

**WOMEN'S CAREER ADVANCEMENT: A CASE
STUDY OF FEMALE STAFF IN GOVERNMENT
SECTORS**

NUR ADILAH BINTI AB AZIZ

UNIVERSITI SAINS ISLAM MALAYSIA

**WOMEN'S CAREER ADVANCEMENT: A CASE STUDY OF
FEMALE STAFF IN GOVERNMENT SECTORS**

Nur Adilah binti Ab Aziz

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the
MASTER OF DA'WAH AND ISLAMIC LEADERSHIP

UNIVERSITI SAINS ISLAM MALAYSIA

July 2023

SUPERVISOR DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I have read this thesis and, in my view, this thesis is sufficient in term of scope and quality for the Master of Da'wah and Islamic Leadership.



Signature :

Date : ...3 August 2023

Name : Dr Kalsom Ali

AUTHOR DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this academic project is my own except for the quotations and summaries which have been duly acknowledged.

Date: 31st June 2023

Signature :



Name : Nur Adilah binti Ab Aziz

Matric No: 3212660

Address : Lot 910, Lorong Madrasah Kampung

Kepulauan Palekbang 16040 Tumpat

Kelantan.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

All praises be to Almighty Allah S.W.T. who has blessed me with the belief, the strength, motivation, health, ideas, passion and the capabilities throughout my journey in completing this thesis and throughout my journey in completing my Master's Degree. Peace and prayers be upon our most beloved Prophet Muhammad s.a.w, the most beautiful soul, whose sayings, actions, and stories have deeply inspired me enough to believe that there are no limitations to what we can achieve when we are fully committed to accomplishing something, knowing that God is on our side.

It is tremendous honour to have this research published. In fact, just knowing the fact that I have finished writing it gave me a wonderful sense of personal accomplishment, an accomplishment which was motivated by the high hopes that this research will be blessed by Allah S.W.T to benefit many individuals all over the world, from one generation to another, *Inshaa-Allah*.

Thank you Allah for every blessing You have generously poured into my life. Especially the amazing people whom You have destined for me to meet course of my life's journey thus far.

Most of my profound thankfulness goes to my kind and respectable supervisor, Dr Kalsom Binti Ali, who always been supportive and patience with my progress. I am forever grateful and honoured to be under her supervision and able to exchange ideas. Her expertise, advise, excellent guidance, endless and inspiring effort has significantly made my thesis journey a success and meaningful.

Then, I also not forget to say thank you to my key informants from Malaysian government sectors who provided this thesis with valuable information. Their cooperation and willingness to spare their time for interview is highly appreciated. Without them, this thesis would not be able to be completed. And to my friends, thank you for supplying me with inspiring words, encouragement whenever I need it.

Last but not least, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the backbone of my success, my family. To the two individuals whom I would like to dedicate my whole achievements to my father, Ab Aziz bin Mat Diah and to my mother, Azizah binti Muda. I am blessed to have had such wonderful, loving and supporting parents. Thank you for all the sacrifices and every endless support and encouragement you've given me that has driven me to achieve this far and thus completing my Master's program. Their love for me has never been questioned. They has always wanted the best for me, from the the day I was born. And till this very day, every small achievement I make, they always will be the first to congratulate. Thank you for always gave me the best education and for every compliment

you've showered me with and every word of encouragement. The dream you had of seeing your own daughter exceeding your educational achievements is an admirable trait in itself. And Allah S.W.T has gladly answered your prayers. *Alhamdulillah*. Thank you for your unwavering support and belief in your only daughter. Without them, this would not have been possible.

To my dearest siblings, I can't thank you enough for your love, understanding and support. Thank you for every single gift. I'm always praying for your success and happiness in *dunia* and *akhirat*. Forget Allah S.W.T not. And keep on believing. Let's continue striving for success, never give up on hopes and dreams and let's do whatever it takes make our parents proud!

Nur Adilah binti Ab Aziz



ABSTRAK

Walaupun penglibatan tenaga kerja wanita telah meningkat secara mendadak sejak beberapa tahun kebelakangan ini, tetapi wanita masih ketinggalan berbanding lelaki kerana peranan mereka yang harus dipikul sebagai ibu dan pekerja. Tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengkaji faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kemajuan kerjaya wanita dan halangan yang dihadapi oleh wanita bekerja di sektor kerajaan, Malaysia. Kajian ini dijalankan dalam pendekatan kualitatif. Responden terdiri daripada wanita yang bekerja daripada profesion yang berbeza, mempunyai anak dan juga mempunyai pengalaman bekerja lebih daripada lima tahun. Data primer dikumpulkan melalui temu bual mendalam separa berstruktur untuk mengumpul maklumat daripada responden dengan mengambil masa temu bual lebih kurang daripada 35-45 minit. Analisis tematik dilakukan untuk menganalisis data secara manual dan ia dibukukan menjadi transkrip. Temu bual ini mendedahkan bahawa faktor masyarakat, organisasi dan individu amat mempengaruhi kemajuan kerjaya wanita. Penyelidikan ini mendedahkan hakikat bahawa kemajuan kerjaya wanita sangat bergantung kepada peranan keluarga dan peranan organisasi. Suami, majikan, rakan sekerja dan juga anak-anak sangat mempengaruhi kerjaya wanita secara positif dan negatif. Kajian itu mendedahkan bahawa wanita yang menerima sokongan positif daripada keluarga, majikan dan rakan sekerja akan lebih bermotivasi untuk mencapai kejayaan yang lebih besar dalam kehidupan kerjaya mereka. Selain itu, kajian ini juga menekankan tentang hakikat halangan yang dihadapi oleh wanita bekerja termasuklah dari segi diskriminasi dalam pembahagian tugas, konflik kehidupan dan kerja, mencari pusat jagaan anak-anak, dan keletihan terhadap kerja yang berlebihan. Atas pelbagai sebab, isu ini boleh menjadi salah satu punca utama mengapa wanita kurang berminat untuk meneruskan kemajuan kerjaya mereka. Pada akhir kajian, beberapa cadangan untuk meningkatkan keseimbangan di antara kerja-kehidupan dan kemajuan profesional dibuat, serta cadangan untuk penyelidikan lanjut pada masa akan datang juga turut diberikan.

ABSTRACT

Although women's labor-force involvement has increased dramatically in recent years, but women are still lagging behind than men's due to their role they should shoulder as a mother and employee. The purpose of the current study was to explore the factors influence on women career advancement and the barriers faced by working women in Malaysian government sectors. The study was conducted in a qualitative approach. The respondent constituted of working women from different professions, had a children and also have work experience for more than five years. Primary data was collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews to collect information from the respondents with extending time from 35-45 minutes. Thematic analysis was done to analyze the data manually and it emerged from the transcripts. The interviews revealed that societal, organizational and individual factors remarkably influence women's career advancement. This research reveals the fact that women's career advancement is highly dependent on family roles and organizational roles. Husbands, employers, colleagues and even children greatly influence a woman's career both positively and negatively. The study revealed that women who receive positive support from their families, employers and colleagues will be more motivated and achieve greater success in their career life. Moreover, this research also highlighted the fact of barriers faced by working women include discrimination in the division of the duties, work-life conflict, finding childcare centre, and excessive in work exhaustion. For many reasons, this issues somehow was the main caused why women have less interest to pursue career advancement. At the end of the study, some recommendations for improving work-life balance and professional progression are made, as well as recommendations for further research.

ملخص البحث

مع أن مشاركة المرأة في القوى العاملة قد زادت بشكل كبير في السنوات الأخيرة ، إلا أن النساء ما زلن متخلفات عن الرجال بسبب الدور الذي يجب عليهن تحمله كأمهات عاملات. كان الغرض من هذه هو استكشاف العوامل التي تؤثر على التقدم الوظيفي للمرأة والعقبات التي تواجهها المرأة العاملة في قطاعات الحكومة الماليزية. وقد أجريت الدراسة بمنهج نوعي. تتألف المستجوبة من النساء العاملات من مهن مختلفة ، وخمس سنوات أو أكثر من الخبرة العملية. تم جمع البيانات الأولية من طريق مقابلات متعمقة شبه منظمة لجمع المعلومات من المستجيبين مع تمديد الوقت من 35-45 دقيقة. تم إجراء تحليل موضوعي لتحليل البيانات يدويًا وتوثيقه في النصوص. كشفت المقابلات أن العوامل المجتمعية والتنظيمية والفردية تؤثر بشكل ملحوظ على تقدم المرأة الوظيفي. يكشف هذا البحث أن التقدم الوظيفي للمرأة يعتمد بشكل كبير على الأدوار الأسرية والأدوار التنظيمية. هناك تأثير كبير من الأزواج وأرباب العمل والزملاء حتى الأطفال على مهنة المرأة إيجابيا وسلبيا. وكشفت الدراسة أن النساء اللواتي يتلقين دعمًا إيجابيًا من عائلاتهن وأرباب عملهن وزملائهن سيكون لديهن دافع أكبر ويحققن نجاحًا أكبر في حياتهن المهنية. إضافة إلى ذلك ، سلط البحث أن الحواجز التي تواجه المرأة العاملة تشمل التمييز في تقسيم الواجبات ، والصراع بين العمل والحياة ، وإيجاد مركز لرعاية الأطفال ، والإرهاق المفرط في العمل. كانت هذه المشكلات هي الأسباب رئيسة لعدم اهتمام النساء في متابعة تقدمهن الوظيفي. في نهاية الدراسة ، تم تقديم بعض التوصيات لتحسين التوازن بين العمل والحياة والتقدم المهني ، بالإضافة إلى اقتراحات لإجراء بحوث مستقبلية

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT

SUPERVISOR DECLARATION.....	i
AUTHOR DECLARATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
ABSTRAK.....	v
ABSTRACT.....	vi
ملخص البحث.....	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF THE TABLES.....	xii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiii
GLOSSARY.....	xiv
ABBREVIATION.....	xvii
CHAPTER 1.....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of Research.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	5
1.3 Research Question.....	12
1.4 Research Objectives.....	12
1.5 Significance of Research.....	12
1.6 Scope of Research.....	13
CHAPTER 2.....	14
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	14
2.1 Introduction.....	14
2.2 Contemporary Scholars' View of Working Women.....	14
2.3 Female Leadership Figures in Islamic History.....	17
2.3.1 Saidatina Khadijah Bin Khuwailid.....	18
2.3.2 Bai`Ah Al-Nisa'.....	18
2.3.3 Ummu Salamah.....	19
2.3.4 Queen Balqis.....	21

2.4 Transformation of Women Career Advancement	22
2.5 Career Advancement.....	24
2.6 Women Career Advancement	25
2.7 Factors Influencing Women Career Advancement	28
2.7.1 Individual Support Factors.....	29
2.7.1.1 Spousal Factors	29
2.7.1.2 Employer Factors	31
2.7.1.3 Peers Factors	34
2.7.1.4 Children Factors.....	35
2.8 Barriers on Women Career Advancement	36
2.8.1 Islamic Perspective by Al-Qardawi	36
2.8.2 Western Perspective by Simpson	37
2.8.2.1 Person-centered barriers.....	38
2.8.2.1.1 Personal Factors	38
2.8.2.2 Situation – centered barriers.....	40
2.8.2.2.1 Gender Discrimination	41
2.8.2.2.2 Glass Ceiling	44
2.8.2.2.3 Work Life Conflict.....	45
2.8.2.2.4 Child-Care Support Centre.....	49
2.8.2.2.5 Family Consideration.....	49
2.8.2.2.6 Excessive Work and Exhaustion	51
2.8.2.2.7 Organizational Structure, Culture and Practice	51
2.9 Conclusion	53
CHAPTER 3	54
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	54
3.1 Introduction.....	54
3.2 Research Design.....	54
3.3 Sample of Study	55
3.4 Profile of Respondents	56
3.4.1 Respondent 1.....	56
3.4.2 Respondent 2.....	57
3.4.3 Respondent 3.....	57

3.4.4 Respondent 4.....	58
3.4.5 Respondent 5.....	58
3.5 Data Collection	59
3.5.1 Sample of Interview Questions	60
3.6 Ethical Considerations	63
3.7 Data Analysis	63
3.7.1 Analyzing Qualitative Data.....	63
CHAPTER 4	65
FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS.....	65
4.1 Introduction.....	65
4.2 Findings.....	67
4.2.1 Factors Influencing Women Career Advancement	68
4.2.1.1 Individual Characteristics Influencing the Career.....	68
4.2.1.1.1 Spousal Factors	68
4.2.1.1.1.1 Provide physical and mental support as well as helping in household management	68
4.2.1.1.1.2 Supporting spouses related major decision-making process concerning their career.....	71
4.2.1.1.2 Employers Factors.....	75
4.2.1.1.2.1 Characteristics and role of employers towards working women	75
4.2.1.1.3 Peer Factors.....	81
4.2.1.1.3.1 Supportive work environment.....	81
4.2.1.1.4 Children Factors.....	86
4.2.1.1.4.1 Grown up independency children / helping hands	87
4.2.1.1.4.2 Children as a motivation in pursue career advancement.....	89
4.2.2 Barriers on Women Career Advancement	91
4.2.2.1 Gender Discrimination.....	91
4.2.2.1.1 Division of duties and responsibilities at work	92
4.2.2.2 Glass Ceiling.....	98
4.2.2.2.1 Opportunities for advancement and positions in the execution of duties and responsibilities.....	98
4.2.2.3 Work Life Conflict.....	100
4.2.2.3.1 Family role	101

4.2.2.3.2 Extended work hours.....	105
4.2.2.4 Child-care Support Centre.....	107
4.2.2.4.1 Assist in smoothing work matters.....	108
4.2.2.4.2 Care center selection	110
4.2.2.4.3 High cost	114
4.2.2.5 Family Consideration.....	114
4.2.2.5.1 Family support	115
4.2.2.5.2 Considerations from children.....	118
4.2.2.6 Excessive Work and Exhaustion.....	120
4.2.2.7 Organizational Structure, Culture and Practice.....	122
4.2.2.8 Personal Factors	126
4.2.2.8.1 Determination and Challenge.....	126
4.2.2.8.2 Individual Aspiration	129
4.3 Discussion	132
4.3.1 Factors Influencing Women Career Advancement.....	132
4.3.2 Barriers on Women Career Advancement.....	137
4.4 Summary and Conclusion	143
CHAPTER 5	144
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	144
5.1 Conclusion	144
5.2 Implications.....	146
5.2.1 Recommendations on Practical.....	148
5.2.2 Recommendations on Theoretical.....	151
5.2.3 Recommendations on Methodological.....	156
5.3 Conclusion Remarks	157
REFERENCES.....	158
APPENDICES	178
APPENDIX A.....	181
APPENDIX B	183
APPENDIX C	186

LIST OF THE TABLES

Tables

Table 4.1: The Socio-Economic Information of the Respondents

Table 4.2: The Characteristics and Role of Employee towards Working Women

Table 4.3: The Characteristics and Role of Children towards Working Women

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures

Figure 1.1: Population by sex and sex ratio, Malaysia, 2019-2020

Figure 1.2: Labour Force Participation Rate by Sex and Age Group, Malaysia, SThird Quarter (Q3) 2020 & Fourth Quarter (Q4) 2020.

Figure 1.3: Labour Force by Sex, Malaysia, Third Quarter (Q3) 2020 & Fourth Quarter (Q4) 2020.

Figure 1.4: Population Outside Labour Force by Reasons for Not Seeking Work, Malaysia, Third Quarter (Q3) 2020 & Fourth Quarter (Q4) 2020.

Figure 1.5: Number of students enrolled in public higher education institutions in Malaysia from 2012 to 2020, by gender

Figure 1.6: Female Labor Force Participation Rate (15-64 years, %) among 10 ASEAN Countries in 2021.

GLOSSARY

COVID-19	: Coronavirus Disease 2019
Naqli	: Revelation
Aqli	: Human mind
Hadith	: A collection of traditions containing sayings of the prophet Muhammad which, with accounts of his daily practice (the Sunna), constitute the major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Qur'an,
Sharia	: The fundamental religious concept of Islam namely, its law that governs aspects of day-to-day life for Muslims
Ba'iah	: An agreement to give obedience
Caliph	: A political and religious leader of Islam in the period following the death of Prophet Muhammad
Fardu Kifayah	: The obligations of fardhu kifayah is none other than matters that will lead to benefit or goodness for people in this world and the hereafter and it cannot be achieved by an individual or several individuals separately; for fardhu kifayah can only be achieved through collective cooperation in a society.
Syarak	: Islamic Laws
Nusyuz	: An action of a wife which can be intended as a disobedient or against the will of the husband without any syarak reason which can be accepted according to Islamic law.

Fatwa	: A legal information given by a Muslim authority upon request, which serves the purpose of clarifying a religious or legal problem that has occurred among Muslim believers.
Haram	: Forbidden or proscribed by Islamic law.
Halal	: Permissible or lawful in Islam
Dorurah	: Emergency
Awlawiyyat	: Priorities
Mahram	: Refers to a person with whom marriage is prohibited because of their close blood relationship, because of radaa'ah (breastfeeding), or because of being related by marriage
Haji	: One who has made a pilgrimage to Mecca
Umrah	: Visiting Baitullah al-Haram in Mecca at any time to perform certain acts of worship in accordance with the obligator

ABBREVIATION

LFPR	: Labor Force Participation Rate
FLPR	: Female Labor Participation Rate
DoSM	: Department of Statistics Malaysia
ILO	: International Labor Organization
S.W.T	: Subhanahu wa ta'ala
S.A.W	: Salla'Allahu alayhi wasallam
r.ha	: Radiya Allahu anha (May Allah be pleased with her)
CEO	: Chief Executive Officer
OLS	: Ordinary Least Squares
UNDP	: United Nations Development Programme
UN	: United Nations
US	: United States
MCO	: Movement Control Order
ACCA	: the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants
GDP	: Gross Domestic Product