Balancing the Dual Burden: A Study of Household Responsibilities Among Women in Educational Management

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ABSTRACT: Women in leadership positions in education often face a dual burden: fulfilling professional responsibilities while also managing domestic responsibilities. The study examines the nature and extent of the household responsibilities that women in positions of learning exercise and how these domestic roles affect their professional experience. Despite the increasing participation of women in higher education institutions, their participation in the management is still limited. The study focuses on understanding the socio-cultural, organisational and personal dynamics that shape this dual role, especially in relation to Pakistan. For the data collection of female administrators at the International Islamic University Islamabad and Fatima Jinnah Women's University Rawalpindi, a mixed methodology was used, with a self-developed questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. Universal sampling was used in the selection of sample. Quantitative data were analyzed through frequencies and percentages, while qualitative responses were thematically observed. Findings shows that women managers continue to tolerate an inconsistent part of domestic responsibilities, often without sufficient institutional support. Cultural expectations, family obligations, and work-related stress significantly affect their leadership performance and career progression. The study recommends targeted policy reforms, leadership training, and institutional support systems to help women efficiently balance their professional and domestic roles. Improving societal acknowledgement of women's leadership potential is also important to develop more general and unbiased academic environments.

KEYWORDS: Balancing, Dual Burden, Household Responsibility, Educational Management

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Introduction

Pakistan's education sector faces several challenges, containing the continued under-representation of women in leadership positions in the education administration. This under-representation is a world-wide problem and is accepted not only in the West (Lopez, 2008) but also in Asian states (Jessar & Kazmi, 2023). While women have made substantial progress in educational achievement and contribution in the labour force since the 1960s (Schwanke, 2013; Carr et al., 2015; O'Meara, 2015), they still have inadequate access to senior management positions in academia (Montez et al., 2003; Taylor & Özkanli, 2013; Cook & Glass, 2014).

Even in countries with an advanced gender equality framework, for instance Sweden and the UK, females still make up a marginal of directors and professors (European Commission, 2012; The Herald, 2015; Statistics Sweden, 2012). In Pakistan, the position is even more perturbing, with complete social, cultural and political problems to female contribution in academic leadership (Sarwar & Imran, 2019). While women account for more than half of Pakistan's population and a major part of its youth, their contribution in decision-making remains suspiciously low (Jamal et al., 2023).

In addition to the workplace hindrances, various women in education face a dual burden of balancing deep professional demands with the continued outlooks of family life. These gendered domestic roles continue basically unrecognized, but they form judgmentally the professional experience of women. The intention of this study is to inspect how these household responsibilities affect the performance, wellbeing and career development of women in educational leadership positions.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the accumulative number of educated and career-oriented women in Pakistan, their contribution in education leadership remains insignificant. Women are often excepted from decision-making, not only because of institutional obstacles, but also because of intensely imbedded gender roles that suppose them to take care of the household. However global research identifies the capability of women to work in collaborative, interpersonal and consultative leadership. Pakistan continues to under-utilise this potential in its educational setting (Kellerman et al., 2007). The prevailing literature in Pakistan pays small consideration to the boundary between professional leadership and domestic responsibilities of women in academia. The lack of targeted studies on how homework affects women leaders at universities is a major gap. This study hence examines the role of women in the home-based education system and how these dynamics affect their leadership, performance and career development, mainly the cultural expectations placed on women. Addressing this problem is crucial to stimulating gender equality and assisting Pakistan to tap the full potential of its female workforce.

Research Objectives

The aim of the study is to examine the relationship between household responsibilities and professional leadership roles among women in higher education. Particular objectives are:

1. To explore the nature and extent of household responsibilities performed by women working in educational management positions.
2. To examine how domestic responsibilities, affect the job performance and career progression of women in educational leadership.
3. To investigate the influence of socio-economic factors on women's ability to manage household and professional responsibilities.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in two basic theoretical views:

1. Role Theory

Role theory clarifies how individuals accomplish multiple social roles, for instance being a leader, a mother, or a spouse, and the probability of conflict between roles or of tension between roles when they are confronted

by opposing demands. This theory helps to comprehend how household and management responsibilities cooperate and sometimes conflict, generating stress or lowering performance.

2. Gender Role Theory

The theory of gender roles discovers how social beliefs to shape the roles that men and women are probable to play. In various cultures, containing Pakistan, women are usually expected to take on most of the household duties, regardless of their professional responsibilities. This theory benefits to comprehend the cultural and normative obstacles that women face in their careers. Composed, these frameworks deliver a lens through which to analyse how women direct their dual responsibilities and how they affect their leadership ability and career outcomes.

Literature Review

Introduction

The participation of women in educational leadership has received cumulative attention in latest eras. Nevertheless, in spite of increasing representation in teaching positions, women are still under-represented in decision-making and management positions in academic institutions around the world. This unit analyses the current literature on the dual responsibilities that women face in professional leadership and homecare and how these roles affect their performance, career development and wellbeing.

Underrepresentation of Women in Educational Leadership

Generally, women's entrée to academic leadership remains disproportionately low. Women account for only 15-22% of full-time professorships in European universities, in spite of gender equality policies (European Commission, 2012; Statistics Sweden, 2012). Related patterns can be understood in the UK, somewhere women account for less than a fifth of professors (Times Higher Education, 2012). In Pakistan, the situation is even more critical, with women accounting for only an alternative of academic leadership positions (Sarwar & Imran, 2019). The gender gap index and precise data on education highpoint the systemic differences in educational leadership opportunities for women (Jamal et al., 2023; Hausmann et al., 2012).

The Dual Role: Leadership and Household Responsibilities

Women in leadership often face the double burden of being probable to function as active professionals whereas holding primary responsibilities for domestic responsibilities. According to the role theory, the management of multiple, often conflicting, roles lead to a tension between roles and may affect work performance and personal well-being (Kahn and Others, 1964). Studies depicts that women in management positions often sacrifice career advancement or personal growth for family responsibilities (Schwanke, 2013). This pressure is intensified in patriarchal societies where domestic duties are culturally defined as the primary duty of the wife (Carr et al., 2015).

Cultural and Societal Barriers

In various South Asian societies, containing Pakistan, cultural and religious norms play a main role in the contribution of women in leadership. Gender role theory discusses that social expectations restrict the agency of women, specifically when their professional roles challenge traditional norms (Eagly & Wood, 2012). In

Pakistan, research show that women are often discouraged from taking leadership positions because of family expectations, gender stereotypes and institutional biases (Jessar & Kazmi, 2023). Even if they are skilled, women often assume these limits, leading to their self-marginalization from the leadership pipeline (Kellerman et al., 2007).

Organizational Support and Institutional Culture

The role of institutional culture and support mechanisms in supporting or discouraging female entrepreneurship is critical. Flexible policies, mentoring programmes and gender-sensitive techniques have been revealed to increase the retention and progression of women in management (O'Meara, 2015; Taylor & O'Zankel, 2013). On the other hand, in numerous developing contexts, these support structures are either missing or unsuccessful. In Pakistan, universities often absence childcare facilities, elastic scheduling, or affirmative action programs for women, intensifying the problems faced by female professors (Enyioko, 2021).

Research Gap

While there is a large literature on gender inequity in education and leadership, there is little empirical research specially on the role of women in academic leadership in Pakistan. The interface between professional leadership and domestic responsibilities is still under-explored in local studies, particularly when mixed methods are used. The existing study purposes to fill this gap by tentative how household chores affect women's leadership in Pakistani higher education institutions.

Research Methodology

The study assumed a mixed methodology for research to observe the dual responsibilities of women in education leadership positions. The purpose of the study, which mutual quantitative and qualitative approaches, was to capture not only statistical models but also the lived experience of women balancing domestic and professional household tasks. As emphasized by Spratt, Walker and Robinson (2004), mixed-method research tolerates for a further nuanced and complete sympathetic by combining the strengths of quantitative data with narrative complexity.

The study population was comprised of all female academic administrators working at the Fatima Jinnah Women's University Rawalpindi and the International Islamic University of Islamabad. These universities have been selected because of their importance in the Pakistani higher education sector and the fact that they employ a significant number of female academic leaders. The total population was measured as a sample and a generalised sampling was used to confirm the comprehensiveness of all suitable respondents.

The data collection instruments comprised a self-developed questionnaire and a semi-structured questionnaire pattern. The questionnaire used a Likert scale to evaluate opinions of household responsibilities, working setting, gender stereotypes and socio-cultural expectations. The interview guide permitted a profounder analysis of topics for instance social outlooks towards women, job requirements, family provision and the impact of cultural and religious norms on leadership. These tools have been intended to shelter both the structural and the personal extents of the dual role of women, and to confirm their validity, they have been subject to a peer review by professionals from the field and their proposals have been combined to improve simplicity and significance. The reliability of the quantitative instrument was established

by a pilot test and analysed with Cronbach's alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.86, demonstrating strong internal consistency. This has given credibility to the consistency and reliability of the command to collect appreciated.

The researcher goes to both universities personally to collect the data. Questionnaires were circulated and collected openly, whereas interviews with particular respondents were carried out. All interviews were conducted by audio-delay after informed consent. This approach facilitated direct participation and confirmed correct recording of transactions. Participants were informed of the determination of the study and the voluntary nature of their contribution and ethical standards were severely observed to throughout the complete process. Quantitative data collected by questionnaires were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequency and percentages. Qualitative data from interviews were subject to thematic analysis, where repeated themes were recognised in line with the research objectives. These themes were then observed to appreciate how the role of domestic responsibilities stimuluses the experience of women in leadership and generosity.

Results of the Study

Quantitative Data Analysis

Table 1

Job Interest of Working Women Should be Subservient to their Husband

	Frequency	Percentage
SA	46	49.5
A	33	35.5
UN	3	3.2
DA	3	3.2
SDA	8	8.6
Total	93	100.0

That was the basic variable. The determination was to measure the participants' beliefs about their husband's beliefs about their work. As per table 1, 50 percent of teachers strongly agree, 37 percent agree, 3 percent are undecided, 3 percent disagree, and 9 percent strongly disagree with the statement that the professional interests of working women should be subordinate to their husbands. It was thus revealed that most teachers strongly agreed with the statement that the interests of the working woman should be subordinate to the interests of the husband.

Table 2

Working Women are Supposed to Take Care of Household Responsibilities Only

	Frequency	Percentage
SA	34	36.6
A	41	44.1
UN	6	6.5
DA	6	6.5
SDA	6	6.5
Total	93	100.0

The question was regarding the responsibility of working women. Table 2, 37 percent of teachers strongly agree, 44 percent of teachers agree, 7 percent of teachers remain undecided, 7 percent disagree, and 7 percent strongly disagree that working women should only take on household responsibilities. Maximum teachers therefore strongly agreed that working women should only take care of domestic duties.

Table 3

Working Women are Supposed to Take Care of Children and Husbands

	Frequency	Percentage
SA	42	45.2
A	32	34.4
UN	7	7.5
DA	3	3.2
SDA	9	9.7
Total	93	100.0

The question was intended to assess the dual role of a working woman and a deep person in the household. Table 3 illustrations that 45 percent of teachers strongly agree, 34 percent of teachers agree, 8 percent of teachers are undecided, 3 percent of teachers disagree, and 10 percent of teachers strongly disagree with the statement that working women should deliver for their children and husbands. Its spectacles that most teachers strongly agreed with the statement that working women should provide for their children and their husbands.

Table 4

Working Women are Supposed to be Care Takers in their Homes

	Frequency	Percentage
SA	27	29.0
A	41	44.1
UN	14	15.1
DA	5	5.4
SDA	6	6.5
Total	93	100.0

The problem of discreet treatment of women in the workplace was further observed by the notion that working women should discreetly dispose of the women in the household. Table 4 indications that 29 percent of teachers strongly agree, 44 percent of teachers agree, 15 percent of teachers remain undecided, 5 percent of teachers disagree, and 6 percent of teachers strongly disagree with the statement that working women must be housekeepers. Most of the teachers hence agreed that working women should be carers in their own homes.

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Table 5

Working Women Desire to Work Where they are Close to the Family

	Frequency	Percentage
SA	23	24.7
A	45	48.4
UN	9	9.7
DA	6	6.5
SDA	10	10.8
Total	93	100.0

The question was to assess the distance between their homes and their workplaces. Table 5 reveals that 25 percent of teachers strongly agree, 48 percent of teachers agree, 10 percent of teachers remain undecided, 7 percent of teachers disagree, and 11 percent strongly disagree that working women want to work in a place close to their families. Most of the teachers therefore agreed that working women wanted to work in a place close to their families, and that they would find work there.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Responses to Interview Questions

A semi-structured interview was carried out with 12 academic leaders presently working in senior positions at particular universities. These respondents were nominated on the basis of their professional status and willingness to subsidize to the study. The investigator approached each participant individually and interviewed them in their offices. Before the interviews, the respondents were informed of the nature and purpose of the study and given assurances of privacy. Questions during the interviews focused on themes such as work-life balance, family dynamics, institutional challenges and personal experiences.

Duration of Current Managerial Position

Participants were inquired how long they had served in the existing position of a trustee. Responses were mixed: numerous participants (R1, R3, R5, R12) indicated that they had served in several leadership positions over time, which reflects a significant amount of experience. Others (R4, R6, R10) reported that they had been in their existing position for less than two years, while R2, R7, R8, R9 and R11 reported that they had been in their current posts for over five years. These variations have provided diverse visions into the thinking of both developing and well-known leaders.

Family Support in Leadership Journey

Respondents were inquired whether their family maintained or contrasting their leadership aspirations and how this support (or lack of it) exaggerated their career development. Most (R2, R3, R4, R6, R10) described that their families were supportive and delivered emotional and real-world support. Several respondents (R5, R12) had mixed feelings and well-known that while some family members supported them, others were indifferent or critical of their professional commitment. The other participants (R1, R7, R8, R9, R11) emphasized that strong family support helps them accomplish both their domestic and leadership responsibilities.

Hurdles Faced in Reaching Leadership Positions

Participants were inquired to reflect on the challenges they faced in their ascent to managerial positions. Most respondents (R2 to R12) described that they confronted a number of social and institutional obstacles. These comprise inadequate entree to education for girls, lack of sanitary facilities, poverty, misunderstanding of religious rules, discrimination based on gender, early marriage, dangerous environments and restrictive social practices. One respondent (R1) specifically pointed to social mind-set as the most significant obstacle, saying that dominant social arrogances often challenge women's leadership ambitions.

Challenges Faced by Women in Educational Leadership

Participants were also asked to explain the enduring problems faced by women in leadership positions. Most of them (R1 to R10, R12) described difficulties for example limited career opportunities, absence of mentoring and networking, difficulties preserving a work-life balance, imperfect suppleness of working schedules, unsatisfactory treatment in the workplace and feelings of doubt or deception. Restriction of pluralism aggravated by lack. One attendee (R11) emphasized the struggle of balancing family accountabilities with professional duties, which she recognized as a continuous and very personal struggle for various women in the education sector.

Conclusion

Based on quantitative results, it can be decided that most respondents strongly consider that housework leftovers a main expectation for women, even if they are in professional leadership positions. Various participants decided that working women are still predictable to put their domestic duties, for example day-care and housework, before their careers. An important number also articulated the view that women in leadership must remain actually and emotionally close to their families, underlining the continuing social view that career determination must be secondary to family commitments.

The results also presented that women leaders in education often assume adaptive and peaceful strategies in their professional environment. Various respondents shared that they intentionally avoid conflict and criticism, try to uphold synchronisation and spectacle flexibility and compassion in their decision-making. These qualities, for example emotional intelligence, integrity and cooperation, have been frequently quoted as the strengths that women bring to leadership. At the same time, respondents described feeling isolated or marginalised in a male-dominated situation, which proposes that the working environment still poses major obstacles to inclusive and equal leadership experiences.

As esteems socio-economic related, the study determined that the probable of women to lead continues to be hindered by deeply rooted cultural preconceptions and institutional obstacles. Furthermost respondents described that they are challenged with stereotypes which describe men as more talented leaders and decision-makers. Challenges for example absence of trust from senior management, partial support structures, gender partiality in promotions and unable treatment in working with male colleagues were frequently described. Furthermore, absence of socio-economic support, social scepticism and family stresses were quoted as the key aspects affecting the capability of women to fully accept their educational leadership roles. Time constraints instigated by family responsibilities and the absence of flexible work arrangements have further underwritten to the struggle to balance professional and family responsibilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made to address the contests faced by women in educational leadership in balancing family responsibilities and professional leadership:

1. Education institutions may develop gender-sensitive policies that respect the dual role of women leaders. This comprises the delivery of flexible working hours, isolated work opportunities and childcare facilities on campus to support women with childcare responsibilities. These improvements may help women to fulfil their leadership responsibilities without compromising family responsibilities.

2. Higher education institutions may implement targeted programmes for women to develop leadership. These programmes may emphasis on ability building, empowerment, decision-making skills and opposing gender bias. Consistent training sessions, mentorship, and networks of mutual support can foster a more general leadership environment.

3. Governments and universities may provide grants, scholarships, and professional support systems specially for women in leadership positions. Access to these resources may improve financial stress, rise support in nation-wide and worldwide academic opportunities and endorse the long-term career of females.

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