

A Review of Women and Leadership in Tertiary Education in Cameroon: Adversities and Implications for Productivity

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ABSTRACT

This paper is anchored on leadership and women in tertiary education in Cameroon with a focus on productivity from the perspective of these women. The review dwells on the premise that possibilities for floundering among women leaders abound with adverse consequences on their productivity. There are multifold concerns regarding women in leadership positions within higher education institutions ranging from: ability to manage work and family responsibilities, difficulty of receiving adequate mentoring from women with greater longevity and issues related to gender bias. While these adversities exist, there is seemingly a low key empathetic and supportive response from their male counterparts. Albeit these challenges, this paper examines the status quo through the lenses of a conceptual review to comprehend what literature has posited in respect to the topic under discourse. While the paper acknowledges the paucity of empirical works that have investigated the topic within the context of Cameroon, calls are equally made for more research to understand women in leadership positions within higher education institutions in Cameroon as well as some possible recommendations to remedy the challenges they face. Primarily, the male administrators may engage in behavioural adjustments towards female colleagues, support the activities of their female counterparts due to their extra responsibilities and equally show more empathy to their female co-workers.

KEYWORDS: Women, Leadership, Tertiary Education, Productivity

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide enrolment of women in higher education now exceeds that of men. Women's participation in higher education as a result of the expansion of both capacity and opportunity has increased six-fold over the last four decades (McDaniel, 2014). Nevertheless, this good news does not go any further as this rise in female enrolments has failed to be reflected in the growth in number of women in senior leadership roles in universities (Morley & Crossouard, 2015). This trend recurs at continental and regional levels as the Global Education Monitoring Report (2018) upholds that fewer women occupy leadership positions in Higher Education Institutions-HEI and that as of 2009 only 13% of HEI in 27 European Union-EU countries were headed by women.

In 2006 women were the executive heads of 9% of 107 HEI in India and just 1% of 81 HEI in Anglophone Sub-Saharan African countries (Morley, 2014). Singh (2008) holds that an increase in the quotas of women involved in higher education leadership rose for lower-level positions in India. This rise was as follows; 20% of Deans and 23% of Heads of Departments-HODs and Directors, and in Anglophone Sub-Saharan African countries, 13% of Deans and 18% of HODs or Directors were women.

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The same pattern is seen in the HEI in Cameroon where ministerial and presidential decrees appoint only few women to such leadership positions (see appendix C). The few women who eventually rise through the ranks take longer than their male counterparts with whom they started off together (Beaudry, Mouton & Prozesky, 2018). This situation captures interest as it intimates that the systems have hitherto, failed to make full use of all their human capital, in order to realize the sustainable development. There has so far been an underutilization of the females in HEI as far as leadership is concerned. Their fewer numbers administrative positions and longer time periods to rise through the ranks presupposes that they are treated unfairly. This paper reviews their challenges and the effects on productivity.

There is need for follow up on full usage and fair treatment of all human capital in the system since HEI generates and disseminates specialized knowledge. This means HEI determine the fervor of the job market in a nation as they produce enlightened leaders, promote social mobility, and provide essential skills (Aduah-Karikari, 2008). As such, the effective management of this domain merits top priority. HEI in Cameroon are not left out as they also need to harness all their reserves of human resources in order to ensure

optimum internal and external efficiency. This statement is buttressed in the mission of higher education stated in Law No. 005 of 16 April 2001 to Guide Higher Education in Cameroon. Part 1, Article 2 which states: "the higher education realm shall be assigned a basic mission of producing, organizing and disseminating scientific, cultural, professional and ethical knowledge for development purposes". To attain this objective the HEI must ensure that impediments to growth are minimized. This can only be guaranteed in a system whose leadership is void of gender imbalance.

Historical Background

The history of private higher education in Africa can be traced to as far back as the 1990s when the wave of global developments which began particularly after the end of World War II fostered the growth of higher education. This development paved the way for the emergence of private HEI in many parts of the world not leaving behind Sub-Saharan Africa which grew from 30 in 1990 to more than 85 in 1999, and by 2003, there were over 176 private HEI in 9 Sub-Saharan countries of Africa (Varghese, 2006).

Moreover, according to the World Bank Report (2009) the number of private universities and colleges, including for-profit and not-for-profit institutions, increased to about 468 by 2009. Observations reveal that higher education in Cameroon which can be traced to the pre-colonial period has over the decades given very few opportunities for women's contributions. Higher indigenous education in Cameroon was provided by elders, and like Western higher education, it required teachers with expert knowledge most of whom were men. In the post-colonial era higher education resurfaced and began from the creation of the National University Complex to its transition to the Federal University of Yaounde in 1962. In 1962 the National Institute for University Studies gained the status of a full-fledged university called the Federal University of Cameroon, created by decree number 62-DF-289 of 20th July 1962 (Fonkeng, 2010). This appellation later changed to the University of Yaounde in 1967 and thereafter to the University of Yaounde 1 in 1993. During all of this time the involvement of women in administration was still timid.

Cameroon's educational system is a conglomeration of what exists in more than one country around the world. An example of this is seen in the BMD (Bachelors, Masters, and Doctorate) system which was adapted from the European educational system. Private higher education in countries such as the USA, Germany, Poland, Japan, Australia and Chile are different from public higher education in a number of aspects which include; tendency to be teaching-oriented, likelihood to offer similar, low-cost subjects in the humanities and social sciences (especially business, law, computing, hospitality and tourism, and management).

Also there are issues related to: arm of research in the public sector, tendency of being less prestigious, most private providers relying on tuition fees as their key source of income (despite the receipt of state subventions), being sensitive to changes in demand which has both positive and negative consequences, being quick to suffer the consequences of diminishing demand (which could force institutions to close), increased vulnerability to a drop in

demand due to dependence on tuition fees, and higher tuition fees charged (Hunt, Callender & Parry, 2016).

These differences are also reflected between the private and public HEI in Cameroon. In addition to the foregoing, the staffs of the private sector are mostly employed on semi-permanent basis meaning that the level of job security for staff in the public HEI is higher. This follows suit in terms of job satisfaction. Sometimes the prescribed salary scale according to employee's qualification is not used to pay staff in the private sector. This leads to the skilled staff being over used and underpaid.

In Cameroon an evolution of women's involvement in senior and mid-level leadership within HEI can be traced from excerpts of Decrees of the President and of the Minister of Higher Education appointing senior and mid-level level administrators, respectively in public HEI. This shows that in the University of Yaounde I in 2007 out of 33 administrators appointed, only 10 (30.3%) were women (see Appendix C). One decade later the same university had a total of 73 appointments with 23 being women. In 2017 the University of Bamenda had 102 appointments, with 21 (20.6%) being women and distributed as follows: 9(16.4%) HODs, 4(3.9%) Heads of Division, 6 (5.9%) Heads of Service, 1(0.9%) Faculty Officers and 1 (0.9%)Coordinator of Functional French.

Moreover, out of the 8 state universities 4 women have so far been Vice Chancellors since creation as follows: University of Buea, from the 1993/1994 to the 2004/2005 school years (Prof. Dorothy Limunga Njeuma), and from the 2012/2013 to the 2016/2017 school years (Dr. Navola Lyonga), Yaounde University I in the 2005/2006 school year (Prof. Dorothy Limunga Njeuma), University of Bamenda from the 2015/2016 school year till present (Prof Theresa Nkuo Akenji), University of Ngaoundere, from 2016/2017 school year to present (Prof Florence Uphie Chinje Melo). With the prevailing circumstances, the voices of the women would not be as loud as that of the males in decision making. This creates a back-wash effect as the ripple of this skewedness in gender balance would continue down the train predisposing the women to more disadvantaged situations at each successive level.

Justification for more research on women and leadership in tertiary education in Cameroon

The Republic of Cameroon is signatory to many international conventions aimed at fighting discrimination against women. Some of these include the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), The 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the 1993 UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, and the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, Women, Peace and Security Framework and Commitments and MDG- number three. The Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) in 1993 carried out a comprehensive study on the working conditions of women academics at HEI in West Africa.

This study revealed that across regional, cultural, and national divides, women were underrepresented at all levels in African universities and were concentrated in traditionally female fields such as general education. The study also found that the limited involvement of women in

fields outside the traditional female disciplines was associated with a low prioritization of gender balance in policy formulation.

Ensuring gender equality is one of the goals outlined in the Law of orientation for higher education. Law No. 005 of 16 April 2001 to Guide Higher Education in Cameroon, Article 6: states:

- The basic mission of the higher education realm shall have the following goals:
- The quest for excellence in all domains of knowledge;
- The promotion of science, culture and social progress;
- Social promotion, with the participation of competent national bodies and socio
- Professional circles, especially as concerns the drawing up of programmes as well as the
- organization of theoretical courses, practicals and internships;
- Assistance to development activities;
- The training and further training of senior staff;
- The deepening of ethics and national consciousness;
- The promotion of democracy and the development of a democratic culture;
- To participate in the development and strengthening of gender equality.

Working to ensure gender equality constitutes the strategic objectives of the United Nations Development Programme in its gender equality strategy (2014-2017). Appendix C shows the number of women and men appointed in the State and Private HEI in Cameroon during the school years indicated. An excerpt of it shows that in 1980 out of 14 appointed in the University of Yaounde only 1 was a woman. Similarly, in 2017 in the University of Dschang out of 44 only 5 were women. This shows gender imbalance which could be caused by metaphors of the glass ceiling or the glass cliff as explained below.

Barriers to Access to Leadership Positions and Its Effects on Productivity

Anything that fails to facilitate women's access to leadership positions poses itself as an obstacle. These may be due to age-old or spontaneous factors. Some factors considered in this section include the glass ceiling, the glass cliff and lack of motivation to lead.

The Glass Ceiling and Its Effects on Productivity

The glass ceiling refers to leading edge practices that preferably usher men than women to leadership positions, indicators of which include slower ascension into top leadership positions, lower earnings, fewer academically based awards, and less representation in top leadership positions (Titanji, 2017). Reasons why the glass ceiling metaphor exists is tied to age-old unilaterally accepted role of the woman as being in the home or only superficially engaged in the workplace. This phenomenon still prevails due to factors such as; traditional gender stereotypes which associate leadership to men, conflicting expectations from the female leaders, sheer discrimination and a higher toll on the woman for personal and family responsibilities. The glass ceiling as a barrier to women's ascent is a metaphor which emphasizes the notion that invisible and unseen structural patterns of gender discrimination prevent women from ascending into the most prestigious, well-paying senior

leadership positions in organizations (Kellerman & Rhode, 2014).

Other ways by which this barrier is referred include the ivory basement, and velvet ghetto situations and they both represent obstacles women face on their career paths to achieve success in executive leadership roles (DeFrank-Cole, Latimer, Reed & Wheatly, 2014). Closely related to this is what some authors describe as psychological glass ceiling, DeFrank-Cole et al. (ibid). The "term psychological glass ceiling" refers to the way in which women themselves have internalized a patriarchal gender ideology which, when acted out, undermines their own chances of securing top-leadership positions. In as much as the influence of this barrier is generated from the male folk, it is also reinforced by other women in leadership positions involved in horizontal violence and female misogyny against their fellow female leaders. With the phenomenon of the glass ceiling in place, the women are unlikely to receive the same amount of grants for research as their male colleagues. This could limit their number of publications and hence narrows down the horizon of citations available to the masses. These are all measures of low productivity.

The Glass Cliff and Its Effects on Productivity

Another barrier which is antagonistic to that of the glass ceiling is what was named "the glass cliff" (Cook & Glass, 2016). This is a situation whereby, females are appointed to top leadership positions not readily because they have grown through the ranks and gained the necessary experience but rather because of organizational crisis such as financial difficulties, and other organizational emergencies (Gartzia, Ryan, Balluerka, & Aritzeta, 2012). According to these authors this kind of appointment is brought to women because it is believed that collaborative leadership traits and other interpersonal approaches which are most effective in redeeming an organization from the fringes of destruction in the face of crisis are particular to women. This phenomenon, though it has to do with promotion to higher ranks, constitutes a barrier in this context as it is analogous to letting a willing player into the field only when the terrain has become slippery. This places the 'player' on the disadvantage because they are most likely to be appraised unfairly.

A woman who is appointed in the face of organizational crisis may put in her best which may not be judged as "sufficient" by onlookers and hierarchical superiors. Such an appointment is like placing the obstacle before the newly appointed and then, asking her to move on (with speed and accuracy). The glass cliff may also be countered in cases where one is appointed at a senior level quite alright but at the helm of a faculty or unit the technical know-how of which the appointee has not mastered. This situation is described as nothing but stepping into troubled waters since the personnel of that faculty who are versed with the way things ought to be done may be restive and relegate to the back, making things more difficult for the newly appointed thereby, increasing the chances of downplaying on her productivity in the system (Bruckmüller, Ryan & Haslam, 2014).

Lack of Motivation to Lead and Its Effects on Productivity

A blend of Murray & Chaus (2014); Guillen, Mayo & Korotov's (2015) description of motivation to lead presents it as the aggregate of factors which determine an individual's

willingness to take on leadership roles. An individual in a leadership position without the motivation to lead constitutes a barrier to themselves since according to Guillén, Mayo & Korotov (ibid) they lack inner tenacity to persist in their leadership roles whenever challenges arise. Furthermore, lack of motivation to lead may be explained using a demands-and- resources approach proposed by Mbepera (2015) wherein work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts are highlighted as barriers to women's access to leadership positions. These conflicts include:

1. Time-based demands which place women in a situation whereby, their home and workplace compete for their time, each wanting to have her for almost all of the day. This kind of demand turns out to be more stressful for the married than the single women. Unmarried or single women find it easier to close the gap because they are not as glued to the home or family as those who are married and or have children to rear. Time-based demands arise because long work hours make it difficult to spend much time with family members.

2. Strain-based demands are those with inelastic expectations on women to put the best of their efforts in to their job. Those who yield to this positively tend to become workaholics who are more concerned about their job while often neglecting their physical, social, or emotional well-being. Strain-based demands show the strongest relationships with family-to-work conflict, and

3. Boundary-spanning demands. These are those who pressurize the women to carry office work to the house or carry a purely home activity to the office. This category of demands if not fought against is bound to impose an overspill in the boundary between work and home/home and work.

Lack of motivation to lead as a barrier to women is sometimes imposed by what Mbepera (2015) explains as a lack of transparent procedures for recommending, recruiting and appointing administrators. This plays negatively on those who are appointed in the sense that a good portion of those who expected to have been appointed but were not, automatically act as a source of resistance to the incumbent. As such the task becomes more difficult. Similarly, at the societal level, negative perceptions and stereotypes of female leaders, conservative expectations of women in the private domain and deep-seated beliefs in some rural areas pertaining to spiritual and or superstitious issues, may result in physical risk and exploitation of female leaders. These prove to be strong barriers to leadership succession and result in on-going significant challenges for incumbent female leaders (Dunn, Gerlach & Hyle, 2014). While some of these women leaders shy away from these challenges, others confront them though sometimes with great difficulty (Moon, 2013). The effect of this is that their path to increasing productivity is blurred by these extra challenges.

In the midst of the foregoing, some women still wade to senior administrative positions; but the sad thing is that even up there, race and social class still blend with gender to pose a new set of challenges (Healy, Bradely & Forson, 2011). This is the probable reason why some scholars maintain that despite all the innovations in Sub-Saharan

Africa's higher education, women are still overwhelmingly barred from quality experiences that work to raise productivity (Teferra & Altbach, 2004 cited in Kiamba, 2008). They are rather often hailed for being good care takers, wives and mothers. Even though these are roles honoured by society, many women are punished for these identities when they become influential within HEI, (Johnson, Banard-Brak & Johnson, 2012). This is unfair since the externalities of education that come along with a terminal degree are far too weighty just to equip the women for the above hailed roles.

In other words this researcher advances that a woman does not necessarily need to study up to doctorate level to be able to bear/rear children, and keep the home properly. In Nigerian universities Lindow (2011) found out that women have been out rightly discriminated against for managerial positions under the pretext of the inevitability of reproductive roles. Some men hold that there is no logic appointing a woman when she will not be able to deliver the goods/services because intermittently she would be required to take her sick children to the hospital. It would be worthy to note at this point that not all of these women in higher education leadership actually lack someone to sit in for them in performing their child rearing roles. Some of these women are married to husbands whose work schedules are more flexible and as such may take care of the children when the woman is unavoidably absent due to work engagements. This is to say that the hard fast rule of relegating qualified women to domestic roles should be reconsidered.

Leadership and Its Effects on Productivity

Leadership is a group function whereby, two parties who perceive their task(s) as relevant, worthwhile, reasonable and ethical, give and receive support and influence bilaterally and work in synergy towards the realization of defined goals in the interest of all the parties concerned (Titanji, 2017; Hlatywayo, Hlatywayo & Muranda, 2014). This definition highlights the fact that the two parties involved give and take support/influence as need arises. However, for the sake of orderliness in the organization the person who has been appointed and occupies a given seat is seen as the coordinator and his power is distributed instead of being localized. An important pre-requisite for school improvement is effective leadership and three dimensions of leadership may be considered for it to be effective (Kowalski, 2010). These are non-hierarchical and non-sequential and include the individual, interpersonal and organizational dimensions.

Patriarchy and Its Effects on Productivity

Patriarchy is a situation which is generally believed to show itself only in primitive and remote areas where the people are so learned. This may not be the case as patriarchy tends to show itself in various ways in both advanced and primitive areas with the difference being only in form and extent. Patriarchy is described as an ideology and social system with an in-built mechanism to uphold male supremacy and superiority over women and reflect same as natural and divine (Johnson, 2014). Their premise of operation is that by genotype, men are intellectually and emotionally superior to women who are rather feeble and dependent on men for protection, guidance and upkeep (Johnson, ibid).

As earlier mentioned patriarchy shows up in various ways such as; no pay for work done by women, male superiority within the household, male-dominated cultural norms, and violence toward females which obstruct basic and further education opportunities, and gainful/satisfactory employment opportunities for girls and women thereby, cementing male domination (Alabi, Bahah & Alabi, 2013). These authors identify two forms of patriarchy as private and public. Affliction and domination of girls and women by inequalities within the household constitutes private patriarchy. Girls and women are made to believe that it is impossible and improper for them to take decisions on their own without the supervision of men.

Through private patriarchy, women are demoralized and controlled individually and the male exalted head of the household because he puts in more hours of work and retains a greater occupational authority outside of the home (Walby, 1990 cited in Mitchell, 2009). Worse still, services rendered by women are seen as inferior to and less valuable than those rendered by men. Hence, culture tends to reward male practices while being hostile to women's endeavours. Domestic patriarchy is also manifested in the following ways; the burden of household chores mostly left to women and young girls, girls have to cope with lack of/inadequate educational opportunities, lack of freedom and mobility for girls, and wife battering.

Public Patriarchy on the other hand has to do with formal organizations like work places, schools, churches, and the government and how they view and treat women. These organizations partake in instilling patriarchy by subtly or overtly upholding the inequality of men and women in their position, power, and controls (Alabi, Bahah & Alabi, 2013). Women under public patriarchy perform roles in the public sphere, but remain hem pegged by the prevailing organizational cultures and the symbolic frames which uphold the preference of male leaders.

The effects of patriarchy have been negative and have affected the women more. This ideology has been knitted into the fabric of formal and informal organizations, and has been supported by many ideas, beliefs, and practices. As such, the numbers of women decrease at every stage of appointment on the academic scale (Carter, Ibarra & Silva 2010; Eve line, 2005 cited in Parker, 2018). This has a double-fold effect on women who aspire to be leaders; it gives the men an edge over the women firstly in terms of numbers and secondly, in terms of prospects. So, when they finally get to top positions, they are hardly valued for such (Brink & Benshop, 2012). The effect of this is not to be minimized as would range from low to high levels of discouragement in the victim exposing them to risk and neglect (Sultana, 2011).

As a result of this unfair treatment, women have had peculiar narrations of how they make it to key leadership positions and of their challenges in those positions. These narrations are often more challenging than those of their male counterparts not because of professionalism per se but because of their gender. Particular to the context of this paper is the fact that such gender gaps which are initiated in the private domain or at home seem to be well nurtured in school settings. As such, schools may be seen as complex gendered arenas where students observe, participate, and

acquire the ways in which gender relations work and how to scale their way among them (Connell, 2002 cited in Levto, 2013). This empowers the assertion that the gender gap problem is more likely tied to patriarchal tendencies than to available means of schooling.

Discrimination and Its Effects on Productivity

This describes the way people tag summative judgments on others in alignment with some predetermined label which is often unfounded. When the discrimination is used in the workplace, its insinuation is unfair treatment on the one who is being discriminated against (Beardwell & Claydon, 2010). Discriminatory attitudes in this context are often veiled in inaccurate facts about women's capacity for leadership. Women are labeled as being short of rigor, deficient in self-confidence, and unsure about making it up the corporate ladder before they retire.

Discrimination against women results in a subordinate position of women and a violation of basic human rights and is an obstacle to the achievements of the objectives of women's equality, development and peace, Sultana (2011). All forms of discrimination constitute the basis for social, political, economic, religious and cultural differences between men and women and establish male dominated society. A way out of this situation would be a reformation of our double standards of morality and our laws, which give more rights to men.

Bias and Its Effects on Productivity

It cannot be denied that bias is extensive in higher education for a number of reasons. Institutional organization, customs, and cultures are regular obstacles to women's progress. Many female faculty members serve their institutions willingly, giving off their time and talents only to have their efforts disregarded when leadership succession and other benefits are considered (Assensoh, 2012). The consequence is marginalization of women in leadership networks, obstructed or slower paths to leadership positions, and a lack of recognition and reward within institutions for the work being done by women (Ballenger, 2010). As a result, more women are likely to be in lower-level leadership positions and to have limited influence.

Tokenism and Its Effects on Productivity

A way in which this is manifested is in sharp decline in the number of women as they climb up the ladder contrary to the large numbers at entry levels. The place of a token in a group is shaky and speaks of a member who may be let in simply because of the obligation to fulfil organizational norms, but is not allowed to fully participate owing to lack of characteristics (sex, race, ethnicity) prerequisite for persons in that position as judged by the group (Laws, 1975 cited in Kaushik & Pullen, 2018). Hence, they are never become complete members and may be ousted if they fail to align with expected behaviours.

The consequences of tokenism are many and varied but can be visualized as derivatives of a major one which is that women at higher levels have so far been unable to influence policy directions in favour of female employees. Tokens are intensely scrutinized by others and this creates a strong pressure for high performance. The outcome is either overachievement or underachievement, each of which leads to complications for further advancement. This situation

brings token women face to face with the problem of assimilation against which they may choose to fight or compromise with.

Lewis & Simpson (2012) found out that most women often resorted to the latter option. Tokenism is stressful in the sense that even if the token succeeds in their job, they are still likely to go back unfulfilled because of the burden of managing social relationship appraisals which are more subjective than objective. These authors hold that such a situation only makes things worse widening the gap between the employee and job satisfaction. This point is buttressed in the fact that tokenism.

The influence of tokenism could be broken by hiring more women in organizations that are mostly male so that the voice for advocacy for gender-sensitive slots in the policies around the tables of decision making should be louder (Kanter, 1977 cited in Zimmer, 2011). Strategies such as avoidance of negative connotations, mentoring, and provision of work-life support initiatives, tough action against harassment, discrimination, and tokenism could also be of help. The easiest way to arrive the solution to this problem would be by attempting a change in people's leader/gender perceptions, showing them how women can serve in leadership positions as long as they are qualified.

Underrepresentation and Its Effects on Productivity

Underrepresentation may be attributed to reasons such as bias towards women and the stereotyping of female behaviour and insufficient mentoring of women due to too few women in top leadership positions available to mentor other women on lower rungs of the corporate ladder (Ballenger, 2010; Krause, 2017). Although many women have attested to the possession of very supportive male mentors, men cannot understand the challenges of meeting the demands of both career and family like the women (Ballenger, *ibid*).

To Adusah-karikari (2008), conflicts in managing their multiple roles as mothers, wives and workers, interrupted careers, impact of family dynamics, lack of mentoring and networks, and the effect of the „old boys“ network are some causes of women's underrepresentation in higher education top-leadership positions. Other barriers such as dual responsibilities of traditional and professional roles, lack of professional development programs, succession planning, and diversity of programs are possible obstacles toward women's progress in top leadership roles in higher education.

Underrepresentation could be mitigated by taking the following strategies in to consideration with the aim of bringing about deep-seated change in our organizations; by broadening access to education, reviewing appointment and promotion procedures, providing legislative and infrastructure support (such as maternity leave and childcare facilities), changing the rules and then the attitudes, providing special programmes for women (such as leadership training programmes, special seminars and workshops), intentional institutional and government support to women (such as putting in place rules and regulations against discrimination). These strategies when embraced by all and sundry could bring about positive changes which is what we seek.

Role Congruity and its Effects on Productivity

The generally held beliefs of a leader and those of a woman are immiscible, reason why the masses often reject female leaders in one way or the other. Role congruity is approached from a background which traditionally relegates women to home responsibilities releasing them only very sparingly to career pursuits and expecting them to end up in trivial leadership positions or part-time employments so they will gain time for family responsibilities. Women who take up top leadership positions are seen as serving in a role that is incongruent with their primary function(s) of mother/wife. This situates the concept of role congruity of the woman midway between the workplace and the family leading to work-family conflict. Role incongruity surfaces when relative demands and resources associated with work and family roles are considered (Voydanoff, 2014).

Demands stand for structural or psychological claims linked with role requirements, expectations, and norms to which individuals must respond or adapt by exerting physical or mental effort. Resources on the other hand refer to structural or psychological assets that may be used to facilitate performance, reduce demands, or generate additional resources. Work-family conflict reflects the extent to which work and family demands and resources conflict with each other. The degree to which there is a strain between the two is the same degree to which a woman's role is in congruent with her family responsibilities.

Every employee comes from and belongs to a family/home where their full attention is demanded, so both genders experience some degree of limitations. As such we talk more of the extent of role incongruity rather than just role incongruity per se; this modification brings to limelight the strengths and weaknesses of both genders and make room for mutual assistance both at home and in the place of work. This calls for a replacement of our compartmentalized way of life for an integrated approach which contains every member of the community and lodges them in their niche while giving them the opportunity to offer the maximum they can to the rest of the community. In this light, a shift in attitude and in support at home in order to help women close the gaps that exist between the two spheres is advocated (Airini, Collings, & Conner, 2011). Similarly, men's uptake of unpaid domestic work has hitherto, been slow and should be redressed following the trends of men's „free“ time so that more time is freed up for women to career pursuits (Scott, 2012).

Work-to-family and family-to-work conflicts as sources of role incongruity may be conceptualized as two sides of a coin. Work-to-family conflicts occur when challenges and commitments at work interfere with family life, such as extensive, irregular or inflexible work hours, and other forms of job stress, interpersonal conflict at work, extensive travel, career transitions, or an unsupportive supervisor or organization. Family-to-work conflicts on the other hand, occur when challenges and commitments in the family interfere with work life, such as the presence of young children, primary responsibility for children, elder care responsibilities, and interpersonal conflict within the family unit or unsupportive family members (Greenhaus, Collins, & Shaw, 2014). Work-to-family conflicts are more direct than family-to-work conflicts because the work place is a formal organization with a stated code of conduct and job

description spelling out the expected number of hours to be put in daily.

The way forward

These difficulties can be handled in the following ways;

1. lost time from family schedules could be regained at other hours such as at night or during weekends but lost time from work may be hard to catch up as services in the latter are meant for public consumption and not for localized members.

According to Voydanoff (2014), adjustment in traditional work routines is another way which would allow women the chance to attend to work and family demands more effectively (for instance, tackling small stuff during work time; like phoning or e-mailing family members from work and receiving family-related phone calls while at work), taking care of household-related tasks while at work (like paying bills or arranging plans by phone).

2. Time-shifting: leaving work during the day but completing the work later that night, working on a non-typical work day in order to make up for a day she plans to miss due to family responsibilities, taking time off during a typical work day but making it up by working over the weekend, arranging with a co-worker to sit in when taken away by family responsibility
3. Using time-holes which entails using lunch or break time to attend to family matters or run errands, working through lunch in order to get out of work early or to avoid taking work home.
4. Making use of nannies and others still make use of day care centres where their pre-schoolers are kept during working hours.

Conclusion

There is ample evidence of Cameroon's commitment to pursue gender equality in the administration and management of tertiary education, however observations point to the fact as a nation she has rather displayed tokenism instead of the purported gender equality. Thus a review of this nature was inevitable in order to bring to lime light the challenges of the few women who serve in higher education administration with calls for empirical investigations to probe into some of the challenges they encountered on their way up and while in office. Also this paper is an eye opener as well as a clarion call for more research to understand the obstacles faced by women in attaining leadership positions and to establish the coping mechanisms they employ when in such positions as so as to help decry their plight and elevate their situation to policy makers and government officials alike.

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