THE URGENCY OF WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP INTEGRATION IN CAREER AND WORK LIFE BALANCE BASED ON THE EXPANSION OF GENDER EQUALITY IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The dual role of women cannot be separated from their nature as women who can give birth, nurture children, take care of the household, serve their husbands, care for parents, and pursue careers in various fields they desire. To fulfill this dual role requires a high level of willpower and self-commitment, as well as support from various parties, especially from the husband and family. The achievement of Indonesian women's emancipation has shown significant progress, as evidenced by women reaching high positions such as President, Vice President, Ministers, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Governors, Vice Governors, CEOs, TNI/Police Generals, Managers, and more.

This research design is a descriptive qualitative one that analyzes data regarding the variables of women's leadership integration, career, and work-life balance based on the expansion of gender equality. The qualitative descriptive method aims to discover and describe the phenomena of the studied variables narratively (non-numerical). The results show that the integration of women's leadership in career and work life balance is urgent to ensure a harmonious and productive relationship between both, to achieve the goals of organizations/institutions/companies. The challenge is not easy, and it needs to be strengthened in the dimensions of: a) Personal life enhancement of work—how personal and family life can improve someone's performance in an organization/institution/company, and b) Work enhancement of personal life—how work influences the quality of someone's personal and family life.

From these conclusions, it is recommended that the government prepare adequate policies to develop women's leadership and strengthen access to education, health, and the economy, so they have sufficient social capital to develop a career that is harmonious with their personal and family interests.

Keywords: Women's Leadership Integration, Work-Life Balance, Gender Equality

1. INTRODUCTION

The dual role of women cannot be separated from their natural role as women who can give birth, nurture children, take care of the household, serve their husbands, care for parents, and pursue careers in various fields they desire. For example, careers as entrepreneurs, educators, religious leaders, employees in various companies/industries, civil servants, members of the military and police, politicians, presidents, vice presidents, ministers, regional heads, managers/company leaders, and more. To fulfill this dual role requires high levels of willpower

and self-commitment, along with support from various parties, especially from the husband and family.

The achievement of Indonesian women's emancipation has shown significant progress, with women reaching high positions such as President, Vice President, Ministers, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Governors, Vice Governors, Regents, Deputy Regents, Mayors/Deputy Mayors, members of legislative bodies, leadership positions in judicial institutions, CEOs of state-owned enterprises, CEOs of private companies, managers, and more. This progress is tied to the struggle of R.A. Kartini, who is a key figure in the emancipation of women.

However, there is an important issue behind the career advancement of women in understanding gender equality, allowing them to progress without losing their identity. On the other hand, the progress in gender equality has not yet been felt by all women in Indonesia. Many women are still marginalized or sidelined because they are in disadvantaged conditions—poor, uneducated, or still bound by certain cultural traditions in specific communities.

Therefore, the challenges faced are becoming increasingly heavy. It is necessary to strengthen efforts to expand the role of women in societal, national, and state life. It is crucial and urgent to integrate women's leadership in their careers with work life balance (work-life balance), both for themselves and for the members they lead, based on the expansion of gender equality.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

a. Women's Leadership Theory

Leadership between women and men is fundamentally the same; what differentiates them is their leadership style, which is influenced by gender characteristics. The multi-tasking ability of women will affect the dynamics within the organization/institution/company they lead. Emotional and intellectual maturity are essential so that the core functions and leadership duties can be carried out effectively and efficiently to achieve established goals. According to Daniel Goleman et al., there are six leadership styles: visionary, coaching, affiliative, democratic, pacesetting, and commanding, each of which will have different impacts on those being led (https://www.hrd-forum.com/the-six-leadership-styles-daniel-goleman).

Research by Yulianti et al. concluded that women's leadership has two styles: feminist and transformational. These styles excel in the ability to persuade, disprove criticism, foster team

spirit, exhibit strong charisma, take risks, multitask, and show patience. These qualities enable women to hold a central position in societal development (Yulianti et al., 2018).

b. Work-Life Balance

The ability of a person to balance between work demands and personal/family needs is a significant challenge for career women or female leaders. This situation is referred to as work life balance or work-life balance, where both matters must run harmoniously. Therefore, integrating career and work life balance is urgent.

There are four dimensions that shape work-life balance: a) Work interference with personal life – the extent to which work disrupts personal and family matters.

b) Personal life interference with work – the extent to which personal and family life disrupts work matters.

c) Personal life enhancement of work – the extent to which personal and family life improves someone's performance in an organization/institution/company.

d) Work enhancement of personal life – the extent to which work influences the quality of personal and family life (Moorhead & Griffin, 2013).

Work-life balance provides substantial benefits for the performance of individuals, families, organizations/institutions/companies. Proper management is necessary to make these factors constructive. Its benefits include: a) reducing tardiness/absenteeism; b) increasing productivity; c) increasing commitment and loyalty; d) improving job satisfaction; e) strengthening job security; f) reducing stress; and g) improving both physical and mental health.

c. Gender Equality

The struggle for women's emancipation in Indonesia began with Raden Ajeng Kartini and has since grown significantly. However, further strengthening is needed so that opportunities can be utilized by all Indonesian women. Many issues concerning women still need to be resolved, including access to education, healthcare, and the economy. Such efforts are essential so that women can experience progress, justice, and prosperity. The continued

existence of patriarchal culture in society results in gender inequality, which has negative impacts on social life.

Currently, equal opportunities and better living conditions are mostly enjoyed by the elite class of women. Therefore, an affirmative policy is needed to ensure greater equity and harmony. The advancement of women will determine the progress of future generations. In the workforce, achieving work-life balance requires the implementation of proactive and reactive strategies tailored to the stress levels experienced by each individual as they pursue their career and manage family life. This is especially important for female leaders who face a more complex dual role (Heath, 2012).

Molloy, in Heath (2012), concludes in her research that the greatest challenges to work-life balance include time management (39%), organization (16%), financial pressure (10%), lack of energy (9%), emotional management (9%), childcare (7%), saying 'No' (7%), and living with a focused partner (25%). In her book *Get a Life*, she explains strategies for work-life balance such as: focusing on dreams, priorities, people, and finances; being organized; avoiding stress; connecting with others; and pursuing goals.

3.   RESEARCH   METHOD

This research design is a descriptive qualitative one, which analyzes data regarding the variables of women's leadership integration, career, and work-life balance based on the expansion of gender equality. The qualitative descriptive method is intended to find and describe the phenomena from the studied variables narratively (non-numerical).

4.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Success in a career for a woman is an extraordinary achievement, considering that they have a dual role (multi-tasking) that is not easy, especially for female leaders. Behind the success of women's leadership, there is always support from their family. Essentially, a woman's leadership success is not solely the result of her own efforts; it is a contribution and collaboration from those who support her. It is important and urgent to integrate women's leadership in their career and work life balance to achieve the desired goals. Conflicts between these two interests should be minimized so that they remain harmonious and non-counterproductive. Career interests and

personal/family interests should support each other. It would be wonderful if career success for a woman could lead to the welfare of her personal and family life; likewise, family success can drive the career success of a woman.

The social system (where women are considered inferior to men), cultural values (where women are regarded as secondary), and men's attitudes towards feminism (with most men viewing women not as competitors but as companions) are all significant factors. Internally, women's strengths include their desire to be on par with men, perseverance, honesty, thoroughness, having a humanistic yet firm leadership style, and family support. Leadership is an art of emotional management, adhering to rules and responsibilities. Weaknesses include feeling guilty for leaving their family (in this case, a mother should help her children understand the situation without neglecting their needs) and managing the dual role of being a housewife (ensuring home tasks such as preparing meals for children are done before leaving for work) while also earning an income. Sometimes, when a woman surpasses her husband in financial success, she must maintain respect for him to prevent feeling undervalued.

In integrating women's leadership in their career and work life balance, it is essential to strengthen the following dimensions: a) Personal life enhancement of work – how personal and family life improves someone's performance in an organization/institution/company; and b) Work enhancement of personal life – how work affects the quality of someone's personal and family life. Mitigation must be carried out so that women's career interests do not conflict with their work life balance (work-life balance). Strengthening literacy, internalization, and mentoring is very necessary to prepare women for leadership roles.

Regarding the long struggle of women, according to Prof. Suratman, there are still many obstacles or controversies, both from external and internal factors. The quality of women's lives has improved over the last decade, and Indonesian women are a potential resource who, when given opportunities, will advance, improve their quality independently, and become drivers of national development. However, many issues remain unresolved, such as high levels of violence against women, gender disparities in development, limited access to better healthcare and higher education for most women, and the lack of women's roles in broader public institutions (such as political participation and strategic positions in government).

In the current era of rapidly changing information and communication technology, or the digital era, women's leadership must transform to handle global issues affecting Indonesia. Achieving leadership at the national level is not easy for a woman, as it is still influenced by gender issues and injustice. The higher the leadership position, the lower the proportion of women, but there are still opportunities for women to occupy various leadership roles, both structural and functional. To face global challenges, visionary women leaders who think innovatively, have time management skills, foster teamwork, are self-aware, and have gender perspectives are required.

The career development pattern of an individual is influenced by their family environment—parents, spouses, and children. The dynamics of this environment need to be properly adjusted to maximize career achievement. Mutual openness and support will positively influence a woman's success in reaching high career levels and becoming a leader. High career achievement is expected to lead to personal and family welfare. The condition and number of family members also influence a woman's career success. The employment profile in Indonesia shows that more than 70% of workers belong to the "sandwich generation," where workers are responsible for the generation above them (their parents) and the generation below them (their children). This affects their productivity and competitiveness (Hadiningrat, 2023). Women leaders in the industrial sector must consider these labor conditions and mitigate them, along with action plans to make workers more productive and competitive.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the integration of women's leadership in career and work life balance (work-life balance) is important and urgent. This integration is necessary to ensure a harmonious and productive relationship between the two in achieving the goals of organizations/institutions/companies. The challenges are not easy, and it is essential to strengthen the following dimensions: a) Personal life enhancement of work – how personal and family life can improve someone's performance in an organization/institution/company; and b) Work enhancement of personal life – how work influences the quality of personal and family life.

From these conclusions, it is recommended that the government develop adequate policies to support women's leadership and improve access to education, health, and the economy. These

improvements will provide women with the necessary social capital to develop a career that is harmonious with their personal and family interests.

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