CAREER ADVANCEMENT IN INDONESIAN ACADEMIA: A CONCERN OF GENDER DISCRIMINATION

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Abstract: The human resource management practices in the State Higher Education Institutions (SHEIs) in Indonesia follow the rules and regulations set by the government; this in theory should guarantee equality to all staff. In reality, however, the effects are different to female and male staff with regards to their career advancement. The present study aims to explore women's status in the structural and academic ranks as well as in the management and leadership positions compared to men's, and the reasons responsible for the gap in their career advancement. A set of instruments was distributed to universities willing to participate in this study. Ten universities participated in this study by returning completed instruments. This study reveals that the representation of women in the higher structural and academic ranks was reasonably below than that of men. However, their number in the starting levels tended to grow. Women were also scarce in the top management and leadership positions, even though their representation in the lower levels tended to increase. Reasons for this disparity include women's lacking research and publication; tendency to recruit future male leaders; and the women's lower qualifications for the higher posts. The implication of this study is provided.

Keywords: Academia, Female Academics, Career Advancement, Indonesia

Introduction

Academic career is one of the employments that provides sources of living, social identity, creativity development, and life challenge. Like other careers, academic career arises from the interaction of individuals with organizations and society, and is an individual's life journey. Career, defined as "the unfolding sequence of a person's work experiences over

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time"[2] is very important for the individual and organizations. People working in the academic settings, such as in universities, may aim to achieve diverse purposes, including but not confined to increased salary, advancement or promotion rank, and occupational status. They may want to feel and experience satisfaction with their work and able to balance between work and family. In return, successful attainment to these objectives benefits organizations.

Much of the career research indicates that in academia women are less successful in achieving their career objectives compared to men in the commonly agreed sets of indicators, i.e. academic rank[3], leadership positions[4], and income[5]. Put it simply, women are less likely to reach professoriate levels and the highest management level, and more likely to earn lower salaries[6]. These findings raise a concern about unresolved phenomena in academic careers among men and women, and deserve further investigation.

Career advancements in Indonesian academia are three-fold: structural (of which the highest is head bureau), academic of which the highest is professor, and leadership positions (of which the highest is rector). The advancements to these three types of positions require different paths, all of which are based on nationally prescribed policies, regulations, and guidelines. The promotion into a structural position is

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[2] Arthur, Khapova, & Wilderom, "Career Success in a Boundaryless Career World," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(2), 2005: p. 178.

[3] Sanders, Willemsen, & Millar, Views from above the glass ceiling: Does the academic environment influence women professors' careers and experiences? *Sex Roles*, 60(5-6), 2009; Wright & Guth, Women in the higher education sector. *The Industrial Law Journal*, 38(1), 2009.

[4] AVCC, Vice-Chancellors. Retrieved November 11, 2008, from http://www.universitiesaustralia.edu.au/content.asp?page=/about/current_office_holders/VCs.htm; European Commission, 2009. *She Figures 2009: Statistics and Indicators on Gender Equality in Science*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.

[5] Knapp, Kelly-Reid, & Ginder, 2010. Employees in postsecondary institutions, Fall 2009, and salaries of full-time instructional staff, 2009-10 (NCES 2011-150). U.S. Department of Education. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Retrieved August 17, 2011, from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch; Takahashi & Takahashi, 2009. *Gender salary differences in Economics Departments in Japan*. Paper presented at the Kansai Labour Seminar.

[6] Manchester, Leslie, & Kramer, 2010. *Stop the Clock Policies and Career Success in Academia*. Paper presented at the American Economic Review: Papers & Proceedings 100. Retrieved from http://www.aeaweb.org/articles.php?doi=10.1257/aer.100.2.219.

based on, rank, education and training, experience, and competence.[7] Academic promotion is based on accumulated credit for education level, teaching, research, community services, and supporting activities.[8] For the promotion of higher leadership positions there is a politically election process in each university, besides formal requirements such rank, educational background, and other qualities.

These mechanisms in theory provide equal opportunities for women and men to ascend to the highest possible positions. It is argued here, however, that formal regulations, which underpin fair practice and make it easy for organizations to assess practice and outcomes, may not ensure the associated processes and practices are merit-based and so bias-free.[9] Decision regarding academic promotion is based on the written documents, but the way in which their quality is interpreted depends on individual and organizational values. The use of interviews as recruitment practice can also disadvantage some candidates. Organizational culture may supersede the intentions of formal policy.[10] The culturally associated leadership quality with masculinity may make it difficult for women to assume a leadership role due to their gender identity contradicting with the masculine leadership norm. [11]

The question remains whether the implemented policy and practices in Indonesian academia affect the university staffs similarly or differently, especially when gender is taken into account. The current study seeks to answer three main questions. Do female administrative and academic staffs advance similarly or differently with their male colleagues? Do female administrative and academic staffs have equal share in the

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[7] Indonesian Govt, 2000. *Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 100 Tahun 2000 tentang Pengangkatan Pegawai Negeri Sipil dalam Jabatan Struktural (Government Regulation on the Appointment of Civil Servants into the Structural Position)*.

[8] Indonesian Govt, 2009. *Peraturan Pemerintah Republik Indonesia Nomor 37 Tahun 2009 tentang Dosen (Goverment Act on Lecturer)*.

[9] Loughlin, *Barriers to women's career progression: A review of the literature*. Unpublished Working Paper No. 6. The State Services Commission New Zealand, 2000.

[10] Ismail, *Barriers to Career Progression Faced by Women: Evidence from a Malaysian Multinational Oil Company*. Gender in Management: An International Journal, 23(1), 51-66, 2008.

[11] Eagly & Karau, Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice Toward Female Leaders. *Psychological Review*, 109(3), 2002; Kark & Eagly, Gender and leadership: Negotiating the labyrinth. In J. C. Chrisler & D. R. McCreary (Eds.), *Handbook of Gender Research in Psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 443-468). New York: Springer, 2010.

management and leadership positions? What are reasons responsible for the gap between female and male career advancement?

Method
Sample

The total number of the State Higher Education Institutions (SHEIs) in Indonesia is 133. It was not feasible to survey all the universities, thus a sampling strategy was needed. The researcher employed a convenience sampling strategy[12] to purposefully include universities which were approachable and showed a willingness to participate in the current research activity. However, the limitation of this strategy is that the result of the study may not be generalized across populations i.e., all state universities.[13] Nonetheless, the result could provide sufficiently representative baseline data regarding the status of women in administrative, academic, and leadership positions.

Initially, twelve universities indicated their willingness to participate. However, by the time the dead line was reached, only ten universities (5 under the MoRA and 5 under the MoNE) returned the completed questionnaires. These institutions are located in five provinces: Central Java, East Java, Riau, South Sulawesi, and West Nusa Tenggara. From each province, one university under the MoRA and one under the MoNE participated.

Instruments

For data collection, a set of instruments was created and distributed to sample universities. The instruments contained nine parts. The first four parts required the university personnel to fill out the forms with the exact numbers of the structural rank of administrative staff in 11 years; structural positions in the latest three periods; the functional rank of PNS lecturers over the past 11 years; and the leadership positions within the three latest periods. The next two parts asked the head of Human Resources to supply the yearly percentage of recruitment and retirement and the average year of rank advancement of administrative and academic staff. The last three parts requested the head unit of Human Resource or higher leaders to describe their perceptions on why the university recruits

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[12]Brewerton & Millward, *Organizational Research Methods: A Guide for Students and Researchers*. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE, 2001.

[13]Henn, Weinstein & Foard, *A Short Introduction to Social Research*. London: Sage Publications, 2006: p. 133.

more men or women; why rank advancement of men and women is delayed; and why more men or women occupy leadership positions.

Data Collection

A fellow researcher who at the time conducted interviews with participants from the targeted universities was asked to negotiate with the universities. Prior to conducting negotiation, this person was provided with general background knowledge about the nature of the current study. Once they had committed themselves to participate, the university was given a set of questionnaires to be filled in. The data collection process took place over a five-month period from December 2009 to April 2010.

Parameters

The present study applied parameters for inclusion in the instruments. First, the administrative ranks were concentrated on III/c to IV/d because those holding these ranks are eligible for the managerial positions. Using this parameter it was assumed sufficient to compare which gender groups could reach to a higher structural rank. The managerial positions covered Head Sub-Unit, Head Unit, and Head Bureau. These positions are common to almost all university management structures. Next, all academic ranks (Expert Assistant, Lecturer, Head Lecturer, and Professor) were included. Then, the leadership positions included university leaders as the highest level; faculty and postgraduate leaders as middle levels; and department and centre leaders as the lowest levels. The period used in the current study for tracing administrative and academic ranks was from 1999 to 2009. In addition, for managerial and leadership positions, three latest periods were used, as the common duration of the position is four years. However, the starting and the ending years within the periods can be different from one to two years earlier or later.

Analyses

For quantitative data, descriptive statistics were used to analyze, summarize, and present the data from six parts of the instruments, in the forms of percentages; and Microsoft Excel 2007 was used for conducting this task. The analysis involved the comparisons of the data from both groups of universities. For qualitative data, the keyword-in-context (KWIC)

approach was employed.[14] By keyword-in-context, words or phrases that are mentioned frequently in the data sets to support a specific argument were considered important. All respondents were guaranteed confidentiality in the whole process of this study; and to this end, all references to university or persons who provided answers in the questionnaires were eliminated.

Results
Administrative Ranks
The ten universities studied employed a total of 922 administrative staff holding III/c level and above (39% female and 61% male). The data shows there was almost no difference in the percentage of female staffs in both groups of MoRA (39%) and MoNE (38%) universities. In a decade women lagged behind men in the senior administrative ranks. On average women represented 37% of the rank III/c to IV/d, while men 63%. The percentage of women in these ranks fluctuated across the years and the ranks, indicating that the movement to the higher rank in the administrative areas is stable for both male and female staff.

Managerial Positions
Throughout three periods, the number of women in all managerial positions has been lower than that of men across university groups. The average percentage of female managers was 36% and male managers 64%; and as the higher the position the less female representation there. For example, in MoRA group female Head Sub-Unit in the period 3 was 45% and it fell to 22% in the Head Bureau. This situation applies to MoNE group. There was no clear sign that the representation of female managers increases in each period in both groups.

Academic Ranks
The total academic staffs in the 10 universities studied were 6.754 (female 34%); however, the percentage of female academics in five MoNE universities was slightly higher (35.37%) than that of MoRA universities (31.25%). The representation of women across academic levels was lower than that of men. However, in all sample universities there was a gradual increase on the female recruits as shown in the percentage of female Expert

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[14]Leech & Onwuegbuzie, An Array of Qualitative Data Analysis Tools: A CII for Data Analysis Triangulation. *School Psychology Quarterly* 22(4), 2007.

Assistant within 11 years. For example, in 1999 they represented 35% and in a decade later (2009) 45%.

Female academics are gradually left by men as they ascend to a higher rank. For example, in 2005 they held 37% of Expert Assistant rank, but this number fell to 31% at Lecturer position and then dropped to 23% at Head Lecturer, and then sharply plunged to 12% at professor level. This trend occurred across the years. In spite of this, the number of female professor increased almost 100% in a decade from 7% in 1999 to 13% in 2009. In addition, female academics shared their largest percentage at professorial level (15%) in 2008.

MoNE group had a higher percentage of female Expert Assistants (MoNE 40%, MoRA 23% in 1999) and female Professors earlier (MoNE 7%, MoRA 0% in 1999) than MoRA group. In recent years the disparities between MoNE and MoRA groups regarding the number of female academics have been narrowing, especially in their starting career. For example, in 2005 female Expert Assistants in MoRA group was 4% below that of MoNE's and in 2009 was just 1%. In the higher positions, however, the gap remained large i.e. in 2007 MoRA female Head Lecturers were only 13% compared to 30% of MoNE's. The growth of female professors both in MoRA and MoNE groups was characterized by fluctuation across the years, but MoRA experienced a quite reasonable drop in the last year.

Leadership Positions

The period of leadership terms across the samples was four years. However, the starting and the ending years within the periods were different from one to two years earlier or later. In some universities the starting years of the rector term in the period 3 were 2006 and 2007 and their ending years were 2010 and 2011. In other universities the starting appointments were 2008 and 2009 and the ending years were 2011 and 2012 in the same period.

Women were underrepresented in all leadership positions in both MoRA and MoNE sample university groups. At university level, no woman was appointed as rector in the whole sample in the last three periods. However, among MoRA universities, few women reached vice rector positions (6% in period II and III), whereas in MoNE group none. This indicates that in MoRA universities female academics preceded their colleagues in MoNE universities in advancing to the level of university leaderships.

Men dominated leadership positions at postgraduate studies across three periods both in MoRA and MoNE groups. While MoNE groups never had a female director of their postgraduate studies in all periods, MoRA universities had her once in period I (25%=1 person). In contrast, MoNE universities had female assistant directors in all three periods -the highest was in period III, 33%- whereas MoRA universities had them only in the period III (22%).

Almost all faculty leaders (dean and vice deans) in sample universities were men; however, MoNE universities preceded MoRA universities in having female deans. In MoRA group women held position of dean only in period III (4%), whereas in MoNE groups they have shared dean position since period I, with stable percentages of 11 to 12%. In both groups, women had held the positions of vice deans across periods, with maximum of 15% for MoRA and 16% for MoNE.

In all periods, male academics held the majority of head and vice/secretary department positions. While women in MoRA group represented 27% -the highest in period III- of head department, they represented 22% -the highest in period III-in MoNE group. Their representation as vice head departments, however, was larger: 37% in period III for both MoRA and MoNE groups. In addition, MoRA universities experienced a slight increase in the female head department from 20% in period I to 27% in period III, whereas MoNE group were almost stagnant in this position (20 to 22%). Both groups of universities showed a reasonable growth in the female vice head departments from 21 to 37% for MoRA and 34 to 37% for MoNE. In general, there was an increase in the female head department and vice head department from one period to another in all samples.

In both MoRA and MoNE universities men dominated the head and vice/secretary positions at various centers. In three periods, MoNE group had a larger percentage of female head centers (26% the highest) and vice head centers (32% the highest) compared to MoRA group (17% and 10% the highest). However, the number of female vice head centers in MoRA group increased dramatically from 0% to 10% in three periods, whereas in MoNE group this did not seem to occur.

Reasons for the Gap

All respondents acknowledged that both university groups relied on formal requirements for the recruitment of administrative and academic staff. Both processes did not take gender into consideration, but

were based on the educational qualification and the competence of the applicants. The selected candidates, then, were perceived to be the most qualified. The fact that both university groups appointed more male than female administrative and academic staffs every year was due to several reasons. Firstly, during recruitment male applicants always outnumbered female applicants, indicating that male applicants were more likely to be selected than female applicants. Secondly, in the administrative screening process male applicants were likely found to have a higher qualification than required. For example, for administrative staff, the basic educational requirement was Bachelor degree; the male applicants tended to hold a higher degree. They also had more working experiences than average female applicants. Finally, during job interviews, as the additional test procedure, male applicants were commonly perceived to be more ambitious and serious in applying for the job and suited in the profession than average female applicants. If female applicants were accepted they could have shown the same qualifications and psychological traits as male applicants.

Although the academic rank advancement is connected by individual lecturer, male lecturers dominate the higher academic ranks. According to respondents, one of the reasons was that men were recruited into academic profession earlier than women, so they are currently in more senior positions. It was also observed that men proposed their rank advancement more frequently than the existing female lecturers did. The ability to the frequent proposing of rank was due to sufficient credit cumulative in the areas of research and publication, indicating that male lecturers had more time, energy, and fund for conducting research and writing for publications.

Respondents reported that sex background was not considered as part of the requirements for the promotion to a certain position. The promotion, instead, was through mechanism that ensures the selected are the most suitable for that position. Respondents admitted that men were more likely to be recruited for a managerial or leadership position because the majority of current managers and leaders are men. They further explained that male domination may lead to bias in the next recruitment of future leader. For example, these male leaders could unconsciously recruit more male than female candidates. Another reason was that for the higher positions, male candidates were more likely than female applicants to have better qualification e.g., education and training, position experiences, and ranks.

Discussion

Despite the fact that the SHEIs in Indonesia apply the same regulation for the recruitment, selection, and appointment of staffs, its effects are different to women and men. Women's representation in both top administrative ranks and academic levels was below men's. Women were also underrepresented in all managerial and leadership positions; and the higher the position the more likely that women's representation disappears.

Underrepresentation of women in the highest academic level occurs worldwide. For example, in 30 European countries women have been found to hold about 15% of full professor positions,[15] while in the USA this figure is about 24%.[16] In Southeast Asian countries, such as Malaysia, women have been reported to make up 22.1% of all professors.[17] The current study reveals that the percentage of women professor in sample universities was comparatively below these overseas figures (13%).

Women in the top management hierarchy remain scarce, although they have made better progress within middle management positions.[18] For example, International Labor Office reported that in 48 out of the 63 countries in the 2000-02 sample, women's share in managerial positions were between 20 and 40 per cent.[19] In a more recent year, Kim cites that less than 8% of women are in management positions in South Korea.[20] The current study affirms these previous findings and reveals that women were underrepresented across managerial positions (36%).

The scarcity of women in top leadership positions in academia is also worldwide. For example, in 133 UK universities women represent only 14% of senior leaders,[21] while in the USA they held only 26% of

[15] Sanders, et al., *Sex Roles*, 2009.

[16] West & Curtis, *AAUP Faculty Gender Equity Indicators 2006*. Washington, DC: American Association of University Professors, 2006.

[17] Ismail & Rasdi, Career mobility of high-flying women academics: A study at selected universities in Malaysia. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 26(2), 2006.

[18] Eagly & Karau, Role Congruity Theory..., 2002.

[19] ILO, *Breaking through the glass ceiling: Women in management* (Update ed.). Genewa: International Labour Office, 2004.

[20] Kim, *Asian women in management, cracking the glass ceiling?* Unpublished Paper. University of Geneva, 2007.

[21] Eggins, *Women in higher education, research and innovation: Gains and further challenges.* Paper presented at the 2009 World Conference on Higher Education (Paris, 5-8 July 2009).

college and university presidencies.[22] Figures from China in the late 1990s show that there were approximately only 20 women presidents or vice-presidents,[23] and in Thailand women accounted for just over 25% of executive positions across academic institutions.[24] The present study reveals that none of female academics had become top university leaders. This condition has not changed since a decade earlier when the similar study was conducted.[25]

Why, then, are women underrepresented in the academic, management, and leadership hierarchy in academia? The present study found that women were less able to propose their rank regularly due to lacking research and publication; that male candidates tended to be recruited for future managers/leaders because of male domination in the hierarchy; and that female candidates had lower qualifications for higher posts.

The lacking of research and publication among female academics, especially married ones, indicates that they have less time and energy to do so. This may be connected with gender role prescribed to them, of which is more family caring and domestic responsibility. In current industrial and postindustrial economies, gender roles are so organized that men are more likely than women to assume roles in the paid economy and to be primary family providers, whereas women are more likely than men to assume domestic roles of homemaker and to be primary caretakers of children.[26] In Indonesia such roles are clearly defined in the marital law, that is the husband is the head of the family and has obligation to provide financially for his family, whereas the wife is the household manager.[27] For married

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[22] American Council on Education, 2007. American college president. Retrieved September 14, 2009, from http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/CPA/Executive_Summary.htm.

[23] Leathwood & Read, *Gender and the Changing Face of Higher Education: A Feminized Future?* Maidenhead, England; New York: Society for Research into Higher Education/Open University Press, 2009.

[24] National Statistical Office, *Gender Development: Differences and Similarities.* Bangkok: National Statistical Office, 2009.

[25] Astuti, Status of Women Academics in Indonesia: Challenges and Opportunities. In S. K. Gill & S. H. Shahabudin (Eds.), *Asian Woman Leaders in Higher Education II.* Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 2001.

[26] Eagly, Social role theory of sex differences and similarities. In J. Worell (Ed.), *Encyclopedia of women and gender: Sex similarities and differences and the impact of society on gender.* San Diego: Academic Press, 2001; Eagly & Karau, Role Congruity Theory..., 2002.

[27] Indonesian Govt, 1974. *Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 1. Tahun 1974 tentang Perkawinan (Indonesian Law on Marriage).*

women, then, managing the interface between work and family is crucial to them. However, a high degree of commitment to both work and family may result in work-family conflict. As a results, women are still the ones who interrupt their careers to handle work/ family trade-offs, compared to men.[28] Overwhelmed with caring responsibility, female academics may put their career on hold to look after their children;[29] have less mobility;[30] and have less time for academic activities than men do. As a result, women may be unable to meet the requirements necessary for academic advancement and leadership positions.

The tendency to recruit and appoint male managers and leaders is associated with masculine organizational culture. Organizational culture is a system of meanings, values, beliefs, and practices shared by the group that set behavioral norms within the organization.[31] Although the organizational culture may appear to be gender-neutral, its gendered nature prevails; for instance, a more dominant masculine culture will generate gender bias, prejudice, and discrimination towards women.[32] Such organizational cultures account in part for the slow women's career advancement.[33]

Overt gender discrimination is prohibited in most countries by legislation, including in Indonesia.[34] Since the 1990s, Indonesian universities have embraced to establish gender equality programs and accepted gender equality action plans. However, this does not mean that gender discrimination has vanished, but rather it may have changed form and become more subtle, covert, systemic and difficult to perceive. Gender discrimination could take place in recruitment to academic posts and promotion systems. In recruitment, non-transparent and closed

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[28] Eagly & Carli, *Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2007.

[29] Buddeberg-Fischer, Stamm, & Buddeberg, Academic career in medicine–requirements and conditions for successful advancement in Switzerland. *BMC Health Services Research*, 9(70), 2009.

[30] Chesterman, Ross-Smith, & Peters, Changing the landscape? Women in academic leadership in Australia. *McGill Journal of Education*, 38(3), 2003.

[31] Alvesson, *Understanding Organizational Culture*. London: SAGE Publications, 2002.

[32] Ismail, Barriers to Career Progression Faced by Women: Evidence from a Malaysian Multinational Oil Company. *Gender in Management: An International Journal*, 23(1), 2008.

[33] Rudman & Glick, *The social psychology of gender: How power and intimacy shape gender relations*. New York: Guilford Press, 2008; Todd & Bird, Gender and Promotion in Academia. *Equal Opportunities International*, 19(8), 2000.

[34] Indonesian Govt, 1999. Indonesian Law Number 29 Year 1999 on The Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

appointment procedures, such as using close interview, may put female applicants in a less favourable position than their male applicants. In addition, the promotion system based on academic work may generate bias in the evaluation process, especially when the gender of evaluator and the evaluated is known to each other. In leader's selection, the male domination in academia[35] leads to so-called "old boys networks," to which women are less likely to belong and sometimes even consciously excluded.[36] The exclusion of women from the networks means that women have less access to relevant information, resources or decision-making networks within the organization. In addition, this "club" may continually select future leaders having the same sex background as theirs.

The lower qualifications account for the underrepresentation of women in the higher academic hierarchy. The formal requirement for promotion to professor level has been that lectures hold a doctorate degree and that for rector a doctorate degree and professor.[37]To achieve a better representation at these levels, women seem to need a longer time since the majority is in junior levels. When higher positions are advertised, women are more likely to self-limit because they would not be able fulfill the requirements.

The scarcity of women in top positions in academia might be resolved by a continuous affirmative action that will widen opportunities for them to advance more quickly and massively. This could include strategies of handling family-work interface, provision of specific incentives, the mentoring systems, and the creation of gender-friendly work environment. Leadership mainstreaming program could help female academics in making necessary preparation for future top leadership position.

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[35] White, Women and Leadership in Higher Education in Australia. *Tertiary Education and Management*, 9(1), 2003.

[36] Wenniger & Conroy, *Gender Equity or Bust!: On The Road to Campus Leadership with Women in Higher Education* (1st ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 2001.

[37] Indonesian Govt, 2005. *Undang-undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 14 Tahun 2005 tentang Guru dan Dosen (Indonesian Law on Teachers and Lecturers)*.

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