

Women Leadership in Iraq : A Gender study 2021

Dr. Taher M.Al galibi
Professor of Management
Shatt Al.Arab University College

Ali Lafata Khalaf Al Baghlani
former manager of cultural centre
at the University of Basra

Abstract

The study aims at to determine the criteria followed by decision makers to promote women in both the private and public academic sector, to become leaders in top management. It subscribes to the model presented by (Alvesson & Billing, 1997). The participants 70 were divided into 43 male and 27 female managers. The study sample included deans of colleges and their assistants at the University of Basra (public sector) and Shatt Al-Arab College (private sector). The results show that there is no specific model followed by the academic leaders in terms of nominating women for leadership positions. Instead, promotion criteria for women to top positions are decision maker specific. For this reason this study presents a theoretical framework for an Iraqi model. It is called "the personal cumulative Perspectives (Hybrid Model)", which is a combination of two dimensions. First, the personal judgments and Perspectives of decision makers that accumulated over time towards women. Second, the influence of other factors imposed by specific circumstances in some cases. These could include, for example, the government's influences or federal decisions that require fixed share (Quota) for women in leadership positions

Introduction

In the last three decades, at the global level, women have made a major change in their education and political participation around the world. However, they are still struggling regarding their representation in leadership position, politics and business. Although with slight improvements, over recent years, the gender gap in these positions remains a significant issue in many countries. This is especially relevant in developing countries, whereas, advanced countries have shown a significant improvement in closing the gender gap. For example, the U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016) reported that women constituted 46.8 % of all workforce in the labor market. In addition, women occupy slightly more than half of the workforce (51%) in high-paying management, professional, and related occupations (Pande & Ford, 2011)

Politics has endorsed a tool to improve women's representation in parliament and governmental work. Women hold approximately 25% of parliamentary seats globally, and about 12 % of the world's heads of state and government. In 2013, 118 countries were adopting a type of gender quotas for an elected office (Gwiazda, 2014)

Many studies argue that the investment in women at the leadership level causes improvement of human development outcomes and women's entrepreneurship (Iyer et al., 2012; Ghani et al., 2014; Pathak and Karen). Quotas in India resulted in increasing women educational trend and increased women's entrepreneurship. In Africa, it was found that elected female leaders under quotas performed just as well as men, and in some cases significantly better, than their equivalent in societies that do not consider women quotas in leadership positions (Clayton, 2015). In the Middle East, previous studies primarily examined the obstacles that prevent women from being leaders within their organizations. While, other studies focused

on the problems of training and reinforcing women in comparison to .men (Al-Hussain, 2011)

This study aims at identifying the way in which decision-makers nominate women to leading positions in public and private academic sectors. It adopts the model of the relationship. between gender and leadership according to Alvesson and Billing (1997). Alvesson and Billing presented a theoretical framework to measure the relationship between leadership and gender in which they introduce four scenarios for nominating women to occupy top management .positions

A sample of academic leaders, both male and female were selected from the public and private academic sectors. they consisted of deans of colleges, their assistants, directors of centers and former leaders. This study is believed to be the first study that investigates the way in which Iraqi decision-makers promote women for .leadership positions

The Main Hypothesis of the Study

Male and female managers, in public and private sectors follow, a certain model when they nominate women to leadership positions following this main hypothesis, secondary hypotheses. Can be postulated for each of the public and private sectors.

The Public Sector Hypothesis

Regardless of the managers' beliefs on gender difference in the public sector, they consider the moral and political aspects when hiring a woman for a high position. Therefore, they nominate a woman depending on the scenario of alternative values or equal opportunities

The Private Sector Hypothesis

Regardless of managers' beliefs on gender equality in the private sector, they concentrate on the organizational activity when they select a woman for high positions. Therefore, they nominate a woman depending on the scenario of special contributions or Meritocratic

Literature Review

Women's opportunities for occupying leading positions vary from country to country, these opportunities are still scarce in the private and public sectors. It may be a phenomenon in most countries, especially in developing ones (Al-Hussein, 2011). Middle East countries are listed at the bottom of the world list when it comes to women's participation in the economic and political fields, where women are suffering from lack of equality in employment, training and the retreat of taking part in decisions making (Al Bidarein and Al-Qawasma, 2012)

In a country like Iraq, where free education is equal for both women and men, an imbalance occurs in gender leadership opportunities after graduation. Mainly, only men occupy the leadership positions, however, there are some exceptional cases where women occupy leadership positions in the private and governmental sectors (Al-Ya'qoobi et al., 2013). This may be due to the impact of the tribal and conservative culture of the Iraqi society. Several studies argue that

such cultures limit women participation in decision making and their role in society (Al-Hussein, 2011)

Other studies attribute the obstacles of nomination women for leadership positions to the lack of managerial efficiency, and the legal and political factors (Al-Raqb; Al-Hussein, 2009, 2011). While, several researchers believe that the negative stereotypical conceptualisation about women in both men and women's minds is among the basic causes of women's disability to reach the high positions (Al-Hussein, 2011). Al Shihabi and Muhammad (2013) claim that the vast majority of women leaders who participated in their study unanimously agreed a major problem was that decision makers perceived women's work as the inferior. In addition, they believe that women are not able to bear leadership responsibility and are weak at problem-solving in the work place

While most studies focused on the obstacles that women faced to gain a leadership position. this study investigates the model used by Iraqi leaders to empower women to reach leadership positions. In most cases, women's leadership opportunities are filtered by men leaders, and this may be the main reason behind the lack of women representation in top management. However, the results of several studies argue that women perform well in leadership positions the same as men (Clayton, 2015). They used various strategies, and have a considerable and prominent role of change management in the organizations (Al-Badarein and Al-Qawasmah 2013).

The studies of gender impact on leadership have begun to emerge in the 1980s. these studies attempted their model of promoting women for leadership positions based on the nature of the relationship between gender and leadership. The model includes four scenarios that can be followed by politicians and decision-makers when they nominate women of leadership positions in light of belief in gender sameness or differences between men and women .

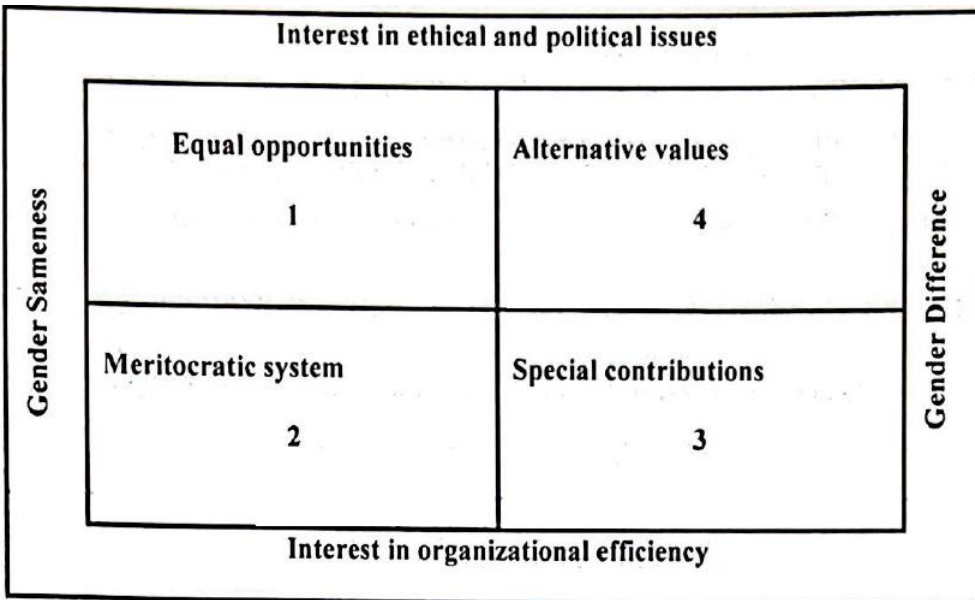


Figure 1 : The Relationship between Gender and leadership (Alvesson and Billing’s 1997)

The Equal Opportunities Position

This scenario reflects a substantial case of social and employment inequality and injustice which results in a weak representation of women in leadership positions. Accordingly, women are seen as an oppressed group, deprived of equality in opportunities when compared to men, especially with regards to high-position employment. While the conservative traditions and presumptions are believed to play a major role in preventing women from reaching high positions in organizations, others believe that the problem in this scenario rather has political and ethical perspectives:

In modern societies, there are strong beliefs that every individual must have a fair chance

regardless of ethnicity, gender, etc. Proponents of this ideology consider nominating only men

for the positions of leadership as an unethical and unjust attitude. Thus, it is necessary to

determine and overcome the obstacles that prevent equality of opportunities. Managers who follow this behaviour treat the problem of women absence in leadership positions through their belief of gender similarity in management and leadership abilities

Meritocratic Position

The meritocratic scenario addresses the resistance of some social groups who do not believe in gender equality, and who therefore represents an obstacle in the way of utilizing human resources, especially women. This will ultimately result in decreasing the efficiency of human resources and its implementation. In this scenario, individuals move freely up and down in the organizational structure depending on the individual's merits and the participation that she or he can present to the organization regardless of race, gender or ethnicity. Accordingly, organizations (in the societies in which the values of meritocratic prevails) seek the qualified candidates for leadership positions regardless of demographic factors which are considered irrelevant in such societies.

The most important shared aspects, in which the positions of Equal Opportunities and Meritocratic meet, are the efforts made to remove the obstacles in front of women to occupy leadership positions. Whereas, the difference between them is centered around the expected benefit of getting women in the leadership positions. In democratic societies, organizations tend to adopt the equal opportunities scenario, while in societies that seek efficiency, the tendency is directed to the meritocratic position. Also, there is another criterion for differentiation between them, which is the trust

in the individual who occupies a leadership position, and the extent of her or his ability in solving the complicated issues and problems. Indeed, the core of the meritocratic system relies on labour market competition, through the selection of the best candidates for leadership opportunities. In this case, women will be

given equal opportunities for occupying leadership positions (Mansoor and Al-Khafaji, 2009)

Special Contributions Position

In this scenario, women are considered to significantly and effectively contribute to organizations especially in advanced societies. It is recognized that women have different characteristics and traits compared to men. Women's leadership is characterized by democracy and inclusiveness which in turn decrease the organization hierarchy. Moreover, women can change the work environment to promote empathy and collegiality among employees.

A study, conducted in Canada in both public and private sectors, shows that 62% of women to 33% of men agreed that women leaders have unique contributions to the organization by using their distinguished social features in cooperation, and their positive effect upon the organization environment (Carlsen and Toft, 1986). This approach is based on giving women the opportunity of occupying the leadership positions for their special contributions to the organization which are different from men. For example, the ability to form alliances and agreements, networks and social communications, increasing the values of participation, mercy, and warmth .

Alternative Values Position

In this scenario, women and men are seen radically different from each other. Ferguson (1994) argue that women have different priorities, attitudes and even their point of views toward life. This scenario is similar to the previous one (Special Contributions Position) discussed above, but it puts more emphasis on the differences between the values of

masculinity and femininity more than the emphasize on the conflicts between them. This scenario is relevant in organizations where men are dominant. Women themselves criticize this approach for it supports the masculine view in the organizations. The studies show that there are mental and physical differences between women and men, and these differences exist since early childhood. These differences perpetuate with age and maturity, and eventually reflected in their organizational behavior. Thus, the conflict begins, when women exercise and espouse female values over male values that dominated the organizational culture. The base of this conflict is that women reject the idea that their values should be tested and evaluated by only the leaders who have the power to determine .criteria to judge women's behaviors capabilities

Following the alternative values scenario, two viewpoints emerge. The first view refers to the difficulty to implement this scenario under the dominance of male-centric culture within the organization which dictate the rules of game. The second view emphasizes the necessity of incorprating feminine values in the organization and removing .obstacles in women's way

They believe that women's values are important resources and it should be supported by nominating them to the highest positions of .leadership (Mansoor and Al-Khafaji, 2009)

Characteristics of the Iraqi Women (Social and Professional)

There is no doubt that Iraqi women circumstances cannot be compared with others women in the rest of the world. Thousands of people were killed in Iraq and thousands displaced because of ISIS. The ongoing violence, power cuts, water shortages and an endless list of other problems that make life unbearable for Iraqis especially for women. In addition, Iraqi women suffer from cultural and social issues. For example, some women in different areas are forbidden from work or education. For those women who succeed to work or study, they face different types of discriminations in their career journey. For instance, in public and

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private sectors some of the vacation jobs are offered only to men. The justification for this is that women's performance and discipline decline when they get married and have children.

It also worth saying that Iraqi women's circumstances are not comparable to the Arab women, especially in the countries that are experiencing social, cultural and economic booming such as Arab Gulf countries and Arab Maghreb countries and even some developing countries such as Lebanon and Jordan

There are many studies that investigate the obstacles that prevent the Iraqi women from becoming leaders in their organizations (Al-Yacoubi et al., 2012; Shehabi and Abdellatif, 2013). These studies concluded that Iraqi women, like Arab women or women elsewhere, suffer from social problems such as raising children, traditions, and norms. However, these studies overlooked the actual circumstances that the Iraqi women faced during the past 40 years, especially the

last 15 years that followed the invasion of Iraq by the United States of America. This invasion has caused several problems such as sectarianism, displacement, orphanage, widowhood, loss of breadwinners and many other problems. This study attempts to shed some light on the exceptional social, economic, educational and political circumstances of Iraqi women

Women in Iraq, regardless if they work or not, bear the full responsibility of raising their children in addition to the housework because Iraqi men are rarely helping their wives at home. In the case of working women, their social responsibility in many cases may lead them to sacrifice their dreams jobs. On the other hand, women in rural areas, generally are not allowed to complete their education or obtaining employment opportunities

In addition, Iraqi women have high fertility and high reproductive rates (CIA, 2018). They report that Iraq is at the forefront of the Arab countries, and is ranked 38 globally with a rate of four children per woman. This rate is high compared to the average birth rate per ,woman

which is known as the rate of social replacement. This statistic shows that the social life of Iraqi women is quite difficult in contrast to other .women in the West

Regarding the issue of widows, Iraq is considered one of the countries with the highest number of widows worldwide. Iraq has more than two million widows because of wars. The Iraqi widows suffer from terrible social problems that relate to raising children,

feeding their hungry mouths, teaching them and protecting them from harm (Amin, 2010).

Finally, it is worth saying that all of the above exceptional circumstances that Iraqi women face cannot be compared to the conditions of any other woman in the world except those that are currently at war, such as Yemen and Syria. It is with no doubt that wars in Iraq badly affected women's careers or their chances to .secure jobs

Methods

A questionnaire was designed to achieve the research aim and test the hypotheses. The questionnaire contains two parts: 1. Demographic factors such as age, gender, work experience, education, and social status, and 2. Twenty-six questions to measure the participants' opinions about women are nominated for leading positions in Iraq according to the model of Alvesson & Billing (1997). This model identifies the nature of the relation and connection between gender and leadership using four scenarios or situations followed by politicians, decision makers, and researchers when they .nominate a woman for a top management position

The questionnaire was designed by the researchers and evaluated by six professors and assistant professors from the Department of Business Administration, College of Economics and Management at .the University of Basra

A quantitative descriptive approach was used to collect and analyze the data from males and females managers in public and private academic educational sector. In the University of Basra, 56 questionnaires were distributed in 18 colleges, '51 were retrieved, and one was invalid. In Shatt-El-Arab College, 30 questionnaires were distributed among the four departments of the college, 22 were

retrieved, and two were invalid. The participants in this study included deans and their assistants in addition to managers of some scientific centers. The total number of participants' in both investigated organizations was 70 academic male and female leaders. SPSS software was used to analyze the collected data in two ways. Firstly, statistical analysis to calculate descriptive statistics and T-Test to illustrate the difference between males and females views about the introduced questions. Secondly, content analysis of the participants

answers to measure their opinions about the questionnaire

Results

Table 1 shows the results of the T-Test that explain the contrast and differences between females and males answers to the questionnaire while Table 2 shows the means of the participants' answers according to the Likert Scale

In general, the results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between female and male answers in both public and private academic sectors at ($p > 0.05$) therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted

The results indicate that the majority of the participants' answers agreed with the addressed questions of the questionnaire. The number of male participants was 43 which represents 61%, while the number of the female was 27, which represent 39% of the total responders. The results also show that the average of the participants' answers was ranked between four and five according to Likert Scale rotated which is between agree and strongly agree.

Table Number (1): The results of (T-Test) to examine the contrast and difference between males and females

T-Test											
N	T	sig(2-tailed)	N	T	sig(2-tailed)	N	T	N	T	sig(2-tailed)	
Q1	-.763-	0.448	Q8	-1.579-	0.119	Q15	0.38	Q22	0.282	0.779	
	-.788-	0.434		-1.664-	0.101		0.338		0.271	0.787	
Q2	-.668-	0.506	Q9	-1.446-	0.153	Q16	-.283-	Q23	-	.404-	0.688
	-.644-	0.522		-1.555-	0.125		-.280-		.424-	0.673	
Q3	-.105-	0.916	Q10	-.305-	0.761	Q17	-	Q24	-	1.617-	0.111
	-.103-	0.919		-.299-	0.766		1.244-		-	1.794-	0.077
Q4	-.022-	0.983	Q11	-.241-	0.811	Q18	-.998-	Q25	-	1.837-	0.071
	-.021-	0.983		-.237-	0.814		1.051-		-	1.912-	0.06
Q5	-.821-	0.415	Q12	-1.214-	0.229	Q19	0.561	Q26	-	1.061-	0.292
	-.864-	0.391		-1.213-	0.23		0.568		-	1.110-	0.271
Q6	1.021	0.311	Q13	-.115-	0.908	Q20	-	Q21	-	1.161-	
	0.98	0.332		-.108-	0.915		1.211-		-		
Q7	0.73	0.468	Q14	0.283	0.778	Q21	-	Q21	-	1.605-	
	0.916	0.365		0.272	0.787		1.553-		-		

Based on the results the main hypothesis of the study was rejected. This means that male and female managers in public and private sectors do not follow a specific model when nominating women to leadership positions

Moreover, the results also show that there are no differences in the participant's answers in both the University of Basra (Public) and Shatt Al Arab college (Private). Therefore, both of the sub hypotheses were rejected as well

Although the questionnaire measures a model with four different scenarios and it was expected that the answers would vary, the majority of responses ranked between agree and strongly agree. This may indicate that there is obscurity of the criteria in which a woman is nominated to the leadership level. The findings revealed that there is a unique Iraqi model for nominating women to top management. This model has resulted from the Iraqi environment which can be described by the instability of security situations, overlapping and contrasting of laws. Therefore, we introduce the Iraqi model named 'The Personal Cumulative Perspectives Model (Hybrid Model)' that is contextually conditioned by particular surrounding factors

This model which is used to nominate women to the leadership positions resulted from the personal perspectives of the Iraqi male managers rather than rules and standards. Therefore, the model is fluctuating and wobbling based on the manager's personal perspectives. Moreover, it differs from organization to another and from manager to manager. A manager can be contradictory in his decisions concerning the nomination of women to high positions. Furthermore, two managers in one Iraqi organization may adopt different beliefs about women and follow contradictory way of promoting them to leadership opportunities. For instance, a dean in a certain college who believes in gender similarity may choose one of the two scenarios, either the Special Contribution scenario or

Alternative Values. On the other hand, for another dean, who believe in gender differences. his decision may be either the Equal Opportunities scenario or the Meritocratic

Table number2: Number of mean for the sample answer according to the likert scale

N	Mean	std. Deviation	N	Mean	std. Deviation	N	Mean	std. Deviation
Q1	4.0286	1.0352	Q10	3.6571	1.00557	Q19	3.7143	0.99481
Q2	3.7857	1.01999	Q11	3.7857	0.7966	Q20	3.6	0.80578
Q3	3.9857	0.89269	Q12	3.6714	0.98865	Q21	3.4286	1.14931
Q4	3.7	1.12059	Q13	3.8	0.84442	Q22	3.5286	1.09969
Q5	3.5286	1.11279	Q14	3.6714	0.97388	Q23	3.6429	0.99325
Q6	3.8571	0.99689	Q15	3.6857	0.97122	Q24	3.6	0.89118
Q7	4.7571	6.18187	Q16	3.6286	0.88746	Q25	3.6286	0.81953
Q8	3.6	1.06866	Q17	3.8286	0.93206	Q26	3.6714	0.89639
Q9	3.7429	1.01704	Q18	3.7571	0.87536			

The results show that 55 participants out of 70 which represents 78% agreed that women are under qualified because they do not receive fair opportunities in training and development in comparison with men. This finding is in line with AL-Hussien (2011) study which argues that there was a pejorative stereotype of woman's performance in the minds of both men and women. This reasoning could explain why women are prevented from reaching leadership positions.

The results of second part of the questionnaire, concerning family life and raising children, revealed that 45 participants which represent 64% of the total participants agreed that such factors play a substantial role in deterring women from high positions. This confirms the

results of AL-Raqeb and Salih (2009) and AL-Hussien (2011) studies which argue that raising children and family life affect women's performance

In addition, the results indicate that 56 out of 70 participants which represent 80% of the research sample agreed that as a result of men dominating high-level positions in the private and public sectors women were not nominated to high-level positions due to the negative stereotype of their performance in the eyes of these men. This result is strongly supported by the answers to the next questions where 49 out of 70, which represents 70% of the responders in the University of Basra and Shatt Al Arab College agreed that women are not suitable for higher leadership positions. They believe that women are suitable for middle level positions such as chairperson of departments or lower administrative units but not for general managers, deans or even assistant deans positions. They also think that albeit women's suitable training and development, leading organizations in Iraq find it challenging to appoint women to high-level positions due to impending cultural and social circumstances. The answers to these questions may describe the real complexity within the business environment in Iraq. This may be considered as an inimical and unfair competition towards women leaders who cannot encounter high masculinity community.

Questions 18 explored the discrimination that women encounter in the workplace and whether they were expected to have some masculinity characteristics to produce an extraordinary performance. The answers show that 51 from 70 representing (70%) agreed with this question. These results corroborate Pasco (2006) study finding of

"Female Masculine". Pasco argues that masculinity is not characteristics of males-only but, females adopt some of them as well. He believes that when girls' behave like boys, this will be a big challenge to the gender system. Also, Lipinska et al., (2010) found that female managers have masculine manners, while women who are not managers retained their feminine manners. Moreover, the results reveal that, 49 participants out of 70 which represents 70% agreed that women could not make big and strategic decisions for the organization. On the other hand, 65% of responders agreed that women's leadership style is characterized as a cooperative, sharing and harmony, while men's leadership style tends toward competition and conflict.

The Personal Cumulative Perspectives Model (Hybrid Model)

The results of the study were collected from (70) participants, female and male managers from the top management of the University of Basra: (public) and, Shatt-el-Arab College (Private) in Basra-city south of Iraq. The data analysis shows that there is no specific model followed by Iraqi managers in promoting women, for leadership positions that depend on local or international standards. Through the analyses of the participants' answers and the business environment, we determined a hybrid model used by Iraqi managers depending on their Perspectives and stereotype about women from the cultural, social, and religious heritage. We named it the Personal Cumulative Perspectives model (Hybrid Model)

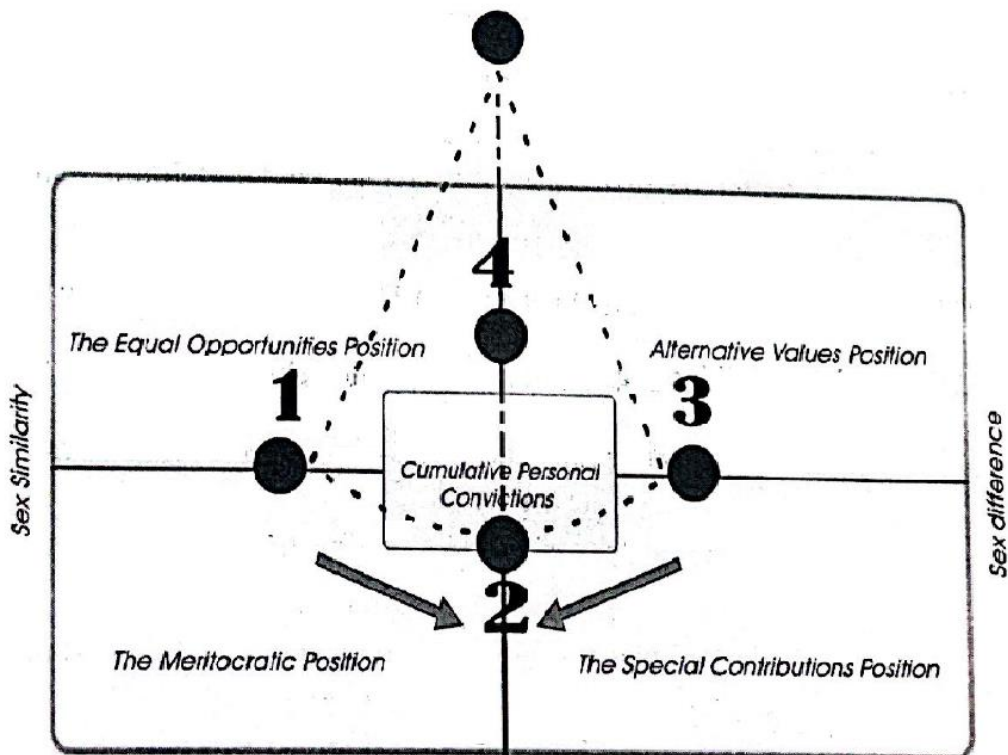


Figure 2: Personal Cumulative Perspectives model (Hybrid Model)

In this model, managers fluctuate among all the scenarios and there is no specific scenario for nominating women to top management. In one organization different scenarios can be used by different managers, even one manager can shift from scenarios to another .depending on the situation

For instance, most of Colleges in the University of Basra nominate women to certain positions such as the head of a department, but they do not nominate them to become a dean or dean assistant due to their personal perceptions about women. The reason for this contradictive position is that women cannot work beyond official office hours and working days because of the social constraints, .family and children demands

According to the model (figure. 1), the managers' orientations about women's nominations are sketched in a pendulum form that swings in the four scenarios of the original Alvesson & Billing (1997) model. This swinging generates four intersection points (1, 2, 3, 4) that form new scenarios besides the original four. These additional scenarios resulted from the interaction of several factors such as: the absence of clear criteria, personal Perspectives, social heritage and the masculinity of society. The original scenarios of Alvesson & Billing (1997) model will be excluded from the study simply because they do not work in the Iraqi environment, and only the hybrid model will be .discussed

In point (No.1), the managers of both the public and private sectors believe in gender equality, and their work standards are a mixture of the beliefs in the ethical and political issues, and the organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Those managers may follow the meritocratic and the equal opportunities scenarios in the parallel. For example, in some colleges top management nominate women for the position of heads of departments to consider the concept of equality in distributing the positions between men and women. In

these cases, the decision makers would choose women for such .positions even if there are men who are more qualified

In point (No. 2), managers of both public and private sectors focus on the efficiency and organizational effectiveness with a neutral attitude toward the gender differences between men and women. Therefore, they follow either the meritocratic scenario or special contribution. These two options concentrate on exceptional characteristics that women must be nominated for advanced leadership positions. This scenario is quite challenging for women because it exaggerates the qualifications required by women. While, it is enough for men to be

chosen either for their special contributions or the meritocratic,
.women are required to do both

In point (No. 3), managers of both public and private sectors believe in the gender differences regarding administrative efficiency at work. Therefore, managers focus on a mixture of special contributions and alternatives values that women can present to be nominated to top positions. In this case, women are expected to promote the values of femininity that is based on warmth and kindness. Consequently, this process would keep the organization environment intact of the masculinity values that seek to control and dominate. Based on the findings, the scarcity of women in leadership positions is attributed to the high standards and the exceptional performance that are
.required from them in contrast to men

In point (No.4), the results show that managers of the public and private sectors are interested in the ethical and political issues concerned with giving fair opportunities to women in the leadership positions and for these not to be exclusively reserved for men. In this scenario, managers follow doubled standards in nominating women for top positions. First, they use the equal opportunities scenario to balance the number of men and women in top management. Second, they also consider the alternative values to promote feminine values

instead of masculine values. In the Iraqi work environment where the majority of managers is men, it is justifiable to use of this scenario as a political and ethical solution to reduce the gap between men and
.women in leadership positions

What we have observed is that, when women are nominated as head of departments, the decision makers in the colleges have no objection to do so, and they may adopt one of the four scenarios:

meritocratic, alternative values, private contributions, or equal opportunities. However, in the case of nominating the same women, for a higher position such as a dean or assistant dean, they would change their mind and exclude her from consideration. Simply this is because the social and cultural norms replace the four scenarios, forming a new model for nominating women for leadership positions

Based on the results, it can be inferred that Iraqi managers have their model. The Iraqi Personal Cumulative Perspectives model is a result of mixing or overlapping the criteria that are adopted by the managers to nominate women for top management. This emerging model adapts the model of Alvesson & Billing (1997) to form dynamic and intersecting scenarios that are placed within center of the four original scenarios. This shows that the managers do not have a clear vision of the gender issues such as similarities or differences, and this may result in adopting an unclear model by Iraqi managers

Although some women in the academic field may be nominated to leadership positions based on their merits, these merits only allow them to reach specific levels of the maximum as a head of a department in a college, while the top positions such as dean are limited to men. Even though with those women who showed an extraordinary performance as heads of departments, they lost their chances to become deans in favor of men because they will be evaluated based on social-cultural factors. Moreover, the security situation in Iraq with the dominance of radical and armed parties and militias may decrease women's opportunities in

comparison with men. Therefore, many families discourage their female members to be nominated to high positions. Furthermore, some female employees with conservative backgrounds, have fears of public shaming in social media. This happens when their pictures were taken and posted on, for example, Facebook which can be outrageous for their conservative families

It is worth mentioning that currently there are some exceptions where women successfully attained the position of Dean and some other high positions. These cases are rare in the educational sector in both public and private organizations and have their attributable reasons. For example Dr. Amel Al Mansouri was appointed the dean of College of Education for women at the University of Basra because that specific college is only for female students and logically the dean had to be a woman.

Other nomination cases may happen to resolve a dispute over the position of a Dean among the male candidates, and a woman was appointed as a reconciliation candidate. This case happened in the economics department at the University of Basra. Other cases occurred where the decisions of nominating women to certain positions come from the ministry of higher education and scientific research or the federal government. This is possible because our administrative system in Iraq is centralized hence the majority of decisions come from the government.

Conclusions

After investigating the academic work environment of the public and private universities, we found that there is no specific model of promoting women for top management that is followed by decision makers. Accordingly, we present a new model which appears to be the prevailing one in nominating women for leadership positions; we named it the Personal Cumulative Perspectives Model.

The reasons for this unstable situation of promoting women for leadership positions varied. Firstly, the wars that the country experienced caused a decline of the administrative and legal Iraqi system especially in the recent period that followed the fall of Saddam's regime. Secondly, the corruption that spread among the country

institutions resulted in poverty and lack of infrastructures. Thirdly, the education system has retreated and did not contribute to the graduation of efficient and qualified graduates. Fourthly, there are no training programs targeting women that were designed based on their specific needs. Lastly, the managers themselves have been nominated for leadership positions without following a specific model for this regard. Therefore, the process may become an administrative heritage that is inherited by new generations of managers

On the other hand, due to wars, corruption, economic sanctions, and current political violence, the Iraqi economy has become complex and ambiguous. These factors have highly impacted the work environment, which has become hostile especially for women working in both the public and private sectors

However, the Iraqi business environment still can develop its model that considers the local culture and women worker representation in the national managerial system. We believe that the model presented in this study can be developed by further investigation and research to help decision-makers in nominating women for leadership positions. Furthermore, this also will help in raising the awareness of the women representation in the top management in the public and private sectors

Future studies

The finding of this study is only the first step toward understanding the obstacles that prevent women from becoming managers in top management. Studying the subject of women's leadership is important for pushing up the development wheel in Iraq. However, the findings

of this study cannot be generalized among the whole community. We urge scholars to investigate this topic in different sectors to expand the research sample and get an in-depth understanding of how decision makers nominate women for leadership positions.

Furthermore, we recommend using the interview questionnaire to ensure that the participants fully understand the questions and the subject itself. However, following this approach of interview questionnaire may consume longer time, great efforts, and high costs; and a smaller

.having a small sample might be justifiable for this kind of studies

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