

Women leadership in higher education: past, present and future trends

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Received 26 November 2023
Revised 25 February 2024
Accepted 5 March 2024

Abstract

Purpose – Gender bias and stereotypes are universal issues in today’s society. This study presents a comprehensive review of women’s leadership based on bibliometric analysis. The feminist approach to leadership is helpful in many ways, and it could be the type of leadership needed in the challenging world of academia. Women present unique characteristics and traits, particularly their motherly approach to leadership.

Design/methodology/approach – A review of the literature based on bibliometric analysis by mapping the knowledge structure of the subject is conferred by uncovering the past, present and future trends based on three bibliometric analyses.

Findings – The finding suggests that gender equality, stereotypes and barriers in women’s leadership are at the forefront of the subject in HEIs. The overall system, mindset and willingness for institutional transformation are needed to change the mindset of accepting women as leaders of HEIs.

Research limitations/implications – This study brought the significant idea of increasing women’s empowerment in HEIs, eventually strengthening institutional leadership’s capability towards advanced education.

Originality/value – This study would present a crucial foundation in women’s empowerment, particularly from the HEIs perspective and from the generic women’s leadership literature.

Keywords Higher education, Women leadership, Bibliometric analysis, Gender equality, Stereotype

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Higher education institutions (HEIs) are transforming due to the dynamic changes in world technology. These academic institutions have the best minds and experts contributing to national development and economic growth (Al-Kurdi *et al.*, 2020). The traditional world perceives men as more appropriate and effective than women as leaders. Higher education institutions (HEIs) are not spared from this gender equality and leadership issue. There have been many efforts and initiatives to improve policies on women’s leadership in HEIs, but discrimination and equality issues are still evident (Ardoin *et al.*, 2019). Women’s enrollment is currently higher in HEIs, yet women are not given considerable chances to lead. The top position in (HEIs) (i.e. Vice-Chancellor, President, or Rector) has been male-dominated ever

