to succeed as college presidents.	2	-3	1	3
36	Women may resist, delay, or avoid the presidency until they feel fully prepared for fear of failing.	0	-2	-1	0
37	The primarily male managerial structure hinders opportunities for women's career encouragement and training.	1	0	0	3
38	Traditionally parochial environment is barrier for women leaders and administrators.	1	3	3	4
39	When deciding who to promote into management, male leaders tend to select people as much like themselves as possible.	2	1	0	2
40	Lack of organizational value may decrease recruitment of younger women into leadership roles.	4	0	2	0

The Q-sort factor value and Z-scores also aided in the process of interpretation (table 3). To interpret these results, this study will focus on specific statements that were defined as distinguishing statements – a statement's score on two factors is higher than the different score.

Table 3: Distinguishing Factors Rank and Z-Score Values

No. Statement	No.	Factor 1							
		1		2		3		4	
		Rank	Z-SCR	Rank	Z-SCR	Rank	Z-SCR	Rank	Z-SCR
For women, career choices still revolve more around family....	2	4	1.71*	2	0.77	1	0.45	1	0.32
Women are required to individually resolve the conflicts	19	3	0.88	0	0.18	-5	-1.59	4	1.83
Compared to male faculty, women faculty spent more time on teaching than on research.	8	-1	-0.48	2	0.65	1	0.32	-4	-1.23

Stereotype threat makes women vulnerable when facing with leadership tasks.	16	-2	- 0.97*	1	0.43	4	1.38	0	-0.01
Social expectations often put men in roles of leadership....	17	-3	- 1.11*	3	0.99	4	1.27	1	0.18
A pre-condition for being appointed to leadership roles...	25	-3	- 1.12*	2	0.76	2	0.86	0	0.08

Factor 2

Because women are still not represented in roles of lead.....	6	-1	-0.53	2	0.93*	-1	-0.23	-2	-0.51
Women are required to individually resolve the conflicts	19	3	0.88	0	0.18	-5	-1.59	4	1.83
Women feel highly motivated and pressured to succeed as.....	35	2	0.84	-3	- 0.94*	1	0.45	3	0.98
The amount of time required in the presidency is unpredicted.....	20	0	0.17	-4	- 1.59*	1	0.6	2	0.48

Factor 3

Women are less likely to gain tenure than their male counterparts ...	11	0	-0.2	1	0.46	5	1.63*	1	0.09
Stereotype threat makes women vulnerable when facing with leadership tasks	16	-2	-0.97	1	0.43	4	1.38	0	-0.01
Being risk averse in the workplace can also cause women...	23	-3	-1.03	-2	-0.83	3	1.00*	-3	-0.96
Women are less often recruited into the starting administration...	28	0	0.04	0	0.16	3	0.92	1	0.17
Women also take more time off for family commitments than...	4	5	1.95	5	1.94	2	0.68*	5	2.09
Women are restricted to building their careers in one in ...	26	-1	-0.45	-2	-0.8	1	0.43	-1	-0.29
Women faculty do face unique challenges from family: try ...	5	5	1.83	4	1.51	0	- 0.02*	5	1.94
To be seen as competent and worthy of funding, women have...	12	1	0.48	3	0.97	-2	- 0.58*	4	1.15

Women are required to individually resolve the conflicts...	19	3	0.88	0	0.18	-5	-	4	1.83
Factor 4									
Women are required to individually resolve the conflicts.....	19	3	0.88	0	0.18	-5	-1.59	4	1.83*
Social expectations often put men in roles of leadership	17	-3	-1.11	3	0.99	4	1.27	1	0.18
A pre-condition for being appointed to leadership roles	25	-3	-1.12	2	0.76	2	0.86	0	0.08
For women, leadership roles are not the only way to have	22	3	0.99	4	1.33	5	2.04	0	-
Women are considered to not tough enough to become leader...	15	-4	-1.16	-3	-0.99	-4	-1.51	-1	-0.23
Because of lack of confidence and “not being heard”, women...	24	-4	-1.53	-4	-1.36	-4	-1.44	-2	-0.58
Women with familial responsibilities often do not get	9	-1	-0.22	0	-0.1	0	0.01	-3	-0.89
Compared to male faculty, women faculty spent more time on teaching than on research	8	-1	-0.48	2	0.65	1	0.32	-4	-

($P < .05$; Asterisk (*) Indicates Significance at $P < .01$)

Note: This is a table that displays each statement's ranking and Z-scores on each of the four factors.

3.1 Factor 1- Family-oriented

This factor accounted for 24% of total variance. The Q-sort of ten participants that defined this factor included 9 married women and 1 single one, in which there is just only one senior women leader (married, full professor with over 45 years old), and most of the remaining ones are at middle rank. The factor 1 perspective emphasized family-oriented women in higher education institutions. Statements four, five, two, and one are obvious statements that define the respondent's positive viewpoint. They strongly agreed that women spent more time for family commitments than men do (4: +5). In addition, women in academia must struggle to balance work and family (5: +5). They almost agree that women still choose the career revolving more around family compared to men (2: +4). Furthermore,

because they have to go back home to take care their family (1: +4), they cannot end the meeting too late.

They mostly disagree with statements involving gender stereotypes and biases including 10, 32, 24, 15, which limited the high position of women at university. According to them, women have similar abilities like men to become leaders. They extremely disagreed with some statements that women are passive and often wait someone to tell them what to do (32: -5) or women are not enough tough (24: -4) or lack of confidence (15: -4).

3.2 Factor 2 – Psychological Choices and Desires

Factor 2 accounted for 14% total variance. Among four respondents defining this factor, three of four women got married, one young single women (<35 years) educated from US now is at the senior position. The distinct viewpoint of factor 2 is oriented around choices and desires of women in academia. Statements 34, 22 and 3 summarize the general features of this factor. In fact, women in academic administration in higher education often desires other priorities, such as family, research and teaching rather than climb up higher position (34: +5). Thus, they supposed that there are alternative ways to have profound impact instead of only leadership roles. (22: +4). Likewise, women are usually the primary parent caring for children and other family members during their peak years in the workforce (3: +4).

Defining participants strongly disagreed that women do not have enough time, stamina and energy to be charge of leader role because of the large amount of time required in the presidency (20: -4). Besides, women of this factor have the similar point of view with those in factor 1 when opposing the statements involving lack of confidence (24: -4) and passive behavior of women (32: -5) leading to the scarcity of senior female leaders in academia. These women were steady against the statement that few senior women support younger women faculty for achieving advancement (30: -4) whereas participants of factor 1 and 3 were neutral to this statement (30: 0).

3.3 Factor 3 – Traditional social cultural values

Factor 3 accounted for 11% total variance. There are three respondents defining this factor including two married women, one single woman; in which one senior female leader (married, associate professor with over 45 years old) graduated from China. Factor 3 reflected traditional social cultural values are the most crucial causes concerning the limitation of promotion opportunities of women at the university. These women strongly advocated the statement that achieving the leadership positions is not the only way to have worthy impact. (22: +5). They also strongly agreed that women are less likely to gain tenure in their

educational pursuits than their male counterparts although both of them become mothers and fathers at the same point after having doctorate degrees (11: +5). Obviously, although they have the same degrees and have a child at the same time, the promotion opportunity is more priority to men. In other words, traditional social cultural values including double standard and gender stereotypes are the main obstacle women must to overcome. As is self-evident, defining participants also agreed that social expectations often put men in roles of leadership and women in supporting roles (17: +4). Gendered assumptions that stereotype threat makes women more vulnerable when facing with leadership tasks than men 16: +4). Additionally, they are also evaluated more stringently men at the same authority positions. (14: +4).

Women in this factor have the similar point of view with those in factor 1 and 2 when opposing the statements involving lack of confidence (24: -4) and lack of toughness (15: -4) making women not to become leaders. The most highlighted point of this factor is that women specially disapprove of statement that they are required to individually balance biological and career conflicts because the career timeline in academia coincides with prime reproductive years for women (19: -5).

3.4 Factor 4 –Workplace attitude & structure

Factor 4 accounted for 13% total variance. Of four respondents defining this factor, two women got married (from 35-45 years, middle position) and two women are single (<35 years, junior position). This factor emphasized that workplace structure negatively affects the promotion of women. These women thought that traditionally parochial environment has hindered them to achieve leadership positions (38: +4). To be recognized as competent, women ought to outperform and be more innovative whereas men can secure backing with far less (12: +4). They are also in favor of the fact that the primarily male managerial structure restricted opportunities for women's career encouragement. (37: +3). Additionally, they indicated that male leaders tend to select people as much like themselves as possible when deciding who to promote into management (39: +2).

Compared to other groups, these participants strongly opposed that gender biases are the main barriers of women leaders. Clearly, they opposed that "it is difficult to accept the 'president's husband' stand-in at an event whereas the 'president's wife' is" (7: -5). Women in this group also disagreed that in comparison to male faculty, women spent more time on teaching than on research (8: -4). Moreover, they did not approve of the statement that women with familial responsibilities often do not get important works like men (9: -3).

4. Discussion

This research pointed out four factors reflecting various perspectives around the main reasons involving the scarcity of senior female leaders in higher education, in the case of VNU-HCM.

Factor 1 reflected the viewpoint of upholding family orientation is the most crucial reason leading to the limitation of women's promotion. Maybe women in this factor thought that becoming family oriented often takes some work in order to make it a priority, then, most of statements that they agreed with are related to family-oriented issue. After the women's movement first advocated equal rights and opportunities for them, until now, the concept of "having it all" often is also unreal (Seierstad and Kirton, 2015). Generally, women loading on this factor also showed a general concern about the family-oriented responsibilities whereas they did not care too much about limitations creating by gender stereotypes and the procedure of appointment at high positions in academia.

Women loading on factor 2 also emphasized their choices and desires rather than their family burden. In fact, except from advancing beyond their current position, women faculty still have more alternative priorities such as family, doing research and teaching. According to August and Waltman (2004), they pointed out that women should concentrate on methods of obtaining career satisfaction. Women should appreciate such factors as the nature of job itself – teaching, research, peer valuation... when deciding careers (Samble, 2008). In general, the viewpoint of women in this factor mainly focus on their choices and desires. Although they have other choices to do beside becoming leaders, women also believed that they have the similar ability like men to do that.

Factor 3 represented the traditional cultural social values make them have less opportunity to get highest promotion at universities. Maybe Eastern ideology has a large influence on perception of these women in this factor. Traditional values gave greater power to men in decision-making, which limited women's access to be promoted. Although women have the same degrees with men, the fact that they become mothers soon maybe make them to be busy with taking care of their children, which reduce opportunities of appointment at higher position. Besides, women in this factor supposed that they have more alternative ways to have profound impact without being leaders (22: +5). Thus, for them, leadership role in academia is not all. Especially, women maybe have a fear of facing new challenges and being risk averse in the workplace. Hence, they particularly agreed that they likely seem to be more reluctant to take on challenging tasks (23: +3) whereas women in other factors disagreed with

this statement. General speaking, this factor reflected traditional social cultural values that limit women's promotion in academia.

The factor 4's perspectives were primarily related to recognize workplace attitude and structure causing the barriers of women promotion. Although women in this factor also marginally considered the domestic responsibilities of women like those in factor 1 and 2, they put the traditionally parochial hierarchies on the top causes that limited the promotion access of women (37, 38). Agreeing with women in the factor 2, they also slightly pointed out that male leaders tend to promote the male counterparts to management (39). They did not also think that women are usually the primarily parent caring for children and other family members during their peak years in the workplace (3: -2) whereas women in factor 1 and 2 agreed with it. Maybe, according to them, Vietnamese universities have a quite different political system and social tradition compared to those of the West. Thus, they thought that the universities implemented policies that are conducive to material equity but not to advancement opportunities for gender equality.

Interestingly, the women loading on the different factors had consensus concerning women's promotion at universities. The statement that got the most disagreement from the participants is the unequal salary. Maybe in Vietnam, the salary between male and female faculty is not different because the level of salary just based on their experiences. In addition, for them, the lack of transparency is not the main problem that limits the further career progression of women. From this view, we can recognize that the procedure of promotion in VNU-HCM is evaluated rather clearly and transparently. It does not make women to become dispirited as well as not decide to seek higher ranks. They also opposed that women feel highly motivated and pressured to succeed as college presidents (35; -3). Maybe they thought that women are as strong as men to become a successful leader at the university. Therefore, according to women in VNU-HCM, physical and psychological stamina are not the most important obstacle that limits the career promotion of women.

5. Conclusion

Generally, the scarcity of senior women leaders is still a controversy issue at the universities in Vietnam and other Eastern countries. This study finds out that most of female managers at the VNU-HCM may face 'slippery ladder' than a "glass ceiling". In other words, 'women do not rise to a certain point and the get stuck; rather, attrition in higher at every step of the pipeline'. Because "glass ceiling" refers to the scarcity of women at the higher levels of leadership and decision-making levels of organizations, which involving the unstated

barriers that females face in advancing to the pinnacle of the profession; whereas the “slippery ladder” asserts that women voluntarily drop out of the partnership track at stages farther down the ladder. In this research, we discovered that most of women in VNU-HCM by themselves skip the advancement opportunities. For them, family orientation, alternative choices, traditional perception, workplace structure are main reason that limit their promotion. In sum, with these findings, this study will proposed some suggested policies for empowering leadership positions for women at universities in Vietnam. Firstly, the traditional prejudice about the wives and mothers duties of women should be changed, both of women and men have to share family chores together. Therefore, suitable policies must lessen the time spending for domestic work so that women can concentrate on their careers pursuits as men. Furthermore, at the same time, women should learn to take the benefits from work-family connection rather than considering work-family balance as a major concern. (Cheung and Halpern, 2010). Additionally, academic women must have in mind of their career advancement. If they are not keen on their own careers, it is very difficult to effectively promote their career advancement.

At present, to become an oriented-research university in the near future, the appropriate policies related to uphold the role of women leaders at VNU-HCM as well as support for their successful academic lives should be fully developed.

6. Limitation

Q methodology is very new in Vietnam, especially to the participants in VNU-HCM. Therefore, sometimes during the process of interviewing, they felt confused about applying this innovative way.

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