



WOMEN, STEM & HE LEADERSHIP IN INDONESIA

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KEY QUESTION

- What are the issues around women, STEM progression and leadership in HE in Indonesia?

RELEVANT STUDIES

ASIAN JOURNAL OF WOMEN'S STUDIES
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Empowerment vs. meritocracy discourses in Indonesian public universities: The case of female leaders

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the tension between meritocracy and empowerment discourses in Indonesian public universities and its relationship with gender-related leadership representation. The recent emergence of five female rectors signals a change that allows women to undertake leadership roles. We argue that there are two contradictory discourses (i.e., empowerment and meritocracy), which are concurrently visible pertaining to university leadership. The discourse of empowerment promotes gender equity and women's participation in decision making processes in universities in ways that highlight the historically progressive political agenda of empowerment in Indonesian society. In contrast, the discourse of meritocracy refers to achievement on the basis of individual merit, such as ability and talent. This contradiction is explored through interview data that illuminates the changing conditions of leadership representation in the Indonesian university context. This article makes three contributions to the literature. Firstly, it adds to an underresearched area in higher education in Indonesia. Secondly, it provides a different perspective and analysis of the relationship between gender and higher education by considering both local and international culture. Thirdly, the article offers an argument about the corrosive effect of meritocracy in any university, irrespective of geographical location and local culture.

KEYWORDS Gender; higher education; leadership; empowerment; meritocracy; Indonesia

GENDER AND EDUCATION
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'Leadership is a sacred matter': women leaders contesting and contextualising neoliberal meritocracy in the Indonesian academia

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ABSTRACT

Feminist scholars have critiqued neoliberal meritocracy as discriminating against female academics through the persistence of gender-biased assumptions, closed procedures of recruitment and promotion, and patriarchal network connections. While these scholars demand fairer meritocratic competition, we explore possibilities to (re)imagine academic career and university leadership beyond the dominant discourse of neoliberal meritocracy. Based on interviews with female deans in Indonesian universities, we identified two alternative discourses (in)forming their subjectivity as university leaders, which may both challenge and contextualise neoliberal meritocracy. The first is the Islamic notion of leadership as *amanah* (God-given responsibility), and the second is a view of university as family. We demonstrate that understanding university leadership through these discourses enables and fosters a sense of trust, nurture, harmony, relationality, and spirituality; which are in contrast with neoliberal meritocracy's objectivism, individualism, corporatism, and entrepreneurialism. Nevertheless, neoliberal meritocracy is quick to co-opt these contextual ways of being for its neoliberal agenda.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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Gender; university leadership; meritocracy; neoliberalism; *amanah*; Indonesia

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Indonesian female academics and the pandemic: the challenges of COVID-19 and academic work

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic brought unprecedented challenges to higher education. This paper explores the challenges Indonesian female academics encountered during the pandemic in which the boundaries between home and work were further blurred. Accordingly, the gender gap was further widened as unpaid and unacknowledged academic and domestic work disproportionately affected women. This paper draws on data gathered from survey, diary studies and in-depth interviews with female academics in the social sciences and humanities. It examines how Indonesian female academics juggled domestic and professional work at home, caring duties both at home and work, and shouldering administrative workloads. In addition, findings reveal that female academics found new meanings in their academic work and the importance of caring and collective solidarity, especially in a crisis such as the pandemic.

KEYWORDS

Female academics; pandemic; care; productivity; Indonesia

Higher Education



STEM

- Knowledge production
- Knowledge use (*hilirisasi*)

Female Representation

- Masculine domain
- Relatively more resources
- Pressure on *hilirisasi*

Indonesia

FERTILE GROUNDS TO EXPLORE...

- 1) **Cases of STEM female leaders : UGM, ITB, Unsrat (2014-2022), etc**
 - “Outliers” vs. by-product of STEM?
 - Knowledge production & Use
 - Their stories: enablers & barriers

- 2) **Mentorship in women leadership & HE**

- 3) **Progression of STEM women researchers – look at BRIN too**