SUMMARY

Academic Careers of Women and Men in Indonesia: Barriers and Opportunities

The overall purpose of the study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of career success in Indonesian academia, from a gender perspective. Despite voluminous literature and research on career success, a paucity of studies has empirically investigated gendered career success in Indonesian academia. The present study attempts to fill the gap in research about career success by supplying empirical career research of Indonesian academia.

To achieve this purpose, three separate-yet-interconnected empirical studies were carried out using different approaches: preliminary, exploratory, and explanatory analyses. The first empirical study was aimed at better understanding of gender differences in career advancement in Indonesian academia. A survey was distributed to 10 conveniently selected universities to portray the administrative and academic ranks, the managerial and leadership positions, and the advancement speed of the administrative and academic staff based on gender. The most important finding from this study is that compared to men, women are less successful in their academic careers in terms of achieving higher academic ranks and leadership positions. This study provides empirical evidence for the prevalence of gender gap in academic careers, despite the fact that the State Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia operate on the same regulations and policies.

The second empirical study was to explore barriers to academic career advancement, particularly those that women face in advancing to higher academic rank and leadership positions in Indonesian academia. In-depth interviews were conducted with 25 academic staff in six state universities from diverse backgrounds i.e., gender, age, academic rank, leadership positions, educational qualifications, and expertise. This study concludes that apart from individual-related and organizational-related constrains, family-related issues are barriers
commonly faced by women in advancing their academic careers in terms of achieving higher academic rank and leadership positions.

The third empirical study was to investigate success factors that contribute to both objective and subjective career success in academia. A nationwide survey was conducted. Seven-hundred and fifty questionnaires were distributed randomly to 18 universities in 11 provinces in Indonesia, from which 469 respondents returned the questionnaires with an analyzable quality. Based on the model developed, three sets of correlates of career success in academia were analyzed. This study results in eight important conclusions. First, both men and women need to be older to achieve higher academic rank, but only women need to be older to gain a leadership position. Second, to gain leadership positions, both men and women academics need to be more frequently involved in committees and to focus on building stronger networks inside their organizations. Third, although men’s and women’s income increases along with their age, men’s income is always higher than women’s. Fourth, men and women academics are equally satisfied with their careers; however, those who are ambitious are more satisfied with their careers than the less ambitious. Fifth, family emotional support is more important for women’s career satisfaction than for men’s. Sixth, while men and women are equally engaged in their careers, those who are older tend to be more engaged in their careers than those younger. Seventh, while proactive lecturers have higher work engagement, proactivity is more beneficial to men’s work engagement than to women’s. Eighth, men and women academics who perceive their organization as being highly political have lower work engagement.

Overall, this study has provided a more illuminating explanation about why women are less successful in their academic careers compared to men, and supplied important empirical evidence on factors contributing to both objective and subjective career outcomes in
academia. In addition, while the epistemology chosen in this thesis is primarily objectivist (gender as a variable), in an attempt to contextualize to Indonesian academia, some facets of the constructivist approach (gender and career as social constructs) are brought in. This endeavor contributes to a contextualized, *emic* understanding of gender and careers in Indonesian academia, using a *multimethod* approach.

The practical implications of the thesis are as follows. First, to reduce the gender gap in academia, the government and each individual university in Indonesia should strengthen law enforcement of gender discrimination and reinforce the implementation of equal opportunity. The human resource department in each university should start tracking careers of a cohort of new recruits over time to see if there are disparities in progress. Then, to help in combining home responsibilities and work duties all universities could provide family care centers within campus, and provide special incentives for those experiencing difficulty with work-family combinations. Next, universities should introduce well-structured training on leadership for women and increase inclusion of women in lower level leadership positions as on-the-job training for future higher leadership. Finally, while women need to use networking more strategically for their career trajectories, the university needs to provide facilitation for women’s networking.

Further research may be directed towards exploring the strategies and resources used for achieving career outcomes and for overcoming challenges in career advancement in Indonesian academia. Research focusing on exploring experiences of women who have successfully managed to achieve the highest positions may be done in the future. Furthermore, further research may pay more attention to the correlates of subjective career success in academia. Finally, factors that contribute to the discriminatory effects on career success in the highly regulated system may be conducted in the future.