Babae Ka, Hindi Babae Lang: Leadership Narratives of Female Management Committee Members in a Philippine University

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Abstract: In the Philippines, women are vulnerable to legal and actual inequities in all communities and fields of endeavor. In this current period, despite national initiatives on inclusivity, gender equity, and equality, women are still underrepresented, underpaid, and often discriminated against in different industries. However, in contrast, in a Philippine private university in Bacoor, Cavite, women dominate around 65% of higher leadership roles. With these contradicting situations, this current study explored leadership experiences and narratives of top female management committee members in an HEI. This research aimed to promote gender equality and inclusivity based on the implication of the merged themes. Employing a phenomenological-descriptive research design, pre-structured online and physical interviews were conducted with purposively selected co-researchers (n=8) handling relevant leadership positions. Based on the narrative analysis, lifelong learning, and relational leadership are the strengths that helped co-researchers attain their present positions. About their experienced struggles and challenges to thrive and aspire to higher management positions, gender stereotyping was highlighted. Moreover, significant realizations emphasized that leadership is not gender specific and that a collaborative approach, leaving no one behind, is essential in promoting inclusivity at work and in the school environment, gender equity and equality, and fairness.

Keywords – Female management committee members, gender equity and equality, leadership, Philippine University, Bacoor, Cavite

Introduction

The Philippines, having its long history of colonialism, adopted the culture of patriarchy in its lifestyle and system, which sees men having more power, more authority, and more privilege in society (Napikoski, 2020; Valdez et al., 2022). Women are vulnerable to legal and actual inequities in all communities and fields of endeavor. Discrimination in the workplace, the community, and the family contributes to and exacerbates this problem. Discrimination against women is pervasive (Jones & Pal, 2022). However, its origins and effects may differ from nation to nation. Stereotypes and anti-women traditional cultural and religious practices and beliefs continue to be used to justify it (World Conference on Human Rights, 1993). In this current period, despite national initiatives on gender equality, women are still underrepresented, underpaid, and often discriminated against in different industries. Women are disproportionately missing out on the ongoing boom in IT jobs (White, 2023). According to a new report by UNICEF (2022), girls worldwide are lagging behind boys in academics and the workplace, with sexism and gender stereotypes among the root causes. Instances such as lesser compensation and other forms of remuneration and fringe benefits, and favoring a male employee over

female concerning work designation, promotion, training opportunities, leadership positions, and dismissal and retrenchment policy are accounted to gender discrimination still happening in the Philippines (Chau, 2022). India Discrimination Report (Hindustan Times, 2022) discussed that ninety-eight (98%) percent of the employment gap between women and men is due to discrimination. Discrimination is due to societal and employer prejudices. There is an evident imbalance and disparity in the distribution of power, making women subordinate to men. In politics, out of the 17 presidents, only two were female. Historically, the 1st female President of the Philippines, Mrs. Corazon Aquino, only came about in 1986, since 1899, the First Republic of the Philippines. This system of patriarchy has been embedded in Filipino culture for so long that it is a central concept of female theorists up until this day.

Women in various organizations have a limited role in management positions, although having the potential to be leaders, according to Bono et al. (2017), Komariah et al. (2020), and Jones and Pal (2022), particularly female administrators in educational institutions. This is different in the University of Perpetual Help System's DALTA-Molino campus. According to statistics, women dominate around sixty-five percent (65%) of higher leadership roles in the academe. Women school leaders contribute to creating an equitable educational environment, advocating policies and practices towards authentic learning. The increasing number of female leaders in the academe implies distinct perspectives and strategies to effectively address needs and challenges of the school and to foster an inclusive and supportive environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging (Cimene, 2023). Results of (Vicencio, 2022) indicated that female academic leaders excel in some aspects of leaderships.

The researchers were prompted to conduct an in-depth investigation of the leadership narratives of the female management committee members by the inconsistent situation in academic institutions and the general employment gender inequality and discrimination issues connected in the Philippines. This contradiction has implications for women and their career advancement and supports the Philippines' effort, as cited by Chau (2022), to end workplace discrimination against women.

The study is based on the career development theory, which emphasizes building meaningful professional growth and fostering a healthy emotional relationship with one's work to achieve success (Birt, 2023). The goal is to explain why a person excels in a particular field through career paths, accomplishments, and behavior. The primary goal of the research is to provide implications from career development theory on achieving a promising trajectory. For context, the researchers assert that the experiences of female management committee members (ManComm) in terms of leadership can serve as a source of encouragement for people of both genders. According to Jena and Nayak (2020), career development theory is built on the characteristic component. In this psychological structure, a personality should match the workplace, decision-situational variables related to social cognition, and self-concept theory. The idea was incorporated into the research's objective since it seeks to comprehend the career paths taken and initiatives by successful female top academic leaders. Merged themes and implications of the study findings are expected to guide the researchers in developing programs and initiatives that would strengthen the gender and development efforts of the institution and career pathing initiatives for all school community members.

Additionally, the study is anchored to role congruity theory, which considers the comparison between gender and other roles, especially leadership. The comparison includes vital factors and processes that influence congruity perceptions and their consequences for discrimination and prejudicial behaviors (Jones & Pal, 2022). In context, observing an individual as an occupant of a leadership role would add expectations based on their gender in competition with expectations based on leadership. The theory is consistent with the general argument that these roles are consequential in organizational settings (success, improvement, satisfaction ratings, and the like). It has been observed that practical evidence exists wherein the information associated with a gender role and a leader role are often merged by observers, subsequently influencing their perception of a female politician. This highlights the significance of the impact of gender roles on the perception of female politicians in leadership roles. Female holders of political offices were especially suited for pursuing what could be regarded as the collective opinions of public policy (e.g., dealing with children and family problems, assisting people experiencing poverty, working for peace). Male officeholders were suited for pursuing what

could be regarded as the agentic goals of public policy (e.g., directing the military and handling big business, domestic rebellion, the economy, and foreign relations). Using the role congruity theory, the researchers assume that female academic leaders are not regarded as holding womanlike responsibilities and that the theory does not apply to all industries.

Anchored to the key research agenda relative to gender and development, leadership promoting gender equality and equity, and education and professional development for women empowerment, the research generally aimed to conduct an in-depth analysis of the leadership narratives of female management committee members in a Philippine university. Particularly, the researcher sought to:

A. Identify the strengths (traits, character, and personality) that guided and helped the female ManComm (academic leaders) to attain their current position;

B. Explore common struggles and challenges encountered by female academic leaders as they thrive and aspire to attain higher management positions and

C. Narrate valuable learning and reflections that could promote gender equity and equality in handling leadership and management functions in academic institutions.

Methodology

Qualitative Design was used to explore and understand the leadership narratives of female management committee members in a Philippine University. Meanwhile, the phenomenological inquiry was employed to explore and deeply understand the context and essence of the 'lived experiences' of the co-researchers. Phenomenology analyzes the essences perceived by consciousness concerning individual experiences such that reduction becomes the central theme (Greening, 2019 and Robinos et al. 2023).

The study was conducted at the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA – Molino Campus due to the contradicting situation of gender-related employment in work industries and in the academe to be specific. Co-researchers are the female members of the top management committee handling these identified positions and who are at the time of data gathering are free and willingly accommodated the researchers. Key positions of the co-researchers are as follows: 1 BED Director; 2 BED Principals; 3 Cluster Heads; 3 College Deans; 1 Knowledge Management Officer; 1 Quality Assurance Coordinator; 1 Chief Librarian; 1 Executive Assistant to the school director; 1 Information and Technology Services Head; 1 University Registrar, 1 Human Resource Department Head; and 1 Head of the Student Affairs and Services, in the academic research-setting. The population comprised 17 female ManComm members. Purposive sampling with the saturation technique was utilized. In utilizing the saturation approach, researchers picked six (6) co-researchers, then added two (2) until codes and themes became empirically saturated. Criteria for co-researchers are as follows: (a) Employee of the UPHSD – Molino campus for about three years, (b) Handling a top managerial position, (c) Started their career not as manager/supervisor, (d) at least 30 years old and above, (e) Can understand English or Filipino, and (f) Willing to participate.

The research instrument is an interview protocol with formulated questions according to the study's objectives. These objectives included identifying the best traits and personalities that helped female academic leaders attain their current positions, exploring the everyday struggles and challenges faced by female academic leaders as they aspire to higher management positions, and narrating valuable reflections that could promote gender equity and equality in handling leadership and management functions in academic institutions. Necessary data were collected via online/onsite semi-structured interviews guided by an expert-validated interview protocol. The interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim and were returned to the co-researchers for checking and validation. A focus group discussion was conducted to validate the codes/themes that merged, and the implications of such were observed. Following and observing a high standard of research ethics, the researchers ensure that participants are well informed of their right to participate, the rationale of the study, the anonymity approach, the right to refuse to answer the interview protocol, and their right to withdraw their responses. These considerations were incorporated into the crafted interview protocol, including consent, which was automatically returned after completion and before the interviews were conducted.

The researchers employed a narrative analysis approach to analyze the data. Researchers use narrative analysis as a qualitative approach to understand how research participants construct stories and narratives from their experiences. Narratives can be derived from journals, letters, conversations, autobiographies, transcripts of in-depth interviews, focus groups, or other types of narrative qualitative research and then used in narrative research. The general data analysis procedures will be transcribing the captured narrative data, coding the narrative analysis, and then validation (Delve & Limpaecher, 2020). Discovered and coded themes will be validated through a follow-up focus group discussion (FGD).

Results and Discussion

This research aimed to shed light on the career paths of eight female members who serve on the management committee at the University of Perpetual Help System DALTA in the Philippines. These co-researchers are school leaders, and their accounts provide valuable insights into women's perspectives in academic institutions. Their stories delve into their individual experiences and highlight their professional trajectories, offering a thorough understanding of their journeys. These narratives revealed the significant challenges and struggles these women faced and the strengths they relied on to overcome these obstacles and achieve their objectives. By examining the meaningful experiences of their career development, this study contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of women's leadership in the Philippines and beyond.

A.   Strengths that guided and helped them attain their current position

Theme 1: *Lifelong Learners*

Throughout history, humans have embraced learning as a vital aspect of life and growth. The learning journey is ongoing, and it is hard to imagine thriving without it. For leaders, education and navigating specific challenges successfully are essential. As work demands and time pressures increase, it is more critical than ever for leaders to remain engaged and informed through continuous learning opportunities. Robinos et al. (2019), Sotiroska et al. (2019), and Robinos, Camilon & Sagudo (2024) define lifelong learning as an extensive range of educational fields catering to the needs of individuals of all ages, be it the young or the old, employed or unemployed. This type of learning comprises various formal, non-formal, and informal levels. It covers multiple fields such as coaching, basic skills, integration of information and communication technologies, investment efficiency, foreign language learning, lifelong guidance, system flexibility to make learning accessible to all, mobility, and civic education. Learning is a fascinating and intricate phenomenon beyond memorizing facts or acquiring new skills. According to Courtenay et al. (1998, p.102), learning can also trigger profound transformations in one's personality and worldview. This means that the process of learning is not only beneficial but also essential for personal growth and development.

Concerning this, the female management committee members stressed that their ability to learn and acquire knowledge throughout their lives has been a crucial factor in their success and progress in their current positions. They believe their dedication to lifelong learning has given them an edge in their field, allowing them to adapt to changes and challenges more effectively. FL 5 stated, *"I am willing to learn continuously for personal and professional development, and am flexible, wherein I can easily adapt to any situation."*

Education is a journey of self-discovery and personal growth, extending far beyond the walls of formal institutions. FL 6 and FL 2 articulate this truth, highlighting the value of hard work and self-improvement in strengthening leadership abilities, *"My strength as a leader lies in my hardworking nature, as I always strive to improve myself." "I make sure to attend to training and workshop, and one more thing finishing graduate school program really delivered."* Lifelong learners are blessed with a deeper understanding of their passions and purpose, leading to a life of greater fulfillment and meaning visible to these female leaders.

Theme 2: *Relational Leadership*

Findings have indicated that women in management committees embody relational leadership characteristics, prioritizing building relationships as a cornerstone of successful leadership. Sklaveniti's (2016) and Robinos et al. (2022) research revealed that as academia and industry experts delve further into the relational approach, their distinct philosophical viewpoints on leadership connections begin to surface. Nonetheless, one common consensus remains among them - leadership is not a solitary or detached endeavor but a cooperative and interdependent process that necessitates cultivating meaningful bonds between people.

Leadership involves more than just giving orders and assigning tasks. It is a complex set of social and relational processes involving establishing solid relationships with people above and below the leader's position. The effectiveness of these female leaders is primarily determined by their ability to manage these social and relational processes. Thus, interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in leadership. FL3 said, *"By approaching employees with a human touch, we can create a positive and productive work environment where everyone feels valued and supported."* FL2 even added, *"I always maintain a positive outlook to build and maintain good relationships."*

Female leaders establish a solid rapport with others and inspire trust, motivation, and guidance, enabling their teams to succeed. FL4 expressed this by saying, *"Learning to respond correctly will take much self-acceptance, and I do not have the monopoly of knowledge, but I should listen to what they are saying, maybe because they have a point. Sometimes, if my colleagues/subordinates have something to say, and if it involves them, I ask their opinion about the situation. I also learned that natural respect bestowed upon a leader is being earned, not gaining it right away; modeling is the key and showing respect to them as well."*

FL8 also mentioned, *"I maintain a professional demeanor, communicate effectively, and build strong relationships with colleagues, clients, and other stakeholders of the University."* The statements mentioned above was substantiated by FL 1 who said *"I imply that active listening, family-oriented work environment, responsiveness, and a sense of accountability. These are pivotal in every leader's ability to lead effectively, personally I sensed helped and led me to my present position in this university".* This highlights the significance of these leadership traits and their impact on these female leader's career progression.

B.   Common struggles and challenges encountered by female academic leaders as they thrive and aspire to attain higher management positions

Theme 3: *Gender Stereotyping*

According to Arvate et al., 2018, as cited in Sweat, 2020, historically, women have held prominent leadership positions; despite this, women are still underrepresented in leadership roles and face obstacles, including from other women, when occupying traditionally male-held positions. This disparity is due to assumptions of gender differences, biases, and discrimination against female leaders. They are evaluated based on their femininity, with criticism for being "weak," not being "manly enough," or "too feminine" when exhibiting traditional leadership traits (Sweat, 2020).

The study found that these female leaders face numerous hurdles due to gender stereotypes. According to Van Gils et al. (2018), female leaders tend to be judged more severely than male leaders when they make mistakes. In addition, women are frequently hired for more challenging and uncertain leadership roles compared to men, as reported by Haslam and Ryan (2008) and Rink et al. (2013). As a result, female leaders often encounter challenges in managing conflicting expectations; FL 4 revealed that being female leaders of the academe, they face challenges such as strategizing, meeting demands from the higher authority and colleagues/subordinates, and even meeting the students' expectations with that she said that "... *it is mentally draining to keep up with everyone's expectations and comparisons, to [be specific] male are expected to be better than female."*

Society often attributes agentic characteristics to men, including aggression, ambition, dominance, forcefulness, independence, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, and leadership. Meanwhile, communal characteristics, such as affection, helpfulness, kindness, sympathy, interpersonal sensitivity, nurturing, and gentleness, are typically associated with women (Koburtay et al., 2019). One of the most significant

impediments is the societal pressures placed upon them. FL 3 revealed, *"With the social demands of my current position, I am expected to identify and solve problems related to social aspects within the academe, such as employee relations, satisfaction, and public relations. I am also expected to be very aggressive in my job, make quick decisions, and be competitive to meet their expectations".* These accomplished women are expected to adhere to particular preconceptions about how females should behave.

As a result, it can be challenging for them to establish themselves as credible and exert their influence in a well-received manner by their colleagues and subordinates. FL 5 highlighted this when she stated, *"As a woman in my job, the social expectations placed upon me can be particularly challenging. I must be assertive and proactive in my approach. This means I must be confident in my abilities and not be afraid to speak up when necessary. It also means that I must be able to navigate potentially difficult situations with tact and professionalism. Sometimes, I still feel that stereotypes".* Thus, female leaders are expected to navigate characteristics of assertiveness.

Given the country's history of patriarchy and how evident it is even in the current system, one of the most common forms of discrimination is gender stereotyping, a preconceived notion, usually generalized, on members of a specific group or gender how they should act or behave and what characteristics they must manifest or acquire. A Philippine senator even metaphorically linked men's testicles with the prerequisite for presidential candidates, as leadership is commonly associated with masculine behavior - being assertive, decisive, and competitive (Wong, 2022). In short, it portrays bias and is oversimplified to the extent that although clear sets of evidence contradict them, they persist (Jones, 2022). Such biases are not inborn but learned through repeated interactions and observations in later life stages. FL 7 mentioned that people expect her to *"be assertive, logical, not to be emotional, and proactive…"* as a female leader, which she mentioned was very challenging. FL 1 also stated that *"male employees tend to test your disposition as a female boss in terms of consistency in decision-making activities"* and that *"male co-heads tend to have a gender bias to[wards] female department heads, that they have a weaker decision-making…"* therefore imposing that *"male administrators are more likely to be heard"* as stated by FL 2. Profeta (2017) supported this claim of women being under-represented in decision-making even though beneficial gains and effects are already evident.

Broader perspectives, increased creativity and innovation, and reduced conflicts with a diversified pool of talents are some of the effects of gender equality, especially women being well-represented in decision-making activities in an organization. In line with the role congruity theory, Eagley & Karau (2002) mentioned that incongruity leads to a less favorable view of women in leadership roles and devaluing behavior incorporated with the role when a woman fulfills it. Gender stereotypes establish the grounds for the incongruity that role congruity theory speaks about. Moreover, FL 2 added that *"female employees are typically assigned in clerical duties…"* strengthens the incongruence claim.

C.   Valuable learning and reflections that promote gender equity and equality in handling leadership and management functions in academic institutions

Theme 4: *Leadership is not gender-specific*
Knowing the Philippines' long history and relationship under Spain, traces of Western practices, specifically patriarchy, remain evident. Typical Filipino families still emanate the said culture. Men, in particular, are conditioned to be strong and aggressive, leading them to the idea that vulnerability is a sign of weakness (Smalzer, 2023). In the Philippines, leaders being tagged as "misogynistic" still filled the news and headlines. Santos (2018) reported that women are still targets of criticism and defamation in the Philippines (as cited in Mapoy et al., 2021). Furthermore, the former presidents of the Republic of the Philippines spoke about the slightest times the country had a female leader. Out of 17 presidents, including the present, only two were female, and the first female leader only came about the year 1986 up to 1992. The second female President came around 2001, 9 years after the first (Twentyfive, 2023).

Rather than sulking, the Filipinas used this opportunity to empower and prove themselves to the world. Mendoza (2022) exceeded her employer's expectations and delivered outstanding results when told that her boss prefers a male employee for the task (as cited in Gita-Carlos, 2022). In line with the study's findings, the female committee members believed that "leadership is not a question of gender." It is good to note that according to FL 7, *"discrimination on gender is no longer an issue. Men can speak their minds freely and make judgments. The same goes with women."* she even stated, *"As long as I can do it, I will do it. No gender preferences…"* which supports the notion above. The co-researchers strongly believed that even though the numbers are yet to speak, there are already movements and resolutions to address the issue of imbalance between genders. FL 6 said, *"I think the male generation nowadays are more open and sees the value/contribution of the female leaders in the academic institutions,"* FL 5 supported this by saying, *"I believe that men nowadays accept the modern role of women…".* Women are starting to voice out and become involved, which was described by FL 8's statement that *"It is about time for women to recognize that they are no longer oppressed…"* and FL 2's strategy of being *"more confident in expressing female viewpoints in any discussion…".*

Theme 5: ***Leaving No One Behind***
Collaboration has always been viewed as one of the essential aspects of the workplace, defined by the Cambridge Dictionary (2024) as "the situation of two or more people working together to create or achieve the same thing." A group or a team having a shared goal must have their members' actions synchronized with one another to produce valuable results. Miller (2019) and Robinos & Alcazaren (2023) support this statement and mention that collaboration is a fluid strategy that enforces communication and sharing of ideas and must happen simultaneously across a company to come up with their goals. FL 1 stressed: *"Understanding the importance of working together, regardless of your gender, is critical to the group's success, leading to desirable results such as high productivity, good employee retention, growth, and success".* The theme of Leaving No One Behind emerged through the co-researchers' collective answer of encouraging one another to promote the advocacy of gender equity and equality among its members.

Steve Jobs, founder and former CEO of Apple, strongly agrees that achievements in business are not achieved by one person but by a team (as cited by Miller, 2019). To highlight one of her best realizations as a female leader, FL 3 said *"effective collaboration is more than the delegation of tasks; it is instead the individual effort of each member to contribute to the group. It divides the workload among the whole team, leading to more accomplished tasks with quality results…."* The phrase "the whole is greater than the sum of its parts" is an excellent definition of the Gestalt school of thought with a strong belief in holism or the view of the totality of an aspect rather than its components (Cherry, 2022). *"Having the members communicate their actions with one another will result in a higher chance of success"* as stated by FL 2. Moreover, FL 8 stated that *"male lawmakers are casting their votes in support of policies promoting gender equality and equity,"* indicating that men are acknowledging the contribution of women in society, which was also strengthened by FL 5's statement that *"They [Men] cooperate and work together to provide better opportunities for women in the HEIs, and they no longer see themselves superior over women."*

Conclusions and Recommendations
The research proves that the female leaders currently in Management Committee positions have succeeded due to their unwavering strength as lifelong learners. This trait has enabled them to adapt to changes and challenges with unmatched agility and effectiveness. Therefore, the importance of hard work and self-improvement cannot be overstated when it comes to strengthening leadership abilities. Cote (2022) defined a growth mindset as an aspect that opens a person towards development and improvement, pushing oneself to its maximum potential. The female leaders leaned towards this kind of mindset in response to the discrimination within the organization. The report of Gita-Carlos (2022) supported this claim as female Filipino leaders were motivated to produce quality results and services in response to the disparity and imbalance of treatment between genders.

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Moreover, the study found that female leaders are relational leaders in contrast with the assertive and aggressive leadership employed by male leaders, where collaboration and cooperation between the organization's members must be established to reach the goal. Female leaders value connection and meaningful bonds with members of the group, which points out the belief that the success of a business is achieved by a team, leading to the theme of leaving no one behind. Female leaders view their members as vital and critical partners to achieve desirable results that involve more than task delegation but the management of the whole team. These results confirmed to the alluded career development theory, highlighting the importance of professional growth and healthy relationship towards workmates.

As for the challenges encountered, the female leaders experienced gender stereotyping, the most common and evident form of discrimination in the country. Two (2) of the critical findings of Oxfam Pilipinas and WAGI's research (2022) strongly correlate with the results of this study, stating that a) traditional gender norms of leadership role preference of males are still pervasive and b) workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation is still evident. Females are criticized as weak, insufficient, and not fit for leadership roles (Sweat, 2020) and are judged more often than males regarding mistakes (Van Gils et al., 2018). The study of Dovidio & Gaertner (2010) and Fiske (1998) pointed out three (3) aspects of biases that could occur distinctly from each other, namely: prejudice or emotional bias, stereotypes or cognitive bias, and discrimination or behavioral bias (cited by Worthy, Lavigne, & Romero, 2020). The female leaders exclaimed how such biases are still rampant, but even with various studies and reports of gender inequality and imbalance, the current study proved that female leaders could rise to the challenge and be on par with males through their own leadership and management style. These concepts add value to the mentioned role congruity theory, which emphasizes the relationship between gender and leadership roles. Female academic leaders are still regarded for feminine-related functions creating a little concern to gender stereotyping.

Given the demoralizing status of society and the prevalence of traditional gender norms, the study's results proved that challenges set the foundation as a source of "newfound motivation" among female leadership and became part of the pivotal process for gender equality and equity. The study also benefited the opposite gender, giving insights into the present barriers that hinder female leaders from achieving their maximum potential, which is critical to the achievement and success of an organization. The study's results propose the unification of both genders and a step towards the commission of traditional gender norms in society, hoping for its total eradication in the future.

In promoting inclusivity, gender equity, equality, and fairness, leaders should actively engage in personal and professional learning and growth opportunities. Management should provide opportunities for all to grow throughout their career journeys. In addition, academic institutions should review policies that hinder gender equity in the workplace and school organizations. Leadership roles, regardless of gender, should be thoughtfully given to deserving individuals. Rethink and recalibrate systems such as practices that support diverse talents for all. Equal and just opportunities with an open-minded work-and-school atmosphere create an environment of academic excellence and a school culture of quality. Moreover, all employees should engage in activities that support organizations with the same goal, maximizing their curiosity and promoting unique ideas that do not promote discrimination. Organizational leaders, specifically the Gender and Development Committee, should establish and implement significant programs to help achieve gender equity and equality. Academe should institute a collaborative and inclusive environment that fosters diversity, productivity, inclusivity, and creativity. By doing so, leadership skills can be enhanced, and overall team efficiency can be promoted. For further research, consider comparative studies of schools with more male academic managers and the assessment of the implemented initiatives in promoting gender equity and equality.

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