Acehnese Women's Move in Academic Leadership in 2020

Basri[1]; Rita Sari[2]; Muhammad Nazar[3]; Andhika Jaya Putra[4]
[1,2,4]Institut Agama Islam Negeri Langsa, Indonesia
[3]Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe, Indonesia

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Basri[1]; Rita Sari[2]; Muhammad Nazar[3]; Andhika Jaya Putra[4]
[1,2,4]Institut Agama Islam Negeri Langsa, Indonesia
[3]Institut Agama Islam Negeri Lhokseumawe, Indonesia
[2]Contributor Email: ritasari17@iainlangsa.ac.id

Abstract

This study discussed the role of Acehnese women in academic institutions within the public leadership structure over the past decade. Recruiting process, placement, and the fulfillment of women's quotas in cross-sectoral at the institutions have become a significant concern due to a patriarchal model applied in Aceh. A qualitative research survey was applied to determine female lecturers' involvement at Islamic academic institutions in Aceh. The questionnaire was distributed to 58 respondents, and six were selected to be interviewed. The data was analyzed by restatement, description, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The result showed that approximately 50% of women worked as first-line managers, more than 35% were as middle-line managers, and 15% were as top managers. It was a milestone of sustainable development efforts over the past decade.

Keywords: *Aceh; Gender; Leadership; Patriarchy; and Women.*
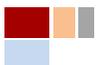
A. Introduction

Discussing women's leadership, particularly in a highly patriarchal region (Srimulyani, 2016)], draws much interest, especially in Islamic academic institutions. The Islamic academic institutions referred to are the State Islamic Universities (PTKIN) in Aceh, Indonesia, which firmly uphold Islamic sharia (B. J. Smith & Woodward, 2014). Since the Center for Gender and Child Studies (PSGA) establishment in PTKIN within the last decade, issues on gender mainstreaming have grown more prevalent. Gender mainstreaming arises significantly as an effort to realize the recommendations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) (Assembly et al., 1985), especially since the Education for All (PuS) movement and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that are concerned with education and gender equality become the primary focus (Durrani & Halai, 2020). However, it is followed with a great many criticisms because women's participation is deemed necessary to support development programs (Yang, 2019) so that improvement of women's position, role, and quality, as well as gender equality and justice, can be realized (Indonesia, 2000). The programs and efforts to reach the National goals encompass numerous sectors (multiple dimensions) of people's lives.

Although the issue of gender equality and justice has been rampantly raised since the 20th century, many women still lack the access and opportunities men enjoy (Horowitz & Fetterolf, 2020). Despite women's superiority in certain aspects over men (Eagly, Gartzia, & Carli, 2014), men's domination (Hoyt & Murphy, 2016), social perception and women's role from the traditional cultural perspectives, and women's stereotypes (Heilman, 2012), (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007) lead to women's small representativeness in the leadership domain. Opportunities for women to lead organizations are likened to a "labyrinth" (Eagly et al., 2014), full of challenges and barriers to arrive at the culminating point. Therefore, cultural change promotion and practice reflect the most effective support form in representing women's participation in leadership positions (Klettner, 2016).

Women's involvement in the public sphere can be seen in an educational setting such as Pesantren or boarding school, which is closely related to patriarchal culture, where the Kyai is the prominent leader, and Nyai (the Kyai's spouse) is known as co-directing and an active agent in society (Bianca Smith, 2011). Husin (2014) states that *Dayah* has unique characteristics in leadership because women play a significant role in maintaining the balance of male and female relationships dynamic within religious settings. Moreover, many of *Teungku Agam* assign *Teungku Inong* the responsibility of managing and leading *Dayah*. Furthermore, several *Dayah* was founded and led by women. It indicated the huge responsibility a *Teungku Inong* possesses in maintaining values and promoting positive changes within the Acehnese *Dayah* culture and social context. Thus, *Nyai* or *Teungku Inong* as *Muballighah* follows Islamic values and does not exceed the role of *Kyai* or *Teungku Agam* based on social and local culture. Therefore, gender practices remain consistent with patriarchal gender scripts (B. j Smith & Hamdi, 2014).

In addition to *Dayah*, society has chosen an Islamic religious college (PTKIN) as a modern academic institution for knowledge dissemination. The characteristics of *Dayah* and higher education institutions, as explained by (Husin, 2014), include the following; *Dayah* is a traditional non-formal education, and a *Teungku* without a structured bureaucratic system leads it. In contrast, higher education is a formal and modern higher education institution established by the government or a foundation with a structured bureaucratic system.

The bureaucratic system requires systematic organization. Bureaucracy involves human resources to operate the organization; it is also used for organizational inefficiency and public administration implemented through authority and agents (Basri, 2021). Therefore, within a bureaucracy, leadership is the key to the success of an organization (Gibson, 2009). Robbins (2013) suggests two pivotal points that deal with gender and leadership, namely (1) The distinction between men and women must be perceived deliberately in the issue of gender equality; (2) The tendency of men's leadership styles to be directive and women to be more democratic. It can be concluded that women's leadership empowers their members and emphasizes organizational structure, while men's leadership tends to be hierarchical, authoritative, and specialized.

This study investigated the following research questions. How do Islamic academic institutions provide opportunities for women to enroll and involve in strategic positions in the organizational structure? What are the supporting and interdicting factors for women to have a career? What position can be occupied by women? This study aimed to contribute as a significant reference to promote gender equality at PTKI in Aceh, which is dominated by the patrilineal system. It becomes exciting to investigate how Islamic academic institutions give women opportunities to penetrate and get involved in strategic positions in institutional structures. The results of this study are expected to provide information for the development of Acehnese women's representativeness in the educational sector to support the National development goals.

B. Method

This study was empirical research with a qualitative survey format (Creswell, 2015). It combines three data sources, including primary data collected from questionnaires, and interviews, to assess gender equality and women's leadership. The secondary data was collected through a literature review (Lexy J. Moleong, 2019). It is survey research in which we analyze women's involvement in leadership positions in academic institutions. The data was generated through a questionnaire and interview data. The research instruments were developed based on the gender mainstreaming indicators consistent with the research focus: access, participation, control, and benefits. Access and participation cover opportunities in education and career, control covers women's roles in their positions, and benefits refer to the things that can be obtained from women's presence in a leadership structure.

The data collected were presented to a group of lecturers as research participants for confirmation. The participants were limited to those seconded to structural positions in Islamic academic institutions. Fifty-eight (58) lecturers filled out the questionnaire online, and six (6) were engaged in in-depth interviews. The participants were from five (5) Islamic academic institutions representing Aceh in the east, middle, and west. The data collection process employed an interview guide and a questionnaire as a basis for question

formulation. The questions were open- (interview) and close-ended (questionnaire) and covered four aspects: data related to education among female lecturers, career opportunities for female lecturers, position occupation by female lecturers, and female lecturers' role or contribution in their positions.

This research occurred throughout June 2020, when Indonesia's COVID-19 pandemic broke. Interviews were conducted with six female lecturers who were consciously willing to participate while still considering and applying the health protocol. Questions were posed one by one open-endedly, both indoors and outdoors. Afterward, probing was performed to analyze the participants' answers (Kallio, Pietilä, Johnson, & Kangasniemi, 2016). The questionnaire mapping and interview data were classified according to the access, participation, control, and benefits indicators. Analysis was then carried out in three stages: data restatement, description, and interpretation. The restatement was conducted about interview quotes from the participants' points of view regarding access to education, women's participation in leadership, and women's role in a leadership structure.

Data description was conducted to show the tendency of the data on women's roles in their positions. The interpretation was conducted by considering the individual, social, and institutional contexts. The three stages above served as a foundation for the conclusion drawn. The data from the interviews served as a strengthening benchmark for the online questionnaire data.

Women's involvement in the leadership structures of Islamic academic institutions has increased within the last decade. It is a coincidence with the presence of the Center for Gender and Child Studies (PSGA) in all Islamic academic institutions. Women's involvement was traced using gender mainstreaming indicators: access, participation, control, and benefits. A discussion of the four indicators above is presented as follows.

The researcher interviewed the respondent thoughtfully to develop reflective and open discussion. The respondents were selected based on their educational background, their position, and the length of their working experience.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Result

a. Women's Access to Education

Access to education is an opportunity that women enjoy to pursue education at higher levels. A Government Regulation stipulates that to become a lecturer. One must have finished education at the Master's level (S2). The online data collection results revealed that all participants satisfied this criterion. Figure 1 shows that nearly 70% of the participants finished education at the Master's level, and 30% finished education at the Doctoral level. Even one female professor was identified (nearly 2%).
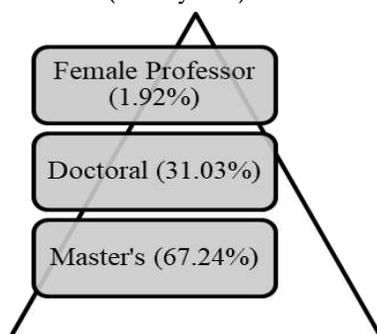
Figure 1: Rate of Women's Participation in Education

This rate of participation in education informs us that, although Aceh is intense in its patriarchal culture, women are still given the same opportunities as men to pursue the highest level of academic education. They hold that education must be pursued as long as they live, enabling women to contribute more to society. Women independently and by sponsorship (scholarship) achieved this success in the educational sector.

b. Women's Access to Management

Management comprises managers of three (3) levels: first-line, middle-line, and top managers. First-line managers are at the lowest level of management. They are tasked to manage their work and be answerable for the results to middle-line managers. Middle-line managers themselves are the mediators between first-line managers and top managers. They are also assigned management and supervisory duties, and they must be answerable for their

work to top managers. At the peak, top managers are authorized to make decisions, make plans, and set the goals to be achieved by the academic institutions. The data obtained are visualized in Figure 2.
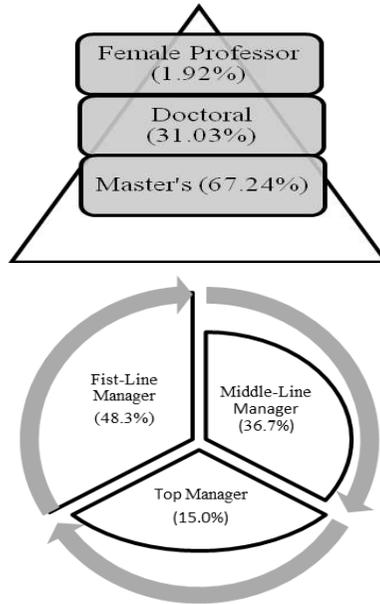
Figure 2: Women's Positions in Management

Based on Figure 2, most participants (50%) were first-line managers, 40% were middle-line managers, and approximately 15% were top managers. According to the percentage of each managerial position, only the top managerial position had its women's quota (30%) unfulfilled. It can be concluded to be a welcome improvement in Islamic academic institutions because equality and women's quota filling in their institutional structures could be realized.

Table 1: Interview Result

Coding	Women's Involvement
Gender Issue Introduction Period	In the aftermath of the 2004 Aceh tsunami, women's involvement in leadership started to be considered. Women have increasingly become more involved in managerial governance, such as department secretaries and heads. The fact that women receive much appreciation even came as a surprise to an Australia-based NGO compared to the appreciation for women in other non-Islamic-based universities in Aceh.

Coding	Women's Involvement
Leadership Selection	In my observation, women's involvement grew after the tsunami and within the recent decade after the formation of the center for gender and child studies in our (Islamic-based) institution. Women typically occupy the department secretary and head positions. It proves that women are highly appreciated and given the same opportunities as men (SY).
	I do not think that women are excluded. Everything depends on the capacity on the part of the women themselves. Capacity is not only about intellectualism but also about emotional maturity and leadership. It is because not all people are intelligent academically, but they may have good managerial capabilities. This also serves as a consideration that administrative requirements, skills, and ages must be of choice in a selection process. One more thing: comfort in a team is necessary because we will not likely cooperate if there is disintegration in the team (SL).
Role	I assume the role of a Dean, so I am responsible for managing, planning, and making decisions (SL).
Budget	It was only recently that we conducted an activity related to capacity building. However, a particular budget related to gender has to be precise. It still depends on the Operational Assistance for Universities (BOPTN) allotted. Nonetheless, we are continuously striving in that direction (SL).

c. Women's Participation in Career

Women are given the same opportunities as men to occupy structural positions in Islamic academic institutions. However, women's career advancement does not come for free; it must undergo a series of competence tests. Therefore, some criteria are established in women's selection process to occupy a position. The analysis results found that the capability and skill factors dominated the selection process for a position, which is at 80%. Other factors, such as academic rank, employment status, age, and kinship, made up a combined percentage of 20%. It can be seen in Figure 3 below.
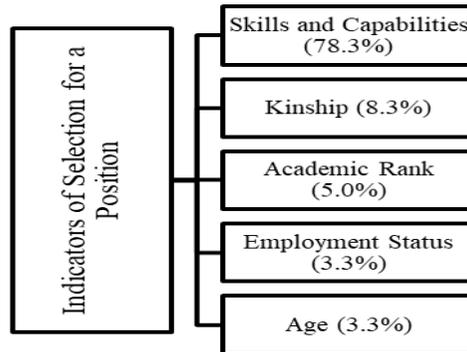
Figure 3: Indicators of Selection for a Position in Islamic Academic Institutions

It is clear from Figure 3 that the leading indicators in the selection for leadership performed by Islamic academic institutions were capabilities and skills because these indicators are highly needed in the operation of an organization for it to run optimally toward the accomplishment of its goals. Both internal and external factors will wield influence employee performance. Other factors are little in their significance but must gradually be reduced. It is especially true for the second indicator, kinship because it is an illness we must get rid of as soon as possible. The following discussion is about several positions predominated by women based on the results of the positional selection. It is presented in Figure 4 below.

Figure 4: Public Positions Occupied by Women

Figure 4 shows that women have sufficient capacity and capabilities equal to men in performance. STAIN Teungku Dirundeng Meulaboh is currently

led by a female rector, who is assisted by a female vice-rector. It implies that the stereotypes that have been attached to women, such as being weak, subjective, inconsistent, and slow, have gradually been eroded over time. It is despite most women being placed in the lowest positions in the organization.

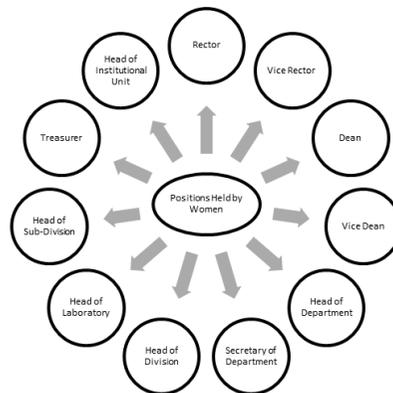### d. Women's Control in Institutional Structure

Control is translated into a gender's ability to make decisions or the role one plays in management as part of the human resources in an academic institution. Role per se can be defined as a dynamic aspect one performs in his/ her position or status. The roles of women in academic institutional governance are as follows:
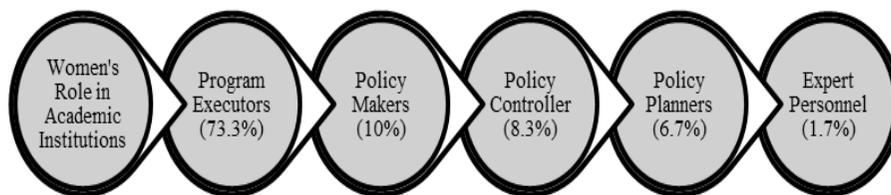
Figure 5: Women's Roles in Academic Institutional Governance

Figure 5 shows the positions occupied by women in Islamic academic institutions. In order from the most extraordinary dominance, women occupied the positions of program executors (more than 70%), policymakers (10%), policy controllers (more than 8%), policy planners (nearly 7%), and expert personnel (around 2%).

It is expected that the career opportunities that women in the strategic positions above have seized can be increased to allow the policies planned by the institutions to accommodate women's aspirations. Moreover, it will be easier to realize if women are given the same proportion and opportunities as men to be involved in institutional management.

e. Benefits of Women's Involvement in the Management of Islamic Academic Institutions

Benefits are defined as the results felt and enjoyed by gender in managerial governance. At the least, the benefits received from women's

involvement and representativeness in managing Islamic academic institutions are as follows. First, women received the same opportunities at work as men. Second, women could explore their competencies by showing performance equal to men's. Third, the organizational climate became more varied. Fourth, the gap in the organizations became desized. Fifth, mutual appreciation was built. Sixth, flexibility in the work environment and a high sense of kinship were also formed. Seventh, women's potential and empowerment were increased. Eighth, policies and programs became more gender-responsive. Moreover, ninth, every Islamic academic institution started to have a taste of a particular budget, albeit, in a small amount, that is at 5–10% of the institution's budget.

2. Discussion

Women in South-East Asia have high social status compared to other Asian societies, such as India and China. It is common for women to take a high position in spiritual matters in non-formal religious practice (Bianca Smith, 2011). In Acehnese culture, women are given a particular portion for self-development according to the needs of the society as long as it does not go against Islamic sharia (Srimulyani, 2016). Moreover, this also applies in Islamic academic institutions, where women's involvement is considered acceptable to academics and the general public as long as the practice remains in line with the culture and sharia. In other words, women are free to express themselves in public spaces as long as they remain compliant with the social and religious norms applicable (Mahmood, 2009).

The data on the educational level of women in Islamic academic institutions prove that Aceh's embracing the patrilineal system does not hinder women from pursuing high education and quality in public space. Women are continuously encouraged to improve their knowledge, competencies, and skills through the provision of scholarships both by academic institutions and the government, local and central. They are also willing to continue their studies at their cost.

It contrasts with some research in Asia and Africa, which shows that women experienced discrimination in education caused by men's domination

and traditional influences. For instance, Indian women only face confinement to their private areas (at home), so not a few experience discrimination, especially in the educational sector (Kingdon, 2002). tradition, religion, and culture contribute to the high discrimination against women in Nigeria. Therefore, women are deprived of access to economic and political resources and are excluded from decision-making. As a result, there is a failure to achieve gender-related MDGs (Kolawole & Adeigbe, 2016).

Although women have filled the women's quota in leadership positions in academic settings recommended by the United Nations (at nearly 50%), the majority only serve as program executors, which constitutes the lowest level in the leadership structure. It is expected for the future that women's quality is improved for them to have a place in academic institutions' decision-making. Unquestionably, it will take time to make it accurate.

As a developed country, Australia still needs two decades to represent gender equality in the pharmacy field. The country still finds a lack of women in the leadership positions of the Professional Pharmacists Australia (PPA) Committee, in which only 20% of the women's quota was filled. It was not until 2018 that the 30% quota of president positions in pharmacy was fulfilled (Martin, Naunton, & Peterson, 2020). Similarly, in the governance of sports associations, women were underrepresented with non-fulfillment of the 30% women's quotas as board directors (nearly 20%), board chairs (nearly 11%), and chief executives (above 16%) (Adriaanse, 2016).

Women's primary requirements to be elected into strategic positions are capabilities and skills. With these two requirements fulfilled, women have the same opportunities as men to fill even the highest possible positions. Other than the abovementioned, honesty, hard work, loyalty, commitment, and motivation are indispensable accompanying factors.

The benefit of gender diversity is the variations in women's transformational leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and ethical standards, which undoubtedly differ from men's (Yang, 2019). Gender equality in decision-making also positively impacts organizational goals (Klettner, 2016).

D. Conclusion

Gender mainstreaming program is a program that must be implemented and fully realized by universities as academic institutions. The involvement of women in leadership is not impossible and impossible. Because women also have competence, skills, and skills and can make decisions just like men. The results showed that nearly 50% of the participants served as first-line managers, about 35% were middle-line managers, and 15% were top managers. It is an immense achievement and gratifying accomplishment of sustainable development goals. In the future, it is expected that there will be an increase in the quality of the role of women who are not only policy implementers but can be involved more proportionally, at least 30%, in institutional policymaking. Of course, by continuing to strive so that women do not experience and feel inequality (discrimination) in leadership and employment in general. Similarly, (Bass & Avolio, 1994) mention that male leaders expose transactional leadership style, while female leaders tend to be more transformational. Motivation, accuracy in decision-making, capacity, determination to succeed, and self-confidence significantly affect the absorption of women's leadership opportunities (Dhatt et al., 2017).

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