

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

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Abstract: The article identifies the relationship between effects of gender differences on organizational performance and high profile jobs relating to employee commitment at work, performance and 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. 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 correlation between effects of gender differences on organization performance 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, High profile jobs, effects, Employment and Western Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

In 2008, the world average of women in Parliament was only 17.8%. With the highest number in Nordic countries (41.4 per cent) and the lowest in the Pacific and Arab states (IPU website 2009). In the highest decision making bodies of European Union central banks, there are five times as many men as women. Local government-initiated consultative processes also often fail to engage women sufficiently. Even decision-makers in civil society organizations tend to be men [1].

In Britain, the study conducted in 1994, indicated that 85 per cent of women under 45 left government for non-electoral reasons, and in 63 per cent of cases this was because of the difficulties of balancing home and work life [2]. Encouraging men to share some of these responsibilities could enable women's participation in governance, but social attitudes about male and female roles also need to shift if this is to happen.

Gender differences and their impact on economic outcomes have attracted increasing attention, both in the media and in the economic literature. There is evidence for systematic differences in the origins of choice and behavior by gender; namely, in the preferences of men and women [2], in a comprehensive

and exhaustive review of the work on gender differences in economic experiments summarize the findings as follows: "We find that women are indeed more risk-averse than men. We find that the social preferences of women are more situational specific than those of men; women are neither more nor less socially oriented, but their social preferences are more malleable. Finally, we find that women are more averse to competition than are men."

In Rwanda, the government underwent a major shift in gender awareness during and following the genocide of 1994. During the conflict, women were subjected to horrific levels of gender-based violence including rape, sexual assault and breast oblation. They also witnessed terrible acts of cruelty against members of their families and communities, in addition to experiencing displacement and loss of livelihoods. A large number of women also lost their husbands, so assumed the role of household heads and community leaders. Women are still in the demographic majority in Rwanda, comprising 54 per cent of the population. The hardships faced by these women, coupled with the responsibilities they have taken on have contributed to changing the way they see themselves and also the way they are perceived in the public consciousness. A major consequence has been the significant political will shown towards the need for gender parity in government

and for male delegates who are committed to equal gender power relations [3].

In Uganda, there is a general consensus that, even when quotas facilitate women's entry into government, leading to increasing numbers of women in elected state posts, there are still a huge number of barriers, largely within state institutions, that prevent their full participation in governmental life and decision-making processes. Until these are addressed, quotas can only provide the first building block in the creation of gender-sensitive state machinery. When women are elected to government offices they can often expect to work long, inflexible hours, including working in the evenings and at weekends. Because women are so often expected to take on the unpaid work of caring for dependents and household duties, they may find themselves faced with a double burden balancing their professional and home lives. For some the strain of trying to reconcile and meet both these demands can affect their career progression and in some cases lead to their resignation from government posts [4].

Uganda has a strong local government system, but, despite the recognition for a strong gender equality policy, outlined in the PRSP, gender was not initially mainstreamed into all actions at the local governance level. In response, a strategic gender performance assessment initiative was developed through the Local Government Development Program. Local government offices are assessed on their commitment to gender equality and mainstreaming by way of a performance assessment framework, part of a broader incentive framework against which their eligibility for funding is measured through indicators. The performance assessment instrument for gender mainstreaming has been very successful, leading to civil-society-led training on gender budgeting for local government officials, training on gender issues for male and female councilors and civil society monitoring of local government expenditure [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 [6]. 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 [6]. 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 PhD 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:

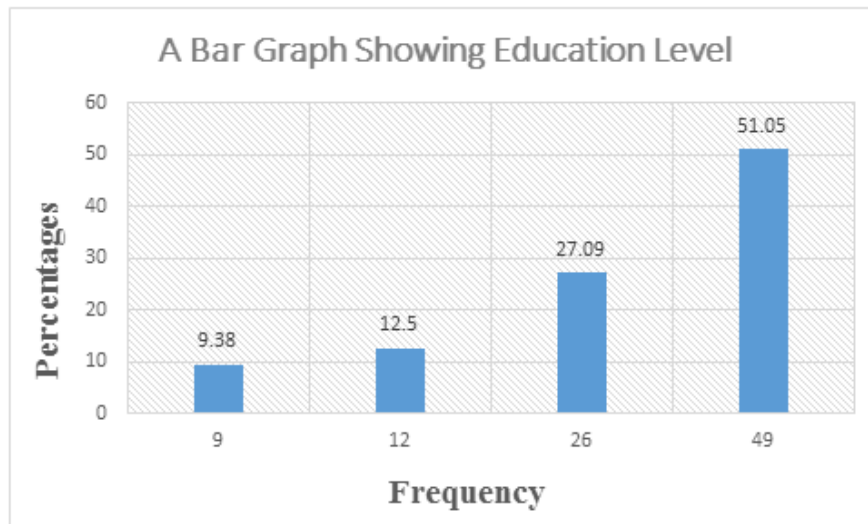


Fig-1: Education Background of the respondents in relation to gender of participants

Source: Primary data

Results from interviews

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

Women are deprived good education to the advantage of male partners. Many societies believe that women are destined to stay back at home and take care of their families. Many will not further their studies but end up being prizes for their male counterparts. Lack of good education means that these women will not be able to take care of their families and this may come with heavy consequences like poverty, ignorance and inferiority complex.

Despite women encouragement to join school, careers advice is poor and lacking in our societies. Women are not well mentored, empowered and not helped to plan ahead and map out careers as those of men. This makes them attain low qualifications compared to those of men

as attributed to stereotyping, traditions and constraints of motherhood. Eventually it becomes hard for them to make it to the top and this disadvantages them by experiencing negative consequences of discrimination at the work place.

This implies that, a lot of gender inequality becomes embedded at an early stage at school. Therefore it is important that not only all staff, but also all students and young ones can be trained in gender equality and best practice as soon as they start primary schools, with in households by parents and relatives and societies respectively.”

Respondents Opinions on the Effects of Gender Differences in High Profile Jobs

Table 2 below shows the effects of gender differences in high profile job positions, 36 participants

think that qualification and experience is the most that affects men and women for attaining high job positions. This implied that educational qualifications and experience do contribute greatly to gender differences in society and especially in high profile positions in higher educational institutions in Western Uganda. This is because 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 [7]. However, women have realized the need to pursue higher qualifications in order to be able to occupy bigger offices in society [8].

Table-2: Respondents Opinions on the Effects of Gender Differences and High Profile Jobs

Effects	Particulars		Total
	Male	Female	
Gender difference de-motivate the disadvantaged gender	10	13	23
Gender differences attracts the best performers	3	3	6
The genders will be differently committed if treated differently	8	9	17
Gender differences are normal and hence have no important effect	10	4	14
Qualification and experience is more important than gender	20	16	36
Grand total	96 participants		96

Source: primary data

Results from interviews

One of the deans from the said universities stated:

Gender inequality is not new in traditional African society. It holds back the growth of individuals, the development of Universities and the evolution of societies, to the disadvantage of both men and women. Gender differences at the workplace not only hurt those who are disadvantaged against, it can also damage the entire organization. However women are the most disadvantaged in both formal and informal employment sector. Institutions should treat gender inequality as a matter of urgency as it affects both human rights and development priorities of both sexes and the university respectively.

This suggested that, Gender inequality is evident in different African societies and workplaces. Many women suffer in silence when they counterpart male parts are enjoying. Gender inequality in workforces can also mean low production as women are capable of doing the same amount of work like men. If women have limited skills of planning, controlling and general management, institutions of learning should provide them career mentoring, on job training and a

variety of short courses in leadership and management so as to compete favorably with men in management positions.

Respondent’s opinions on how gender differences affect decision making in selected Universities

The table below shows how gender differences affect decision making in selected Universities of Western Uganda. Most results indicate that; Decision will be biased in favor of one gender (16 respondents), Decisions will not be the best possible because one perspective is not considered (23 respondents), Important for good decisions is qualifications and experience not gender (24 respondents), and The organization will miss out opportunities (24 respondents) on the other hand, only 9 respondents replied in favor of; Gender differences are normal, they do not affect decisions. This implies that gender differences greatly and negatively affect decision making in selected universities because either of the sex especially women are not considered when it comes to decision making in high job positions because of low qualifications and experience and this eventually leads to the Universities losing out opportunities which comes in favor of women in bigger positions.

Table-3: Respondent’s opinions on how gender differences affect decision making in selected Universities

Opinions	Particulars		Total
	Male	Female	
Decision will be biased in favor of one gender	6	10	16
Decisions will not be the best possible because one perspective is not considered	9	14	23
The organization will miss out on opportunities	15	9	24
Gender differences are normal, they do not affect decisions	5	4	9
Important for good decisions is qualifications and experience not gender	14	14	24
Grand total	96 participants		96

Source: primary data

Results from interviews

One of the head of departments from the said universities stated

Gender differences in the workplace exist, but we don't really talk about them. Most of the people at the University have not thought much about it. This silence means that men are very instrumental in leadership and in exercising significant ways over the decisions and views that shape their workplaces, since they are the ones occupying bigger positions. In our University, Men have demonstrated wonderful good working relationships and necessary skills of planning and decision making appropriate for growth and development of the University.

Organizations have always been successful and have been showing heights for progress while being represented by men in Management positions, this is because they are committed and readily available at work for all the working hours as compared to women.

This suggests that, governance processes and institutions are located within societies with particular, culturally-defined gender rules that affect levels of equality and shape perceptions of people towards male and female behavior, competence, commitment, relationships and roles. There are also social constraints to women's participation in decision-making at all levels that include unequal access to resources, including time, education and the caring responsibilities that women are often expected to take on. Many women have been victims of gender inequality as men in societies have built a perception that women are weak and cannot fight for their rights. Women should not just watch men ruin societies through either poor or good governance when they have the capabilities. Together as a society, it can be easy and gratifying to build respective and equal society by respecting gender equality across all departments.

CONCLUSION

The research revealed the effects of gender differences on organizational performance and development and how it affects decision making specifically in higher institutions of learning in Western Uganda. The study findings showed that gender differences in high profile jobs will affect the way institutions take and make responsibility and decision making respectively for gender-balance. Indeed, responses show clearly that they do not feel responsible but 'blame it' on external factors (mainly qualifications, traditions and culture, gender discrimination being

normal and not affecting decisions). Such biases and lack of actively addressing gender-imbalances e. g. through, career mentoring for women and on job training or staff development and at time of promotions limits good performance or the quality of work because men and women can perform equally well [8]. The study 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. The study recommend also the practice of gender mainstreaming for all academic institutions to avoid the problem of under representation of both sexes, sensitization of stakeholders for girl child education, encouraging female candidates to apply for higher job positions and addressing gender-imbalance through staff development.

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