Traditions, Mentoring, and Vietnamese Women Leaders in Higher Education

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the effects of informal mentoring on the leadership development of women in leadership positions in Vietnamese universities

Literature Review (Roles)

- Women's role has changed, but inequality still persists (Mellor, 2003; Agar, 2004; Eagly & Carli, 2007; Percheski, 2008; Gregory-Mina, 2012)

Literature Review (Barriers)

- Women face barriers to promotions (Schein, 2001; McTavish & Miller, 2009; White, Riordan, Ozkanli, & Neale, 2010)

- Women create their own barriers (Madsen, 2008)

Literature Review (Mentoring)

- Lack of mentoring constitutes a barrier to women's advancement (Devos, 2008; Schollen et al; 2008; Dunbar & Kinnersley, 2011)

Research Questions

RQ1 - What are the reported demographic characteristics of women leaders in Vietnamese public institutions of higher education; such as age, level of education, family status, and position at the university?

RQ 2 - What personal leadership development experiences were reported by Vietnamese women in leadership roles in public institutions of higher education?

RQ 3 - What barriers do Vietnamese women experience in attaining leadership position in public institutions of higher education?

RQ 4 - What mentoring experiences do Vietnamese women utilize in leadership roles in public institutions of higher education?

Findings

RQ1 – Demographics

Age	25 - 30	31 - 35	36 - 40	40+	
2011	1	6	3	7	
2012	1	0	4	10	
Total	2	6	7	17	
Years @ university	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16+	
2011	4	4	5	4	
2012	3	2	3	7	
Total	7	6	8	11	
Years @ position	1 - 5	6 - 10	11 - 15	16+	Not reported
2011	16	1	0	0	
2012	12	1	0	1	1
Total	28	2		1	1
Highest degree	Associate	Bachelor	Masters	Ph.D.	
2011	0	0	9	8	
2012	1	0	6	8	
Total	1	0	15	16	
Mentor	Male	Female	Both		Not reported
2011	4	8	3		2
2012	2	3	2		8
Total	6	11	5		10
Marital status	Single	Married			Not reported
2011	2	15			0
2012	4	9			1
Total	6	24			1

Findings

- RQ2 – Leadership Experience
  - Collaborative decision-making approach
  - Decision to benefit all
  - Value elders' wisdom and advice

Findings

- RQ3 – Barriers to Attain Leadership Positions
  - Lack of time
  - Home plus career duties/roles
  - Gender inequality still persists
  - Lack of networking opportunities
  - Welcome additional support at home

Findings

- RQ4 – Mentoring Experience
  - No formal mentoring experience
  - Mistaking mentor with role model
  - Women do not mentor others – problem persists

Researcher's Observations

- Tradition and culture are always present
- Willingly take on responsibilities and strive for meaningful contribution to family/work/community
- Gender inequality hinders career advancement

Unexpected Findings (Aha.....)

- The achievements of the women in this study were remarkable given the lack of mentoring and the barriers and challenges they face
- The women were ambitious, yet traditional; they prioritize their families' obligations above their careers, yet they achieved leadership positions with little or no support from others
- They were always willing to work hard and did not ask for support or help
- Their only complaint was the lack of time for them to do more

Unexpected Findings (Aha.....)

- The women like to create a conference similar to the Asia-Pacific Rim conferences, where they can exchange ideas and experiences and learn from each other

- (Researcher's thought) - Such conferences would create mentoring opportunities for women, not only in Vietnam, but in the Asia-Pacific Rim, and empower them to achieve their career ambitions

Recommendations

- Study should be replicated in different organizational structures and different countries to identify the most effective mentoring protocol

- Compare and contrast the career paths for men and women in different countries and organizational structures to identify the different support systems and barriers impacting the career development of both genders

Thank You