

Empowering Jordanian Women as Leaders in Higher Education: The Case of the Hashemite University

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Abstract: In higher education, women have made great gains and are now earning more degrees than men. But women still trail in top academic leadership. The aim of this study was to shed light on empowering Jordanian women as leaders at the Hashemite University (HU) in Zarqa, Jordan by exploring the relationship and the impact of the leadership on perceptions of Barriers to Woman's Empowerment (BWES), Psychological Empowerment (PEM) and Administrative Creativity (AC). The present study was based on small convenience sample and on usage data collected through survey self-reports. The study sample consisted of 51 academic women faculty staff members, 26 of whom obtain currently or previously leadership positions and 25 who had never taken a position before and all these present (46.8%) of the original study population (No = 106) which includes all PhD female academics and candidates for holding a leadership position at the (HU). The study results revealed the existence of a statistically significant negative relation between the perceptions of (BWES), Psychological Empowerment (PEM) and Administrative Creativity (AC) and a statistically significant positive relationship between (PEM) and creativity (AC). It was also found that the Barriers to Woman's Empowerment was the best predictor of the (PEM) levels among women leaders and that 55% of the variance in PEM was due to unique contribution of this variable. There were also statistically significant differences between the two study groups on (BWES), (PEM) and (AC), measures in favor of those who held leadership positions at the university either currently or previously. Based on these results, it can be concluded that the HU Model of woman empowerment had an impact and value among those women who benefit from taking leadership positions by eliminating their perceptions of explicit gender bias and barriers stand in the face of women in higher education and through improving and enhancing their sense of psychological empowerment and ability to be innovative. Practical implications and recommendations for future research are presented and discussed.

Key words: Jordanian women's empowerment, leadership, barriers perceptions, psychological empowerment, creativity, The Hashemite University, Jordan

INTRODUCTION

Increasing numbers of women have gained access to universities and the college teaching profession worldwide. However, women continue to be underrepresented in academic, research and leadership positions. Empowerment of academic women to become leaders in Higher Education (HE) means giving them the power to think, the chance to act freely, a sense of self-confidence, ability to believe in their capability to make required changes as equal to male leaders in higher education. Empowerment of women as leaders in Higher Education (HE) is a gender issue facing all women leaders in societies around the globe to some lesser or

greater degree as well as in Jordan (AL-Qudah and Trawneh, 2011). Even women in higher education have made great gains and are now earning more degrees than men but women still trail in top academic leadership they are underrepresented among the ranks of tenured faculty and full professors who wield much of the power to hire and tenure colleagues as well as to prioritize areas of research. Many women still hold the view that they are not capable of accomplishing and excelling in society and the workplace (Smith, 2005) which could be the main reason why women are not occupying leadership positions. Despite women having worked their way into leadership positions, gender imbalance in Higher Education (HE) is a global concern with progress towards

equity very slow and uneven (Odhiambo, 2011). The American Association of University Professors (AAUP), the leading association of faculty in the US, noted in 2006 that “even though women faculty member’s achievements in higher education have enormously increased, empowering women in higher education is still incomplete” (Al-Ghamdi, 2016). The main purpose of this study is to provide information about empowering Jordanian women as leaders at Hashemite University (HU) by exploring the relationship among leadership, perceptions of Barriers to Woman’s Empowerment (BWES), Psychological Empowerment (PEM) and Administrative Creativity (AC) and the impact of the leadership on these study variables. This study contributes to knowledge of gender-based leadership and female empowerment into leadership positions in the higher education sector in Jordan. The increasing enrolment of women at all levels in various aspects of life in Jordan, especially in leadership position has resulted in the need of understanding the challenges encountered by these women and how these challenges are related to other variables.

Theoretical framework and previous research

Women’s empowerment in higher education:

Empowerment is an interdisciplinary construct heavily grounded in the theories of community psychology. Higher Education is one of the most important means of empowering women with the knowledge, skills and self-confidence necessary to participate fully in the development process. Higher education provides opportunities to women to fulfill their needs. The concept of empowerment is understood at its core definition as the progression of moving from a weak position to a higher position of executing power (Al-Rousan, 2014). Empowerment in its wide perspective is based on three dimensions, namely, empowering management practices, empowered individuals and empowering working environment (Spreitzer, 1995). Researchers generally divide the concept of empowerment into two types: relational or Administrative Empowerment (AEM) and Psychological Empowerment (PEM). Burke *et al.* (2006) and Cornwall and Perlman (1990) view empowerment as sharing power and authority (a relational perspective) while definitions by Randolph (1995) and Conger and Kanungo (1988) view empowerment as a motivational construct (a psychological perspective).

Some scholars argue that both aspects are combined for a most thorough understanding of the concept since, the (PEM) is resulted by (AEM). Administrative empowerment is described as top-down processing (Conger and Kanungo, 1988) and the access to organizational structures within the work environment by

means of lines of communication, resources, support and information, all of which provide employees with opportunities to share in the decision-making processes as well as helping in resource control and job growth (Kanter, 1989). It is the belief that empowerment occurs when higher levels within a hierarchy share power with lower levels within the same hierarchy (Spreitzer, 1997). On the other hand, the psychological perspective of empowerment focuses on the employee’s perception of empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995, 1997; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Researchers studying psychological empowerment, maintain that empowerment is achieved only when psychological states produce a perception of empowerment within the employee (Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998; Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997). Quinn and Spreitzer (1997) asserted that one perspective of empowerment is not necessarily better than the other. They propose that a possible reason why empowerment programs fail is because company decision makers are divided on how they perceive the best way to empower employees, utilizing either the relational or the psychological approach. It is suggested that, to develop a truly empowering program, elements must be drawn from both perspectives.

Psychological empowerment and administrative

creativity: Psychological empowerment which is the main focus of the current study is defined as the process of improving the feelings of self-efficacy within an organization’s members and that emphasizes enhanced task motivation, being expressed through the four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination and impact (Spreitzer, 1995). Spreitzer (1995) developed her four component model of PEM that measures an employee’s sense of meaning, competence, self-determination and impact. Spreitzer (1995) defines meaning to be when an individual perceives a connection between their job and their own personal standards (Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). Meaning occurs when one’s job tasks and one’s personal values, beliefs and behaviors possess a degree of fit (Brief and Nord, 1990). Competence is an individual’s belief that he/she possesses the ability to perform necessary activities. Self-determination is defined as an individual’s perception of choice in the tasks that he/she undertakes (Deci *et al.*, 1989). Impact is the amount of influence a person feels he/she has on certain work outcomes. These four components or states (Spreitzer, 1995) cites as being necessary for empowerment interventions to be effective.

Widespread interest in psychological empowerment comes at a time when global competition and change require employee initiative innovation and performance

(Drucker, 1988). Creative behavior is defined as behavior that results in identifying original and better ways to accomplish some purpose (Amabile, 1988) and developing solutions to job-related problems that are judged as both novel and appropriate for the situation (Shalley, 1995). Experimental studies have shown strong associations between the empowerment practices described by Bowen and Lawler (1992) and leadership creativity or Administrative Creativity (AC). This includes encouraging creative and actual creative behavior. Bowen and Lawler (1992) in their search about empowerment programs in private enterprises noted that many of these programs fail when they focus only on sharing power and power without redistributing information, knowledge and rewards. Effective use of empowerment involves managers sharing with their employees four organizational components: information on the performance of the organization, rewards based on the performance of the organization, knowledge that enables workers to understand and contribute to organizational performance and authority to make decisions that affect direction and organizational performance (Bowen and Lawler, 1992). These four elements interact with each other, leading to a multiplicative rather than additive effect on performance. The granting of authority and discretion delegated to employees is very important to stimulate creativity because it provides self-government to act in accordance with new and innovative ways that move away from the standard work procedures (Fernandez and Moldogaziev, 2011).

Barriers to women empowerment in higher education:

Barriers to leadership opportunities are a global phenomenon where women when compared to men are disproportionately concentrated in lower-level and lower-authoritative leadership positions (Northouse, 2015). Women in HE to this day, struggle to find their voices and positions within male-dominated professional cultures (Jones and Palmer, 2011) but women still face numerous obstacles and barriers to obtaining administrative positions in academic institutions. Some of them are internal whereas others are external. Internal barriers originate from the women themselves including choice, aspirations and mentor relationships. Lack of mentoring is an important barrier that faces women in HE and stands in their way to reach leadership positions. Mentoring is among the factors identified as contributing to the success of female professionals and managers (Arifeen, 2010). The presence of mentors may reduce job stress as women may not have a peer group to rely on for psychological support. Salah *et al.* (2017) indicated that

the most leadership challenges faced by Jordanian women are organizational networks and interpersonal relationships. Conversely, external barriers are derived from outside forces over which women have no control. These are comprised of family obligations, bias and discrimination of all types, social expectation and stereotyping, lack of administrative experiences, corporate practices and the tenure clock. External biases against women diminish the contributions educated women can make as leaders which is further complicated by a lack of mentor relationships from other women a two-pronged void. Women using career advancement strategies such as being proactive and asking for more opportunities, become disappointed when they are advanced less or receive slower pay growth than their male counterparts. More frustrating to women is the realization that they lag men in level and power even though they are using the same advancement strategies as the men to get ahead (Carter and Silva, 2011). Family responsibility, namely children, create a barrier for women to progress to senior management positions (Wood and Newton, 2006). Women are less likely than men to be associated with leadership and the awareness of this stereotype may undermine women's performance in leadership tasks (Latu *et al.*, 2013). Society has specific views of what women's roles should be and their role in the wider society. Bergeron *et al.* (2006) argue there is a continued belief that when people think of a manager, they immediately assume it is a male, resulting in women's level of competency in these positions being subject to questioning and viewed as less effective managers than men. Brannon *et al.* (2016) suggests that female roles carry over the workplace atmosphere which can create a certain stereotyped and sexualized atmosphere. Stereotypes of women leaders within the workplace result in making women perceived as less favorable than equivalent male leaders because by fulfilling expectations concerning leadership these violate conventions concerning appropriate female behaviors.

Eagly and Carli (2007) asserted that gender stereotypes and prejudices are major obstacles in women's ascent to the institutions heights, with judgments of competence, aptitude and intrinsic leadership ability often stacked against women as well as charges of uneven treatment and performance appraisal. A study conducted by Jogulu (2010) between males and females, highlights that women scored higher in being better leaders than men in their tests. The fact was underlined that women have always had a desire to lead but have been considerably handicapped and politically, economically and socially restricted. In organizations and institutions, working long hours is an indication of being

ambitious and committed. Liff and Ward (2001) suggest that mothers and young wives find this a challenge because as much as they take their careers seriously, they have to make time for their families including children and husbands (Eagly and Carli, 2007). Also, one of the barriers that have been recognized to prevent women from ascending to senior management positions has been described by the metaphor “the glass ceiling”. The “glass ceiling” represents a hidden difficulty for women and other minority groups which prevents them from moving into senior management (Weyer, 2007). The general-case glass ceiling hypothesis states that not only is it more difficult for women than for men to be promoted up levels of authority hierarchies within workplaces but also that the obstacles women face relative to men become greater as they move up the hierarchy (Akpinar-Sposito, 2013). The glass ceiling is a concept that most frequently refers to barriers faced by women who attempt to attain senior positions in corporations, government, education and nonprofit organizations (Akpinar-Sposito, 2013).

Appelbaum *et al.* (2003) prove that female employees find the work environment unwelcoming and very threatening, due to cultures that are dominating it directly or indirectly, discriminating against females. Oakley (2000) points out that these invisible barriers for women include corporate practices such as training and career development, promotion policies and compensation practices. Even when in higher positions, women have to keep proving themselves as capable leaders. Curry (2000) ascertains that women who ascend into higher leadership levels, must often contend with culturally engrained views of self-assurance and confidence as unacceptable female qualities.

Jordanian women at higher education institutions: A closer look at the situation of Jordan in terms of women’s participation in the labor force and their representation in the upper levels of the academic pyramid or the institutional hierarchy reveals an even worse condition comparing to the rest of the world. According to The Global Gender Gap Report 2016, Jordan ranked the 141th in the Gender Equality List out of 193 countries around the world. Moreover, the participation of Jordanian women in the parliament stood at 12% (Anonymous, 2016a, b). Also, the results of a recent study (Al-Mashagbeh, 2015) revealed a decline in the percentage of female university staff members in Jordanian universities, reflecting the lack of empowerment and adequate representation of Jordanian women in the higher education sector. This further is a logical reflection of the same daunting problem which can be easily

detected in various national sectors today. Moreover, the results of the field study conducted by the Jordanian Ministry of Public Sector Development (Anonymous, 2015) at the beginning of 2015 showed that female employees in the public sector account for 44.95% of total employees. However, this percentage declined to 29% of the total number of employees holding leadership and supervisory positions. The lowest percentage of women representation was in leadership positions at (Assistant Secretary General/Assistant Managing Director/Head of Department) levels where women held 6.73% in total. In the light of this study, it has been found that there are challenges standing in the face of women’s empowerment and advancement towards supervisory and leadership positions. One of these obstacles is the lack of sufficient opportunities for women to enroll in training and capacity building programs to compete for senior leadership positions in the government (Anonymous, 2015).

Women as leaders at higher education institutions in Jordan: Despite the absence of data on the number of women working in various locations and fields at universities as such data has not yet been collected, Jordanian women contribute well to universities in Jordan. The statistics of higher education in Jordan for the academic year 2014-2015, issued by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, confirmed that the number of male and female members of faculties in the different public and private universities in Jordan reached 10,675 of whom 2,836 were women with a percentage of 26.5% (Anonymous, 2016a, b). According to women faculty members at Jordanian universities distribution by educational degree, it is found that 1,424 of them hold a doctorate (PhD) degree, making up 17.3% of the total PhD holders from both genders (No = 8.231) working in academia and 1,231 hold master’s degree, making up 56.9% of the total master’s degree holders from both genders (No = 2.163) working in academia. Statistics also show that 8 women hold higher diplomas and 173 women hold bachelor degrees (Anonymous, 2016a, b) (Table 1). In accordance to women faculty members at Jordanian universities distribution by specialization it is found that 530 of whom work in the field of literature, 334 in educational sciences, 331 in engineering, 281 in commerce and business, 211 in information technology, 199 in natural sciences, 199 in pharmaceutical sciences, 187 in nursing while the rest are distributed among various fields of education (Anonymous, 2016a, b) (Table 1).

On the other hand, Jordan has witnessed progress in the last few decades in the field of female education and gender equality. Female education is one of the most important social rights and a significant indicator of

Table 1: Numbers of women faculty members in various Jordanian public and private universities according to educational degree and specialization

Variables	Values	Percentage
Gender		
Males	7839	73.50
Females	2836	26.50
Grand total	10675	100.00
Academic degree/females		
PhD	1424	50.20
Master's	1231	43.40
High diploma	8	0.28
Bachelor's	173	6.00
Grand total	2836	100.00
Major/females		
Literature	530	18.60
Educational sciences	334	11.80
Engineering	331	11.60
Economics and administrative science	281	9.90
Information technology	211	7.40
Natural science	199	7.00
Pharmaceutical sciences	199	7.00
Nursing	187	6.60
Total	2272	80.10
Others	564	19.90
Grand total	2836	100.00

equality between men and women towards sustainable community development. Higher education statistics for the academic year 2010/2010 (Anonymous, 2016a, b) revealed higher female enrollment rates in higher education institutions of various levels than males. The ratio of females to males at the university education level was 104 (F): 100 (M) students while the ratio of female to male students enrolled in intermediate colleges (community/junior Colleges) was 137 (F): 100(M). In regard to higher education programs, females constitute 51.3% of the total number of students enrolled in the bachelor's degree program (Anonymous, 2008). Moreover, female enrollments account for 56.1% in Liberal arts colleges and 43.4% in sciences colleges. In respect to post-graduate studies, females form 61.3% of higher diploma students, 42.7% of Master's students and 30.2% of doctoral students (Anonymous, 2017a, b). Also, according to 2016 Statistical Report, 4.6 million of Jordan's populations are females, constituting 47%. As for higher education, female enrollment in Jordanian universities was 51.8% against 48.2% for males in 2015. Statistics indicate that there is a tendency in female students towards enrollment in theoretical colleges with 55.3% of total enrollments while scientific colleges attract 47.9% of female students. Female graduates from higher education formed 55% compared to 45% for males (Anonymous, 2017a, b).

The Hashemite University (HU): The Hashemite University (HU) is the fifth state university based in Zarqa in Jordan. With approximately 23,000 students, the HU is

the best choice for higher education in Jordan and one of the best 300 universities in the BRICS and Emerging Economies list, positioning itself as the third best university in Jordan (Ibanez, 2017). Specifically, Hashemite University and other two Jordanian universities (The Jordan University of Science and Technology and the University of Jordan) were recently listed in the Times Higher Education World University Ranking of 2016-2017 (Ibanez, 2017). As a University of many specializations, HU prioritizes the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring its academic staff possesses the highest possible qualification. The HU University's Council of Deans, chaired by the Provost presently consists of 23 members in total. Of the 23 members, 15 members are male and only 8 members are females. Another interesting insight showed on the HU website is the profiles of the Board of Trustee team which is made up of 13 members of which eleven are male.

According to the prevalence of women in Hashemite University it is noteworthy that the percentage of academic women in the HU is close to one-third of the total members of the academic body, the number and percentage of females reach to (No = 196, 28.6%) of the total faculty members (No = 686, 100%) while male members total (No = 490, 71.4%). It should also be noted that the number and percentage of female members in the administrative staff which totals (No = 947, 100%) reach to (No = 343, 36.2%) while males represent (No = 604, 64.8%). Female students account for (No = 19708, 61.7%) while male students represent (No = 12220, 38.3%) of the total number of male and female students in the HU (No = 31928, 100%) at the bachelor and postgraduate level. In an unprecedented phenomenon and in a view to ascertain actual academic women empowerment practice, the Professor Dr. Kamal Eddin Bani Hani, HU President, launched an initiative whereby female contribution and representation in the Board of Deans which is composed of the President, 3 Vice-Presidents and 20 (No = 20, 100%) Deans of which (No = 15) represent the academic deanship and (No = 5) form the administrative deanship have been increased from 4-8 (40%). Furthermore, there are five female, non-academic administrative staff members filling high-level management positions and holding Director Title (Table 2). This indicates the presence and representation of women in the academic, leadership and research areas. The distribution of female academicians at HU based on the educational degree is as follows: Doctorate (No = 106, 54%) and Master's (No = 90, 45%). Therefore, the number of candidates to fill leadership and administrative positions is limited to 106 faculty members. On the other hand, the number and percentage of female academicians who are currently

Table 2: Numbers and percentages of women who are currently filling leadership positions during the academic year 2016/2017 and previous academic years at the HU

Position years						Non-academic		
	Dean	Vice dean	Assistant dean	Head of department	Director	Grand total	females	Grand total
2016/2017	8 (38.1%)	0	7 (33.3%)	6 (28.6%)	0	21	5	26
Previous years	7 (20%)	4 (11.4%)	4 (11.4%)	19 (54.8%)	1 (2.8%)	35	0	35
Grand total	15	4	11	25	1	56	5	61
Percentage	26.8%	7.1%	19.6%	44.6%	1.8	100%	-	-

filling administrative positions at the top of the leadership pyramid for the academic years 2016/2017 totals (No = 21, 100%), distributed on the following positions: Dean (No = 8.38%); Assistant Dean (No = 7, 33.3%); Head of Department (No = 6, 28.6%). The total of female academicians who held administrative positions at the top of the leadership pyramid during the past academic years was (No = 35), distributed as follows: Dean (No = 7, 20%); Vice Dean (No = 4, 11.4%); Assistant Dean (No = 4, 11.4%); Head of Department (No = 19; 54.8%) and Center Director (No = 1, 2.8%) (Table 2).

Considering the above-described scenario and scene, it is important to examine the status of academic women empowerment in Jordanian higher education institutions, represented by the pioneering Hashemite University experience with empowering academic women as leaders. As such, this study aims at reviewing the outcomes of the Hashemite University's experience in empowering academic women and identifying the outcomes of this experience and the challenges and obstacles that may face the Jordanian female academician in her attempt to fulfill her leadership role or the struggle she undergoes during her journey towards or while in leadership role.

Empowering women as leaders in HU: The Hashemite University's mission to advance women has seen in the implementation of various policies to ensure fairness and equality such as assigning academic women in top-level leadership positions, providing women with leadership skills training programs with the aim to empower women and achieve equity in the workplace through equal opportunities. Intentional and great efforts that have taken place in HU to empower women had focused primarily on providing a number of academic women with leadership positions. Women were chosen into leadership positions based on their qualification not on gender. These efforts were supported and enhanced by ensuring availability, selection and opportunities to women with qualities commonly linked with leadership such as: effective communication skills, task completion, responsibility, problem solving, originality, decision making, vision, self-awareness, confidence, experience and power. The presidency at HU facilitates five fundamental practices of exemplary leadership

(Kouzes and Posner, 2002) which are, Challenge the process, inspire a shared vision, enable others to act, model the way and encourage the heart. A great character is important for a leader and also to be able to model and influence followers. In HU when we look at leaders at the top of administrative ladder such as Prof. Kamal Bani-Hani a gastrointestinal surgeon, the Hashemite University current President and previous dean of faculty of medicine at HU who took and adopted the initiative of woman empowerment in HU, we found that he can be described as a charismatic leader who has a powerful presence, remarkable endurance, determination, a visionary who focused on the mission beyond himself intelligent, courageous, dynamic forward looking inspiring with broad-minded and good decision-maker (Rey, 2005). This initiative of woman empowerment in HU is based on model of transformational leadership which is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in followers, with the end-goal of developing followers into leaders. According to Bass and Riggio (2006) transforming leadership is a process in which leaders and followers help each other to advance to a higher level of morale and motivation. In this type of leadership, roles of employees and task requirements are clarified, followers are rewarded positively and negatively, depending on their performance (Kreitner and Kinicki, 2008). This illustrates exactly the situation of women who have benefited from this initiative in HU they gained in leadership self-efficacy, personal mastery and self-esteem and decreases in perceived constraints.

In the higher education sector there is less visibility of women in leadership positions, especially in key leadership positions. Although, women earn the majority of university degrees in Jordan and worldwide, yet they're still underrepresented in top positions. Women constitute slightly more than quarter (26.5%) of the higher education workforce in Jordan and they are still under-represented in senior positions (Anonymous, 2016a, b). However, deliberate efforts to empower women in higher education institutions and strengthen its potential and confidence in its own authority are still dormant in many higher education institutions at the local and global levels. One study (Burke *et al.*, 2006) found that while women make

up half of the work force in developed countries these days there are still visible glass ceiling effects that keep women from moving into middle-and senior-level, leadership positions such as long working hours and male-dominated networks which could in particular be the reason for the under-representation of women in the higher education sector. In HU women constitute slightly more than third (No = 196, 28.6%) of the total academic staff members (No = 686). Jordan lacks studies that address the reality of practicing women's empowerment in leadership positions in higher education institutions and their experience in their leadership role in terms of psychological empowerment, administrative creativity and their perceptions of the obstacles facing women accordingly.

The aim of this study is to analyze the outcomes of empowering Jordanian women as leaders at the Hashemite University (HU). This study served to expand the knowledge base in educational research by providing data from Jordanian women leaders who reported about these obstacles and their leadership roles outcomes. By recognizing and incorporating women's empowerment outcomes, the leadership system may bring major changes in higher education in Jordan. The outcome of this study may enable higher education administrators to understand important issues about empowering the academic women as leaders and will encourage them to deliberately start to exert specific efforts and policies to facilitate women empowerment as leaders in their institutions as what is happening in Hashemite University. This study aim will be achieved through answering the study's main question "What is the situation of the empowerment of Jordanian women in leadership positions at the Hashemite University as a model for the empowerment of women in a Jordanian university with regard to the obstacles that impede empowerment and the level of psychological empowerment and administrative creativity" and the primary objective of this study was to measure the impact of empowering women in HU to leadership positions. The present study addresses the following questions:

Question 1: What is the predictive power of Barriers to women's empowerment and administrative creativity on the psychological empowerment among women leaders in HU (No = 26)?

Question 2: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of barriers to women's empowerment between the two groups (Leaders; not-leaders) of Academic Women in HU (No = 51)?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a quantitative methodology to gain substantial information from participants to determine their perceptions of barriers to women empowerment and psychological empowerment and Creativity. A non-experimental research design is used to obtain perceptions of cross-sectional of faculty members at Fink (2003) explained that the aim of non-experimental research is to compare two or more groups without a manipulation of the situation or experience of the participants. Questionnaires were used as measuring instrument for this quantitative study. Data collection based on the questionnaire which consists of two parts, personal information about the respondents and in terms of current leadership state. The second part deals with the three main measures of the study: Barriers to women's empowerment, psychological empowerment and administrative creativity. Perceived barriers, psychological empowerment and creativity were dichotomized into high and low groups using the median split technique in preparation for a t-tests analysis to test differences across groups, multivariable logistic regression controlling for study group characteristics (i.e., age, leadership type) to investigate the association among the perceived barriers BWES, PEM and ACS. Pearson's correlation investigated the associations between BWES, PEM and ACS. A type, i error rate of $p < 0.05$ was used throughout. The study population consisted of all the academic female faculties (No = 106) at HU in Jordan which includes all PhD academics and candidates in future for leadership position at HU. A convenient sample with total of 51 academic women leaders (No = 26) and not leaders (No = 25) participated in this study (for a response rate of 46.8%). Participants according to leadership positions were distributing on two groups, those held leadership positions were called leaders (group 1: No = 26, 51.0%) who were either Dean (No = 9, 34.6); Vice Dean (No = 3, 11.5%); Dean Assistant (No = 9, 34.6); Head of Department (No = 2, 7.7%) or Director (No = 3, 11.5%) and those who were not-leaders (group 2, No = 25, 49.0%). Majority of participants (No = 37, 72.5) were in the age group (51-60 years) and the rest (No = 14, 27.5%) in the two age groups (41-50 and above 61 years). Based on study targets, The Barriers to Women Empowerment BWES scale were applied for the two study groups (No = 51) while the Psychological Empowerment (PEM) and Administrative Creativity (AC) scales were applied only for leaders group (No = 26). The tools of the study were applied to all target faculty members who responded

to the invitation of the researchers through e-mail or the university web-page and whether by urging them through college administration or personal communication. A pilot study with 20 faculty staff was initially conducted to test and obtain the psychometric properties of the tools of study tools for the final study. Three instruments of Barriers to Woman Empowerment Scale (BWES), Psychological Empowerment Scale (PEM) and the Administrative Creativity Scale (ACS) in addition to the demographic sheet were used to collect the data in this study.

Barriers to Woman Empowerment Scale (BWES). This scale was developed and designed to identify the most important family, social obstacles and those related to administrative leadership experience and social relations. The scale should take no longer than 5-10 min to complete. The scale consists of 30 items of self-report measuring the multi-dimensional component of barriers to empowerment, consisting of four sub-scales as follows: Barriers of family (10 items, scores range 10-20), Social (5 items, scores range 5-10), leadership experience (7 items, scores range 7-14) and social and academic relations (8 items, scores range 8-16). Response options were ranged from one (1 = Does not apply to me) to 2 (2 = Apply to me) or total scores range from 30-60 with a higher score indicating a stronger endorsement with the existence of barriers. In the current study internal consistency reliability at the (BWES) total scale level had an alpha of 0.90. At the subscale level, Family Barriers had an alpha of 0.89, Social had an alpha of 0.86, leadership experience had an alpha of 0.87 and Social and Academic Relations 0.83. Average three-week test-retest reliability coefficient for (BWES) scale was 0.91.

Psychological Empowerment scale (PEM). Psychological empowerment was measured using 12 items PEM scale from Spreitzer (1995) based on four dimensions, namely meaning, competence, autonomy and impact. The Spreitzer (1995)'s PEM scale was translated and adapted to be used in many studies in Arab environments such as Al Ghamdi (2016). PEM scale, comprising four 3-item sub-scales (total 12 items, total scores range 12-72), taps the empowerment four dimensions of: Meaning, Competence, Self-determination and Impact. The response scale was a 6 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). The higher scores indicate the perception of being more psychologically empowered. The internal consistency coefficients reliability at the (PEM) total scale was 0.90 and for the four sub-scales (meaning 0.88, competence 0.78, self-determination 0.81, impact 0.89).

Administrative Creativity Scale (ACS). Administrative creativity was measured using 13-items from Zhou and George (2001). This scale was translated and adapted to be used in many studies in Arab environments. Creativity is defined as "the production of novel and useful ideas in any domain". Respondents were asked to rate their beliefs about some of the creative practices on a 6 point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). Total 13 items scores range 13-78, the higher scores indicate the perception of being more creative. The internal consistency coefficients reliability at the (PEM) total scale was 0.92. Also, these two scales are in the public domain. Therefore, they may be used without copyright permission. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 12.0, 2006). Descriptive statistics were used to generate means, standard deviations and frequencies for a list of variables. In addition, research questions were tested by employing correlations, multiple regressions, t-tests and one way ANOVA. Additionally, for the best type I error control (Preacher *et al.*, 2007) continuous independent and dependent variables were assessed for homogeneity of variance and normality values. Results indicated values of skewness and kurtosis in acceptable ranges that do not exceed the value of (1.00) (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

Furthermore, George and Mallery (2006) stressed that the reliability of measurement of the scales was imperative to the implementation of the regression analysis. Table 3 presented mean, standard deviations, skewness and kurtosis and Cronbach's alpha (α) of the main variables in this study for the study sample (No = 51) and academic women leaders (No = 26). Additionally, the issue of linear dependency between the predictor variables was not to use two variables one of which was partially dependent upon the other (George and Mallery, 2006). In this study, Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to assess the linear dependency between the predictor and criterion variables. Table 4 demonstrated the Pearson correlation matrix for the main variables in this study that will be described throughout this section. All significance tests were two-tailed.

Scores on the BWES among academic women leaders at HU were negatively correlated with the PEM ($R = -0.724, p < 0.01$) and the ACS ($R = -0.639, p < 0.01$). A positive significant correlation was observed between scores on the PEM and ACS ($R = 0.772, p < 0.01$). Table 4 shows that, although, the correlations between the three variables in question exhibit statistically significant relationships these values were high-moderate (except for PEM with BWES and ACS) thus indicating relatively

Table 3: Descriptive statistics BWES for overall study sample (No = 51) and on the three study measures for only leaders (No = 26) homogeneity of variance and normality values

Scales	Mean	SD	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's alpha(α)
Study sample (No = 51)						
Barriers to Woman Empowerment Scale (BWES) 1-2 (30-60)	43.63 (1.508)	7.25	27.02	0.214	-1.120	0.909
Leaders (No = 26)						
Barriers to Woman Empowerment Scale (BWES) 1-2 (30-60)	39.45 (1.364)	6.14	25.02	0.666	0.456	0.808
Psychological Empowerment scale (PEM) 1-6 (12-72)	50.57 (4.715)	11.98	41.04	0.581	-1.190	0.901
Administrative Creativity Scale (ACS)1-6 (13-78)	53.17 (4.681)	8.02	31.04	0.688	0.656	0.927

Table 4: The Pearson correlation matrix for the main variables for only leaders (No = 26)

Variables	1	2	3
Barriers to Woman Empowerment Scale (BWES)	-		
Psychological Empowerment Scale (PEM)	-0.724**	-	
Administrative Creativity Scale (ACS)	-0.639**	0.772**	-

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

minimal overlap between scales. In general, correlations >0.80 between independent variables are regarded as problematic (Berry and Feldman, 1985; Cohen, 1990). Inter-correlations among total score BWES, PEM and the ACS, approach this mark ranging from (0.63-0.77). Guidelines for the interpretation of multicollinearity statistics suggest that the tolerance statistic should be >0.20 and the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) should be >5 to satisfy the condition of independent predictors (Tabachnick and Fidell, 2001).

Analyses revealed that the tolerance statistic and VIF were adequate for all of the predictor variables (i.e., variable tolerances ranging from 0.48-0.61 and Variation Inflation Factors (VIF) ranging from 1.55-1.89) indicating that all variables were unique predictors and the regression models were robust.

RESULTS

In this study analysis of the results of research questions will be presented. The following subsections provide analysis of results of study questions testing at leadership group levels.

Question 1: What is the predictive power of Barriers to women's empowerment and administrative creativity on the psychological empowerment among women leaders in HU (No = 26)? As shown in Table 5 the full model containing the two predictors did predict a significant portion 59% of variance in total score PEM ($R = 0.77$, $R^2 = 0.59$, $F 2.23 = 17.15$, $p < 0.000$).

However, total score ACS made no significant contributions to the equation beyond total score of BWES. When this variable (ACS) dropped from the

Table 5: Regression analysis for variables predicting total score of Psychological Empowerment Scale (PEM) (No = 26)

Predictors	R	R ²	f-values	β	t-values
Full model	0.774	0.599	17.148**	-	-
BWES	-	-	-	-0.638	-0.592**
ACS	-	-	-	0.242	1.608
Restricted model	0.744	0.553	29.743**	-	-
BWES	-	-	-	-0.802	-5.454**

Barriers to Woman Empowerment Scale (BWES); Administrative Creativity Scale (ACS) ** $p < 0.01$; * $p < 0.05$

equation, total score of BWES still predict nearly same amount 55% of variance in total score PEM ($R = 0.74$, $R^2 = 0.55$, $F 1, 24 = 29.743$, $p < 0.000$).

Question 2: Is there a significant difference in the perceptions of barriers to women's empowerment between the two groups (Leaders; Not-leaders) of academic women in HU (No = 51)? In order to answer this question, the means of the total BWES and the four dimensions of BWES scores were compared according to two groups of academic women in HU: 1. Leaders (No = 26); 2. Not leaders (No = 25). Thus, t-tests were performed to compare the differences in the average perceptions of Barriers to Women's Empowerment (BWES) between the two groups (No = 51).

Table 6 data indicate that there exist significant differences in the average of the four dimensions of BWES Sub-scales: familial; societal; administrative and academic relations scores and total score of perceptions of barriers to women's empowerment, between academic women: leaders (No = 26) and not-leaders (No = 25) favor of the leader group. A t-test of independent samples comparison of means also show significant differences.

Table 4 shows significant differences in the average perceptions of Familial, Societal, Administrative, academic relations barriers and TOT BWES scores between leaders and not-leaders; $t(1, 49) = 4.2$, $p < 0.01$, 2.6, $p < 0.05$; 4.9, 5.2, $p < 0.01$, respectively. In this case, leaders ($M = 11.9$, $SD = 2.8$, 5.1, $SD = 1.2$; 8.7, $SD = 1.5$, 9.7, $SD = 1.4$ and 39.4, $SD = 6.1$), respectively have lower average perceptions of Barriers to Women Empowerment regarding their work than not-leaders ($M = 14.6$, $SD = 1.7$, 5.9, $SD = 1.2$, 10.7, $SD = 1.3$, 11.5, $SD = 1.6$ and 47.9, $SD = 5.6$).

Table 6: Mean, standard deviations, t-tests and p-values of responses in the four dimensions of Barriers to Women’s Empowerment Scale (BWES) between the two groups of academic women: leaders (No = 26) and not-leaders (No = 25)

Items	Academic women group				t-values	Sig.
	Leaders		Not-leaders			
	M	SD	M	SD		
Familial barriers (10 items, scores range from 10-20)	11.87	2.80	14.62	1.72	-4.19**	0.000
Societal barriers (5 Items, scores range from 5-10)	5.10	1.23	5.99	1.16	-2.64*	0.011
Administrative barriers (7 items, scores range from 7-14)	8.71	1.52	10.69	1.31	-4.99**	0.000
Academic relations barriers (8 items, scores range from 8-16)	9.66	1.39	11.48	1.61	-4.30**	0.000
Total barriers to women empowerment Barriers (30 items, scores range from 30-60)	39.45	6.15	47.99	5.61	-5.17**	0.000

**p<0.01, *p<0.05. All 30 items were rated on a 1-2 scale with 1 = Does not apply to me, 2 = Apply to me

CONCLUSION

Findings of the study showed a shining profile of empowering women as leaders in Hashemite University (HU). Specifically, the study demographic data showed that total number of academic women in HU (No = 196, 28.6%) of the total faculty members (No = 686, 100%) and were distributed according to the following degree: PhD (No = 106, 54.1%) and Master (No = 90, 45.9%). These data also indicate that in HU women who hold doctoral degree and are considered candidates for a leadership position in the coming future are 106 faculty members and these showed that in HU women are highly empowered by taking the opportunities to be leaders in their colleges and more than half of them are given the opportunity to become leader in their college or university. The total number and percentage of academic women who served in a senior leadership position at the top level at HU (No = 56, 52.8%) with 56 female faculty member were either Dean (No = 15); Vice Dean (No = 4); Dean Assistant (No = 11); Head Department (No = 25) or Center Director (No = 1). Additionally, women are now comprising (40%) of Dean Council members at HU and currently, 21 (No = 21, 20%) of them are leaders: 8 Dean; 7 Dean Assistant; 6 Head Department.

This study found that the level of psychological empowerment for academic women leaders at HU was high while the level of administrative creativity they report was moderate. Moreover, perception of barriers to women’s empowerment was the only uniquely negative significant predictor of the perception of psychological empowerment for academic women leaders at HU. Specifically, the findings showed that the level of psychological empowerment among academic women leaders at HU is high (M = 4. 7) for the total average mean of PEM. This indicates academic women leaders at HU are more likely to feel their work is significant and valued and to have an impact on their units. Findings also reflected the powerful benefits of women empowerment initiative in Hashemite University HU. It is very clear from this study that empowerment is actually achieved only when

psychological states produce a perception of empowerment within the employee (Mishra and Spreitzer, 1998; Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997). A correlational analysis demonstrated that perceptions of barriers to women’s empowerment BWES among academic women leaders at HU were negatively correlated with their psychological empowerment PEM (R = -0.724, p<0.01) and the administrative creativity ACS (R = -0.639, p<0.01). This result shows that academic women leaders who verified the existence of barriers to women’s empowerment in lower level were also reported the higher level of psychological empowerment and creativity, compared with their counterparts academic women leaders who verified the existence of barriers to women’s empowerment in higher level and also reported the lower level of psychological empowerment and creativity. Also, a positive significant correlation was observed between PEM and ACS (R = 0.772, p<0.01), showing that academic women leaders who rated their psychological empowerment on higher level were also reported about their administrative creativity in higher level. This result lines up with the few studies that investigate the relationships among psychological empowerment and creativity. For instance, Spreitzer (1995) argues that psychological empowerment is a statistically significant predictor of innovative behavior. Furthermore, Knol and Linge (2009) research also confirm that psychological empowerment leads to innovative behavior. In addition, Al Ghamdi (2016) and Zhang and Bartol (2010) found a significant correlation between psychological empowerment and creativity. Indeed, this result shows that empowerment should be viewed as a motivational construct that means “to enable” rather than simply “to delegate” (Cornwall and Perlman, 1990). This asserted that women empowerment in HU is practiced as a “process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information” (Conger and Kanungo, 1988).

It was also found that the Barriers to Woman's empowerment was the best predictor of the (PEM) levels among academic women leaders and that 55% of the variance in PEM was due to unique contributions of this variable. This result of multiple regression analysis shows that academic leader's perceptions regarding barriers to woman empowerment strongly impact the perceptions of psychological empowerment or vice versa by making those leaders perceive these barriers in lower levels. Furthermore, results indicate that there exist significant differences in the four dimensions of BWES Sub-scales: Familial, Societal, Administrative and Academic Relations between academic women leaders (No = 26) and not-leaders (No = 25) in HU for the sake of academic women leaders. Accordingly, we may say that academic women leaders compared to not-leaders in HU were able to consider Barriers to Woman's Empowerment in lower levels compared to their counterparts, simply because they were empowered by both formal organizational practices and informal techniques that are used in HU. This positive influence among academic leaders in HU that improving women opportunities to advance and contribute through leadership roles in their universities, can make such perception's changing among women possible. Also, this reflects and goes with glass ceiling hypothesis as a melded from, invisible, artificial barriers that prevent qualified individuals from advancing within their organization and reaching full potential (Akpinar-Sposito, 2013).

LIMITATIONS

The population used for this study was limited to women only and was very small, compared to the number of universities in Jordan. The target population had to be managed due to time and target constraints. This research study was conducted at the HU, the findings will mostly be for the HU's benefit.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In higher education at Jordan specific initiatives to empower academic women were either limited or non-existing or not supported by senior/top management unless clear mandates, policies and strategies were approved and in place as the case in Hashemite University. One way to circumvent this stereotype threat is to expose women to highly successful female role models such as what is happening in HU. In fact, having more women in formal leadership positions actually models the desired culture change in a conspicuous and powerful way while opening valuable networking opportunities for both women and men to experience a new outlook (Bilen-Green *et al.*, 2008). At the HU, it was

found that there are an increased effort to empower women into leadership, however, a lot more can still be done to ensure that women are provided opportunities equally especially in the Jordanian Higher Education sector.

The findings of the study suggested that women in leadership positions at the HU are more productive when compared to their counterparts without leadership experience which suppose that females as leaders are able to get more things done and ensure that all runs smoothly and accordingly with their department in spite of the many constraints surrounding them. In fact, knowledgeable, passionate and organized woman can collectively dispel the myths used to rationalize gender differences. Additionally, women have an obligation to help the women who come after them. Change will not happen without women persevering in their professional lives to end gender imbalances in the workplace (Kelsey, 2014).

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that Jordanian academic women leaders need to be more psychologically empowered to be creative in their administrative areas at universities. Academic female leaders at HU university, especially, those who have a high self-confidence and appreciate the value of their work, play a key role in preparing future generations of female students for successful higher education as well as to serve as role models for future female leaders. The results of the current study suggest that female leaders need more opportunities to show their creativity in administrative work.

Thus, greater efforts must be taken by the officials in higher education to empower women leaders in their own sections and give them more opportunities to show their creativity, thereby raising the prestige of Jordanian women leaders both locally and globally. Lastly, a legal way to increase women's enrollment in administrative positions in higher education is by enforcing equity programs using affirmative-action initiatives. Equity programs in employment require systematic monitoring of who holds certain positions. By instating this, the areas of concern will become public and could be resolved, areas such as representative work force, equal treatment and fairness (AL-Magableh and Otoum, 2014).

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