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TÍTULO: Aspectos teóricos de la subrepresentación de las mujeres en el liderazgo de la educación superior.

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RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza los problemas teóricos del liderazgo femenino en la educación superior. La subrepresentación de las mujeres en el liderazgo de la educación superior se explica por la teoría de la congruencia de roles, la teoría de la competencia y la teoría de la organización de género, así como por las barreras individuales, culturales y estructurales. Los programas de tutoría y desarrollo de liderazgo se proponen como medidas alternativas que permiten promover a las mujeres en el liderazgo de la educación superior. Primero se centra en el concepto de liderazgo en la educación superior, luego analiza los problemas de género en el liderazgo, en particular, los estilos de liderazgo de mujeres y hombres y las barreras en el liderazgo de las mujeres, y las estrategias para superar estos obstáculos. Finalmente, se examinarán algunos aspectos del liderazgo de las mujeres en la educación superior en Kazajstán.

PALABRAS CLAVES: educación superior, liderazgo femenino, teorías de liderazgo, estilos de liderazgo, Kazajstán.

TITLE: Theoretical aspects of the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership.

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ABSTRACT: This paper analyzes the theoretical problems of women leadership in higher education. The underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership is explained by the role congruity theory, the competition theory, and the gendered organisation theory as well as by individual, cultural, and structural barriers. Mentorship and leadership development programs are proposed as alternative measures allowing women to be promoted in higher education leadership. It first focuses on the concept of leadership in higher education, then discusses the gender issues in leadership, particularly, the leadership styles of women and men and barriers in women's leadership, and strategies to overcome these obstacles. Finally, some aspects of women's leadership in higher education in Kazakhstan will be examined.

KEY WORDS: higher education, women leadership, leadership theories, leadership styles, Kazakhstan.

INTRODUCTION.

Recent studies have shown the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership (Ballenger, 2010; Howe-Walsh and Turnbull, 2016; Moodly and Toni, 2015). Although the number of women with academic degrees is increasing, their academic career is often stopped by the so-called "glass ceiling". Even in developed countries such as the United States and the United Kingdom, a gender disparity in higher education leadership is evident, and only one-third of university presidents are women (Gallant, 2014).

In fact, women in leadership can be beneficial to the higher education sector in many ways. The obvious strengths of women leaders in education are group decision-making skills, perception of

criticism, and the implementation of effective suggestions (Austin, 2008). According to Elmuti et al. (2009), women are often perceived as sensitive and motivating leaders. However, in order for women leaders to achieve the desired goals, they have to work twice as much as men to prove their right to primacy in a masculine culture (Vaccaro, 2011). It is important to understand why it is hard for women to occupy senior leadership positions in higher education. Therefore, this article aims to contribute to an understanding of the reasons for the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership. It first focuses on the concept of leadership in higher education, then discusses the gender issues in leadership, particularly, the leadership styles of women and men and barriers in women's leadership, and strategies to overcome these obstacles. Finally, some aspects of women's leadership in higher education in Kazakhstan will be examined.

DEVELOPMENT.

The concept of leadership in higher education.

In order to understand why women are underrepresented in higher education leadership, it is important to study the concept of leadership in higher education in general. Leadership in higher education plays an essential role, since it determines the organisation's vision, develops policy, and deploys a strategy (Black, 2015). Leadership in higher education is more diverse and complex than leadership in other areas, as it is related to the interests of various stakeholders - students, university staff, and even society (Bolden et al., 2008). This means that leaders in higher education should be more flexible and competent in satisfying different stakeholders at the same time. Current changes in the context of higher education, including the shift from collegial forms of management to corporate style of governance, the expansion of student numbers, changes in funding, and globalisation processes have led to increase the recognition of the importance of the effective leadership in the successful functioning of HE institutions (Black, 2015).

In fact, there is no single definition of leadership in higher education. Leadership, as a specific type of managerial relationship, although management and leadership are not synonymous, represents a social impact on a group of people to achieve certain goals. It can be viewed as an ability to influence other people; it is also the ability to motivate other people with the work or ideas; it is a willingness to bear responsibility not only for oneself, but for a whole group of people. Overall, leadership is often defined as a process of influence (Bush, 2008; Gunter, 2010).

The common misconception about leadership is that a person appointed to a managerial position (manager) is already a leader. Leadership cannot be received with the position. A high position gives more chances to become a leader, but at the same time, it is not excluded that there could be a chance of losing influence as a leader. French et al. (2011) argue that while managers instruct and supervise work, leaders tend to inspire and motivate the people. According to Bush (2008), leadership and management in education are distinct, but equally important for an organisation's effectiveness and in achieving its goals.

Juntrasook (2014) argues that individual academics define higher education leadership in many different ways, but leadership in higher education is manifested mainly in two forms: 1) as institutional management positions; 2) as traditional work of academics. Further, Juntrasook (2014) identifies four multiple meanings of leadership in higher education as a result of his study: leadership as position, leadership as performance, leadership as practice, and leadership as a professional role model. Leadership as a position means an official right to be a head of organisation, to have the authority to carry out certain functions. Leadership as performance implies certain achievements in work. Leadership as practice focuses on professional practice in everyday life. Finally, leadership as a professional role model implies the personal qualities of academics inspiring others in academia.

Bolden et al. (2008) identify the five main elements of leadership in higher education based on the theory of distributed leadership: personal, social, structural, contextual, and developmental elements. The personal dimension of leadership implies specific personal qualities and professional experience

of individual leaders. The social element of leadership refers to the social network, relationships, and social identity. The structural element refers to the context where leadership occurs. The contextual dimension of leadership implies both external (socio-political environment) and internal (organisation's culture and priorities) contexts. Finally, the developmental dimension of leadership is a response to the various changing needs of individuals and groups and is aimed at constant change and development.

Although all of the above-mentioned elements of leadership are equally important, many authors argued that the developmental element of leadership is especially essential for successful leadership. For example, Buller (2015) highlights that the context of global competition and ongoing changes in higher education requires new types of leadership practices such as change leadership and effective leadership implies the ability to bring significant changes to the organisation. In fact, leadership for change is important for an organisation's success (Atkinson and Mackenzie, 2015). Within change leadership, leaders focus on inspiring others to drive innovation and change in the organisation (Gilley et al., 2008). Therefore, leadership in higher education is a complex construction incorporating various elements in the dynamically changing context of higher education.

Leadership styles of men and women.

The comparatively low number of women in higher education leadership can be explained by the assumption that leadership is a male-dominated construction (Haake, 2009). The study of leadership in higher education is mainly targeted at men, as men are more likely to occupy leadership positions compared to women (BlackChen, 2015). As a result, women leaders are being assessed from masculine standards (Dunn et al., 2013; Barnes, 2017). Moreover, women leaders are perceived more negatively than men by society (Antonaros, 2010).

White & Ozkanli (2011) compare the differences in perceptions of gender and leadership among 45 senior managers at universities in Australia and Turkey. Their results highlight the importance of economic and social contexts in the perception of leadership, as Turkish respondents denied discrimination against women in higher education leadership, although they recognised the transactional/masculine leadership model as acceptable, while Australian respondents recognised the existence of discrimination against women in leadership and supported a transformational leadership model. These results are really interesting in that they show the connection between culture and leadership perceptions.

In fact, the difference between leadership styles of men and women is one of the reasons for the underrepresentation of females in higher education leadership (Brower et al., 2019). Chin (2011) argues that women leaders generally prefer a feminist leadership style that is collaborative and comprehensive, however, they recognize that their institutions do not support this type of leadership. Several authors supported the idea that women prefer a more transformational and democratic leadership style while men tend to use more transactional and authoritarian styles (Austin, 2008; Bass, 1997; Eagly et al., 2003).

Eagly et al. (2003) conduct a meta-analysis of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles amongst women and men. The results showed a greater tendency of women to transformational leadership, and men to transactional leadership. Eagly et al. (2003) conclude that there are more favourable prospects for women leaders in terms of achieving leadership effectiveness. This is due to the fact that female leaders are superior to male leaders in parameters that are positively related to leadership effectiveness. Similarly, Chin et al. (2016) analyse the leadership styles and behaviour of women in leadership positions, and conclude that women and men have different leadership styles. They find that women are more democratic and cooperative, while men are more autocratic and directive. They also discover that men's leadership is very determined, but women's leadership style tends to reduce risk, a quality that is important for an organisation's success.

On the other hand, some authors (Young, 2004) argue that leadership styles are situational, and differentiating them by gender is not reasonable. Young (2004) examines leadership styles of men and women in one case study organisation, and reveals that men and women can show different leadership styles in different situations regardless of gender. Similarly, a meta-analysis study by Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2014) also finds that men and women do not differ in their leadership styles and leadership effectiveness. Other authors (Grant, 2016; Madden, 2011) highlighted the difference in leadership styles not between gender but within them. Madden (2011) argues that the different social roles of women and men in the context of the role congruity theory are too exaggerated.

Antonaros (2010) states that women and men are not judged by the same standards in leadership. Interestingly, people do not perceive women with transformational leadership as strong leaders while women with transactional leadership style are criticised for being too harsh. Therefore, women are facing the challenge of developing a balanced and optimal leadership style.

Some authors (Wheat & Hill, 2016) argue that the flexibility and responsiveness of women can give them a chance to prove themselves as successful leaders. Moreover, Acker (2012) states that the female leadership style is more suited to the higher education context. On the other hand, in some cases, women tend to adopt a masculine leadership approach because of the negative stereotypes regarding female leadership styles (Eagly, 2007). However, the study by Singh et al. (2012) finds that women who showed masculine leadership were considered as the poor leaders. Thus, there is a need for further study of this controversial situation.

Glass ceiling and the ways of overcoming it.

Existing literature suggests the various reasons for the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions in higher education. Ballenger (2010) argues that the glass ceiling, a kind of barrier that prevents women from holding leadership positions, is still observed in higher education, and the lack of mentoring opportunities and gender bias are the main barriers facilitating it. Similarly, Eagly and

Carli (2007) examine the concepts of concrete wall and labyrinth in women leadership. The concrete wall metaphor is a barrier that completely blocks women's path to leadership. In fact, the concrete wall is a system of stereotypes about the masculine nature of leadership, and women who are faced with the concrete wall cannot progress further in their career progression. According to the labyrinth metaphor, women can overcome structural barriers to leadership, but they will have to navigate through different challenges. To go through the labyrinth, women will need perseverance and a thorough analysis of the challenges (Eagly and Carli, 2007). All these metaphors show how difficult it is for women to achieve leadership positions.

A number of theories can contribute to the understanding of the discriminate treatment of women in leadership. According to the role congruity theory, different groups of people are inseparably linked with the predefined social roles, and if they do not match these roles, they will be negatively evaluated. Thus, it is more difficult for women to achieve leadership compared to men whose social role is associated with dominance, and even those women who have achieved the leadership positions may encounter disapproval due to the violation of the gender role (Eagly and Karau, 2002).

The competition theory assumes that an increase in the number of a minority group (women) generates alienation and hostility on the part of the majority group (men) since the majority group perceives it as a threat to their well-being (Robst et al., 2003).

According to the gendered organisation theory, if in an organisation the behaviour and experience of men are perceived as the norm compared to women's, this organisation is considered as a gendered. Since in the gendered organisation the male type of behaviour is idealised, women have to act like men, in effect by imitating them (Drury, 2011).

Huong (2013) identifies two main theories explaining the weak positions of women in higher education leadership: psychological and cultural. The first theory is related to the concept of stereotypes. The second theory reveals three types of cultural barriers that women face: at the macro level (socio-political), meso level (organisational), and micro level (individual). At the macro level,

these include socio-political barriers that refer to the traditions of the region, country, and local culture. Mesoscale barriers are associated with stereotypes of behaviour in the university environment, which has been and remains traditionally masculine, so it is difficult to change it from the point of view of gender equality. Barriers at the micro or individual level are associated with behavioural stereotypes of women themselves, who, understanding the attitude of society, family and colleagues towards them, are held captive by traditions and prejudices, and do not want to compete for leadership.

Ballenger (2010) classifies three groups of factors that create barriers in the advancement of women in higher education leadership: individual, cultural, and structural or institutional barriers. Individual barriers are obstacles associated with women's personal feelings, such as low career aspirations, low self-esteem, lack of motivation and self-confidence, and other psycho-emotional factors. Amongst other factors, the role congruity theory can significantly affect women's motivation to lead. Thus, women who face the choice between professional and social roles have a lower level of motivation to become a leader. Hewlett and Luce (2005) find that only one-third of the women they interviewed, showed the ambition to be a leader.

Cultural barriers are barriers to women's leadership associated with cultural ideologies and social structures that evaluate the roles and behaviour of men and women in different ways. Cultural barriers are manifested through different stereotypes and prejudice against women leaders. One of the common stereotypes is the belief that males perform better as leaders than females (Grant, 2016). Despite the fact that women leaders do not differ from men in terms of efficiency and motivation, the stereotype that a woman is unsuitable for a leadership role is very stable (Eagly and Karau, 2002). It is manifested in the preference of subordinates to the role of the leader as a man, not a woman, and in the scepticism of male administrators towards female leaders. Grant (2016) argues that such explicit and implicit gender stereotypes affect not only how women leaders are perceived by others, but also on the personal feelings of women leaders.

Structural barriers are limitations that are associated with the features of the structure and distribution of power in organisations that impede the professional growth of women (Ballenger, 2010). Some institutional practices, such as salary compression and negative evaluation of women, also limit women's access to leadership. Brabazon and Schulz (2018) argue that overloading by teaching is one of the reasons for women's failure in higher education leadership compared to men.

Different barriers in women's advancement in higher education leadership discussed above highlight the need for comprehensive programs aimed to contribute to women's advancement in higher education leadership. In fact, many HE institutions across the world have developed various leadership centres, institutions, and programs aimed at training women leaders (Redmond et al., 2017; Ely, Ibarra, and Kolb, 2011). Redmond et al. (2017) point out that the designing and implementation of such leadership development programs can help diminish gender inequality in higher leadership. Similarly, Ely et al. (2011) propose the introduction of a leadership program for women, grounded in theories of gender and leadership. The authors stated that the leadership programs specifically designed for women can eliminate the cultural and organisational biases towards women leaders and help many women develop leadership skills. However, some authors disagree with the effectiveness of leadership development programs for females. For instance, Devos et al. (2003) argue that although women leadership programs may be useful to individual participants, they cannot fully exclude various cultural and organisational barriers in women's leadership.

Another effective way of promoting females to higher education leadership is mentorship (Ballenger, 2010; Brabazon and Schulz, 2018; Diehl, 2014). Ballenger (2010) argues that the lack of mentorship is a common barrier in women's advancement in higher education leadership. Brabazon and Schulz (2018) state that women academics in higher education really need to be mentored, and through collective work with a mentor, numerous visible and invisible structural barriers to leadership can be eliminated. VanDerLinden (2004) conducts a study aimed at evaluating the role of mentoring in higher education and concludes that women who worked with mentors achieved higher positions than

those who did not have access to mentoring. Mentoring is important in the socialisation of the future leader and provides not only career development but also psychological development (VanDerLinden, 2004).

On the other hand, there are some shortcomings in mentorship itself. The majority of mentors in higher education leadership are men, and studies have shown that generally, they prefer to promote mainly other males to leadership roles (Koch et al., 2015; White & Ozkanli, 2011). Searby et al. (2015) highlight that the main problem in mentoring female leaders is the lack of experienced female mentors and, furthermore, a small number of women who have achieved leadership positions and are mentoring others to leadership roles may also be opposed to promoting other women. In male-dominated organisations, women leaders can begin to subconsciously distance themselves from junior women and thereby maintain gender inequality, creating the “queen bee phenomenon” (Derks et al., 2016). Therefore, the practice of mentorship needs further improvement by considering the gender psychology of leadership. To sum up, the study of various factors that impede women's leadership and the positive experience of successful women leaders is important for the development of women's leadership in higher education.

Women's leadership in Kazakhstan's higher education context.

Kazakhstan is a country with a relatively low level of gender inequality (OECD, 2017). The Constitution and laws of the country declare non-discrimination of people based on gender. Despite this fact, in many areas, including higher education, there is a dominance of men in leadership positions. For instance, in 2014 the percentage of women-presidents of universities in Kazakhstan was only 14 per cent (Sagintayeva, 2015). In this case, what prevents women from gaining senior leadership positions in higher education in Kazakhstan?

As the literature shows, the barriers to women's leadership in Kazakhstan are largely similar to those described in Western literature. However, local traditions and culture also influence women's advancement to leadership. According to the Asian Development Bank's assessment (2018), although cultural norms in Kazakhstan are relatively positive in relation to gender equality, women in society are generally not perceived as political and business leaders, they are viewed more from the standpoint and role associated with family responsibilities.

One of the recent studies in examining the women's leadership in universities of Kazakhstan is the study conducted by Kuzhabekova and Almukhambetova (2019). Overall, they interviewed 30 women leaders in higher education in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in order to reveal the challenges facing by female leaders. Their findings show that women in Kazakhstan have to face a difficult choice between gender roles and career expectations. Consequently, women who pursue leadership roles in academia are experiencing different psychological pressures. The authors tried to explain the underrepresentation of women leaders in higher education by using existing western theories and have concluded that they mainly fail to explain the dynamics of the barriers in the advancement of women to HE leadership in Kazakhstan. Thus, the authors conclude that "organisational and professional structures and cultures in the region are also gendered and favour men in performance evaluations and advancement" (p.16).

Kuzhabekova and Almukhambetova (2017) point out that women leaders in higher education in Kazakhstan are influenced by three dominant cultures - the traditional, Western and still strong Soviet culture. Traditional culture obliges women, first of all, to fulfil family responsibilities, while Soviet and Western cultures encourage women to get an education and to pursue career progression. As a result, women leaders in Kazakhstan are facing a challenge: on the one hand, to act like a good mother and wife, and on the other, to try to build a successful career. In this case, the conflict of values of traditional Kazakhstani society and the Western orientation on the professional self-realisation of women is evident.

Thus, in Kazakhstan, there is still a problem of the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership, and in most cases, only men are perceived as leaders. This gender imbalance reflects the attitude of society towards women. Additionally, Urbaeva (2018) highlights the huge impact of Islam on women's position in Central Asian societies. Despite ongoing positive changes in gender policy, within a family network, the position of women is low compared to western countries. Various factors contribute to this, such as early marriage and polygamy.

According to the Kazakh customs, women have long been considered as housewives, and leadership in any form was considered as the prerogative of men. Urbaeva (2018) argues that despite achievements in social and gender policy, Central Asian countries remain deeply patriarchal and the number of women in leadership positions is extremely low since for the majority of women family responsibilities are more important than career growth.

Thus, the small number of women in leadership can be partially explained by the peculiarities of the social status of women in the Kazakh society.

CONCLUSIONS.

Leadership is considered as a key element in the successful functioning and transformation of higher education (Morley, 2012). Effective leadership can bring change to an organisation through improvement and innovation. As this article shows, women are facing diverse barriers that negatively impact their opportunities for achieving leadership positions. To increase the number of women leaders in higher education, it is important to identify these barriers to their advancement. The serious lack of women in higher education leadership necessitates additional studies to study the impact of various barriers on women leaders, as well as how such problems can be overcome. Understanding the reasons why there are so few women in higher education leadership can help future women leaders.

This article shows that leadership is a gendered construction and that female leadership is largely discriminated against compared to male leadership (Chin, 2011; Eagly and Karau, 2002). The dominance of masculine practices and leadership styles in higher education leadership is obvious (Barnes, 2017). Moreover, women leaders in higher education sense a tension not only of this gender inequality, but also are facing the challenges of the changing context of the higher education. Understanding the benefits of female leadership in higher education is essential to empowering women in leadership (Madden, 2011).

Although there has been a recent increase in the number of women holding leadership positions in various fields in Kazakhstan, including higher education, some barriers and stereotypes still exist in society, which are facilitated by local culture and traditions.

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