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The Journey of Women's Career to Top Management: A Systematic Literature Review using PRISMA

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Abstract

Women's involvement in top management is vital in producing positive impacts on the company's performance. It can be seen in their focus on managerial aspects, social relationships and financial affairs of the company. However, the career progression of the women in attaining top management positions is often seen as slow and unstable. Therefore, this systematic literature reviews the factors influencing women's career to top management. This study is done using PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis) methodology through identification, screening, and eligibility process. This method allows discovery of new dimension of knowledge by using various group data for further research. This study chooses articles from two primary databases: Scopus and Web of Science (WoS); and one secondary database which is Google Scholar. Based on thematic analysis, eight factors were identified in this study that will support women's journey to the top management: (i) work-life balance; (ii) organizational support; (iii) sponsorship; (iv) mentoring; (v) soft skills; (vi) job experience; (vii) social networks; and (viii) career strategy. However, more in-depth studies are needed on women's career development process are needed to assist the development goals that has been formulated for women in the country. An efficient solution is needed as the issue of women lacking participation in top management has been going on for a long time. Therefore, this study can serve as a reference point for stakeholders who are involved in formulation of policies involving women's developments to enhance the role of women in the country.

Keywords: Systematic Literature Review, Women, Top Management

Introduction

The participation of women in top management are important (Pastore & Tommaso, 2019). as it can produce positive impacts to the performance of an organization (Adams, 2016; Arun et al., 2018). Their role can be seen in their ability to handle endogenic issues, corporate governance, risk management and quality audit (QualityScore1, 2018; Zalata et al., 2019). They also act as a representative to the stakeholders and a good decision maker in ensuring good financial performance of the company, as well as corporate social responsibility (Zainal & Othman, 2019). The government have also implemented various initiatives and policies to

increase the participation of women in top management (Huang et al., 2020). Besides that, three countries; Germany, Japan and Malaysia, for instance, have approved a 30 per cent gender quota in top management position to be held by women (Terjesen & Sealy, 2016; Zainal & Othman, 2019). In some countries, higher gender quota were allocated. For instance, the governments of Spain, Iceland, Italy and Belgium requires organizations to allocate between 33 per cent to 40 per cent of top management positions allocated to women (Al-Jaifi, 2020). These policies aim to encourage more women to take on opportunities and be more motivated to attain managerial positions. Besides that, the women representation in top management can indirectly elevate the status of women (Arun et al., 2018). This is proved with some exemplary women such as Melinda Gates, Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton, Angela Merkel, Indra Nooyi, Ursula Burns, Meg Whitman, dan Sheryl Sandberg (Longman et al., 2019).

However, the advancement of women's career to achieve top management levels have shown a slow and unstable development (Einarsdottir et al., 2018; Katherina, 2018). This resulted in low percentage of women holding top management, thus not reaching the targeted numbers (Opoku & Williams, 2019; Tyrowicz et al., 2020; Zainuddin & Talib, 2018). This is evident with the percentage of women holding top management positions in corporations to be only at 16.9 per cent in 2016 (Huang et al., 2020). Meanwhile, the statistics of women representation in other countries are: 28 per cent (United Kingdom); United States (6 per cent); Malaysia (15.4 per cent), Germany (6.3 per cent); and Japan (3.1 per cent) (Ministry of Women Family and Community Development, 2018; Spencer et al., 2019; Terjesen & Sealy 2016). In 2018, there are only 25 female CEOs (or 4.8 per cent) in Fortune companies which indicates a large gap in women representatives among top managements (Samara et al., 2018). Torres et al (2020) stated that the lack of representation will lead to lack of feminine style of management in solving various issues. This is because women play an important role in the process of socio-economic development around the world, especially at the top level because they can provide an impactful wellbeing in the welfare of women, children and families (Abraham et al., 2017) which in turn can homogeneously making optimal decision on national policies (Adams et al., 2015).

Many studies have highlighted the barriers of women in attaining top management positions (Nafeesa & Brindha, 2019). Previous literature also shows that gender discrimination hinders the advancement of women's careers (Zainuddin & Talib, 2018). This causes difficulties for women to be employed, promoted and to get salary increments (Goy et al., 2018; Lopez et al., 2020; Thelwall, 2020). Besides that, the working culture that do not support the development of women's career will greatly influence the motivation levels of women within the organization (Kapur et al., 2016). The next factor is the lack of guidance and support in career building (Berra & Cavaletto, 2020). This makes it difficult for women to cope with career challenges, so often that they leave their jobs or move on to other professional sectors (Lopez et al., 2020). This issue causes women to face challenges in their career and affect their performance to move towards attaining top management positions (Abidin et al., 2019; Berra & Cavaletto, 2020; Toyibah, 2019). Besides that, this factor also contributed to the lack of participation of women in top management organizations (Naima, 2016).

The career development process begins from the time a woman enters the organization and continues until the end of their service (Cho et al., 2019). They need to develop their abilities by setting a vision, to learn organizational functions, to understand the concept of job rotation in becoming a professional, and to solve problems strategically with the stakeholders (Longman et al., 2019). Weimann (2020) stated that the involvement of women in the

economy needs to be understood in a top-down process to identify the factors that influence women's career achievement. This understanding is important in highlighting women as a strong and resilient professional in pursuit of their careers (Khilji & Pumroy, 2019).

The strategic experience of women's success is important to increase their chances of placing themselves in top management (Selvadurai et al., 2020). Therefore, it is important to understand their experience in overcoming career challenges and what strategy helps them to achieve their success (Bardekjian et al., 2019). However, there is still lack of research on their success in achieving top management levels (Schoen & Rost., 2020). Furthermore, there is no comprehensive study that combines result from several countries and career fields, thus creating a knowledge gap in identifying how women overcome their career challenges to become board members, CEOs, leaders, or upper-level managers in their organization. Further studies are needed to promote careers and increase women's participation in top management (Bowles et al., 2017 & Huang et al., 2020). Therefore, this study aims to:

- explore the factors that influence the success of women in top management.
- Identify the detail components of the factors that potentially contribute to the journey of the women to achieve to the top management

This study can contribute to providing strategic planning for the future to develop women's policy in accordance to changes in culture, education and leadership style (Place & Vardeman, 2018).

Methodology

The Review Protocol – PRISMA

This study uses the systematic literature method called PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyzes). This method can provide a new dimension of knowledge using various datasets to investigate the issue in detail (Zalata et al., 2019). The PRISMA uses systematic methods that can identify, select, evaluate critically, extract and analyze data from relevant research (Higgins, 2011). The process is carried out systematically to obtain minimal research findings based on evidence for research reporting (PRISMA, 2015). This allows the researchers to examine the findings with transparency, consistency and with high levels of standard (Harden et al., 2018). Therefore, this guideline is selected to enable researchers to make relevant and appropriate details in analyzing the quality and accuracy of a survey (Ridhwan & Jamal, 2020).

Systematic Searching Strategies

The systematic strategy of article search will be explained using three main processes namely, identification, screening and eligibility. Next, the data will be processed and analyzed to ensure the quality of the study content (PRISMA, 2015; Shaffril et al., 2020).

Identification

Identification is the process of finding synonyms, related terms and variations for key keywords in obtaining research-related articles (Shaffril et al., 2020). The process of finding keywords is based on research questions. The search process for related and similar terms is done using online thesaurus. Besides that, the keywords are also referenced based on previous studies by researchers such as (Ingrid and Choroszewicz, 2019; Kumar and Lenka, 2016; Muenks et al., 2020; Pastore and Tommaso, 2019; Samara et al., 2018; Solimene et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2020; Cho et al., 2016). This process also uses a full search strategy using Boolean operator techniques, phrase searching, truncation wild card, and field code functions

as shown in Table 1. Rao (2019) & Shaffril et al (2020) stated that the research sources from Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) are important for systematic review to determine survey results, validity and clarity strength. The quality of the database from Scopus features comprehensive research information, relevant research, expert evaluation and systematic data quality (data access, metrics, and reliable analytical tools (Scopus, 2021). The WoS-Journal database publishes papers that pass comprehensive editorial process to ensure accurate and complete journal quality and data quality structure (WOS, 2019). Besides two databases, there is also an addition of three articles from Google Scholar. Google Scholar acts as a support database in a systematic review process (Haddaway et al., 2015). The keywords will then be processed in three major journal databases, namely, Scopus, Web of Science and Google Scholar. Based on search result, a total of 537 articles were found on Scopus while 462 articles were found on Web of Science. The search string is highlighted on Table 1.

Table 1

The Search String (adapted from Shaffril et al., 2020)

Database	Search string
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY (("women* achieve*" OR "women* board*" OR "women* leader*" OR "professional* women*" OR "influence* women*" OR "women* career*" OR "female* director*" OR "women* success*" OR "women* empowerment*" OR "women* employment*") AND ("corporate* field*" OR "corporate* boards*" OR "corporate* governance*" OR "board* director*" OR "career* advancement*" OR "top* management*" OR "chief executive officer" OR "career* development*" OR "career* mobility*"))
Web of Science	TS = (("women* achieve*" OR "women* board*" OR "women* leader*" OR "professional* women*" OR "influence* women*" OR "women* career*" OR "female* director*" OR "women* success*" OR "women* empowerment*" OR "women* employment*") AND ("corporate* field*" OR "corporate* boards*" OR "corporate* governance*" OR "board* director*" OR "career* advancement*" OR "top* management*" OR "chief executive officer" OR "career* development*" OR "career* mobility*"))

Screening

The screening process focuses on full research articles in the final stages. Therefore, articles from chapters in books, seminars, reviews and proceedings will be excluded. In addition, the articles sourced were written in English from the year 2017 to 2021. Articles that do not meet the criteria are excluded. After the process has been carried out, a total of 432 articles were extracted from two major database: 199 articles were extracted from Scopus and 233 articles were extracted from Web of Science.

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	2017-2021	<2017
Document type	Article Journal	Article review, chapters in book, book series, book, conference proceeding
language	English	Non-English

Eligibility

The eligibility process selects article that focuses on the success of women in achieving top management positions in various fields, such as CEO, board member and senior leadership of the organization. Any studies that use methods other than quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods will be excluded. The author has made an in-depth and thorough reading to ensure the accuracy of the study content. Articles that do not meet the criteria will be excluded. Any studies that match the criteria will be abstracted and placed in the table according to the theme. This study has selected 14 articles from Scopus, WoS and google Scholar that will be discussed and analyzed based on flow diagram (see Figure 1).

Data Abstraction and Analysis

14 articles were abstracted in this study. Two studies use quantitative methods, and the remaining twelve studies uses qualitative methods. 14 articles were abstracted carefully especially in the abstract, results and discussion section. Subsequently, a thematic analysis is conducted to identify the themes related to recording the patterns, groupings, equations, and relationships that existed in the abstract data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is considered most appropriate in synthesizing various forms of research (Flemming et al., 2018). From the abstraction and analysis, the theme pattern has been identified from the articles in Table 2.

Results

Background of the Selected Articles

Based on the thematic analysis conducted on 14 articles, eight themes were identified: (i) work-life balance; (ii) sponsorship; (iii) mentoring; (iv) organizational support; (v) soft skills; (vi) job experience; (vii) social network; and (viii) career strategy. Out of 14 articles, one study was conducted in Malaysia, Cambodia, Canada, South Korea, Australia respectively, two studies were conducted in South Africa, two studies were conducted in India and the remaining five studies were conducted in the United States. For the year of publication, one article was published in 2020, five articles were published in 2019, six articles were published in 2018 and two articles were published in 2017.

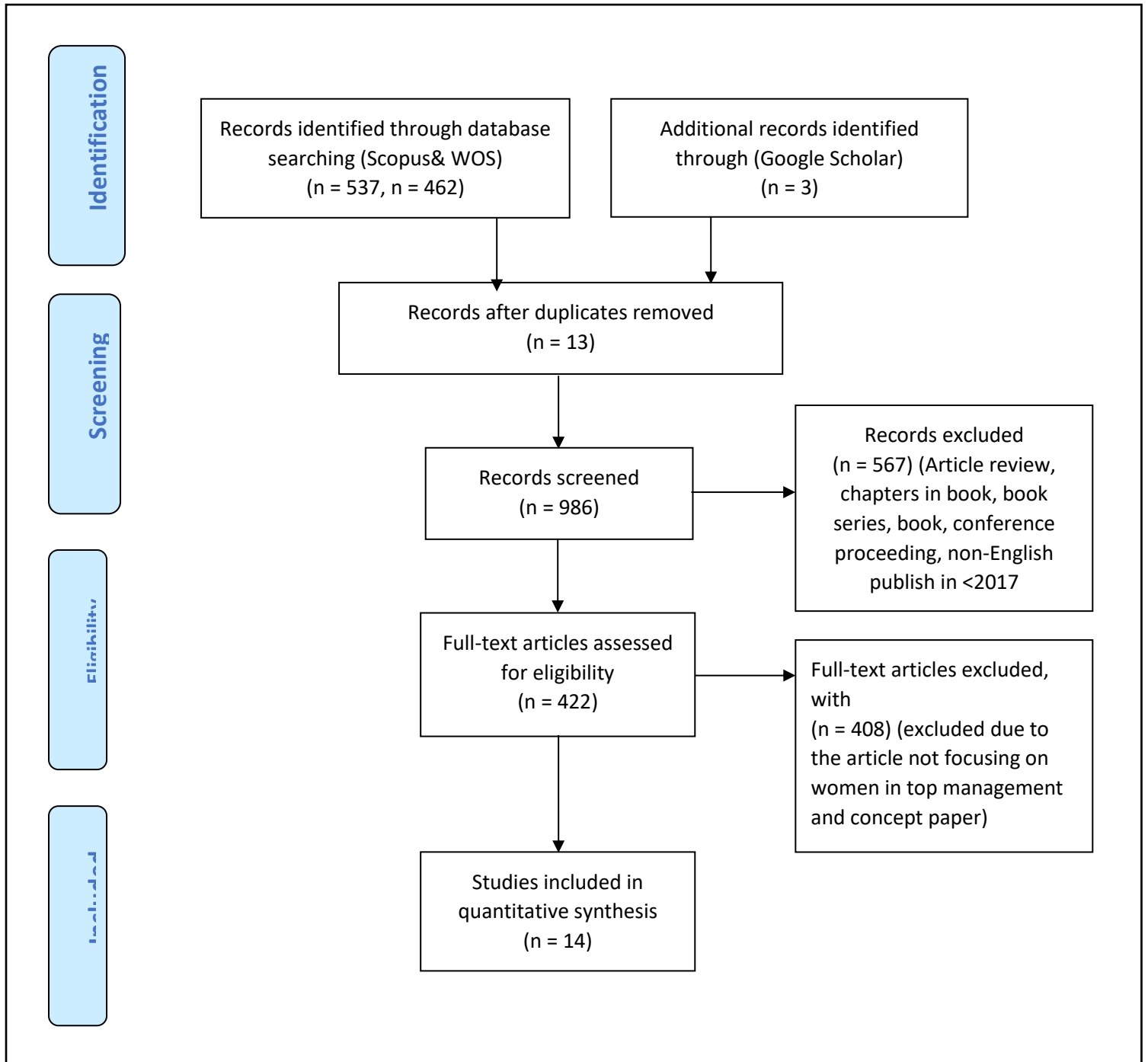


Figure 1. The flow diagram (adapted from Maamin et al., 2020).

Table 2
The Themes (adapted from Shaffril et al., 2020).

Studies	Research Design	Field	Work-Life Balance	Organizational Support	Sponsorship	Mentoring	Soft Skills	Job Experience	Social Networks	Career Strategy
(Bardekjian et al., 2019)	Quantitative	Urban forestry and arboriculture			✓	✓	✓			
(Cho et al., 2019)	Qualitative	Multinational corporations	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		
(Francis, 2017)	Quantitative	Construction management						✓		
(Longman et al., 2019)	Qualitative	Education	✓		✓	✓			✓	
(Selzer & Robles, 2019)	Qualitative	Education	✓			✓				✓
(Ballakrishnen et al., 2019)	Qualitative	Multinational corporations	✓				✓			✓
(Guptill et al., 2018)	Qualitative	Health	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
(Bhattacharya et al., 2018)	Quantitative	Information technology		✓			✓			
(Scheepers et al., 2018)	Qualitative	Corporate organisations			✓	✓				
(Arun et al., 2018)	Qualitative	Tourism	✓				✓		✓	
(Remington & Kitterlin, 2018)	Qualitative	Tourism		✓			✓		✓	

(Carrim, 2018)	Qualitative	Corporate organisations	✓	✓			✓		✓	
(Selvadurai et al., 2020)	Qualitative	Corporate organisations		✓			✓	✓	✓	
(Datta & Agarwal, 2017)	Qualitative	Corporate organisations	✓					✓	✓	

The Themes and The Sub-Themes

Work-life balance

The work-life balance is a key aspect influencing women's achievement in top management (Selzer et al., 2017). Besides playing a role in organizational management, women also play a role in managing their household as wives, mothers, and caregiving their elderly. Therefore, they need to learn balancing both family and work commitments (Datta & Agarwal, 2017). The support of family members such as giving advice for strategic career planning, good communication and gender equality support is very helpful in building their career (Longman et al., 2019). The support from the husband such as respecting and understanding the wife's career can increase women's motivation to give their commitment to career gains (Cho et al., 2019). However, women should also strive to respect their husbands as household decision makers even if they are leaders in office (Carrim, 2018).

Organizations can also implement professional development programmes by highlighting the composition of family balance as a one of the women's leadership strategies (Ballakrishnen et al., 2019). This in turn, can encourage them to be confident and feel the sense of greatness in achieving success (Guptill et al., 2018). To achieve this balance, women need to be aware of protecting their rights as employees such as maternity leave, flexible working hours, mobile work arrangement and special arrangement for time with families in ensuring better quality of work (Arun et al., 2018). Besides that, the organization needs to ensure the women are able to balance their tasks as failure to manage family obligations will hinder their progress in the workplace (Bardekjian et al., 2019). By allowing flexible working arrangement for women after delivery, organizations can do a very great favour in their professional career growth (Datta & Agarwal, 2017). This in turn, cause women to better manage their social relationships and strengthening their career identity further in corporate world.

Organizational Support

The organizational support becomes the second factor that greatly influence women's career development (Francis, 2017). The environment within an organization such as gender-neutral promotion channels, workplace facilities, support of female colleagues, social capital relationships and career guidance have influenced women's participation in top management (Monserrat & Simmers, 2020). Therefore, the organization needs to put in capable women as managers who can work closely and collaboratively with female employees at various levels (Bhattacharya et al., 2018). The ability to work collaboratively is very important in every organization because good decision makers need to cooperate with all levels of the organization to get recommendations, seeking advice, and to consider employee ideas before making a decision (Remington & Kitterlin, 2018). In addition, the organization should serve as a place for corporate training or career development. For instance, the formation of a 30 per cent club to support the 30 per cent quota involving women as decision makers and to defend their position after appointment (Selvadurai et al., 2020). Overall, the organizational support depends on the supervision gained by women to enjoy all the initiatives that have been discussed to spur their career advancement (Cho et al., 2019).

Sponsorship

The third factor that influence women's career advancement is the need for women to get sponsorship (Bardekjian et al., 2019). Sponsorship means a stakeholder in an organization that helps in advancing women's career in the organization. The stakeholders will also address career barriers, speeding up the career growth process, and recognizing women's career to

get a position in the organization (Longman et al., 2019). This influence is also not discriminated against by gender or race but rather emphasizes the potential and talent of women to contribute to the organization (Scheepers et al., 2018). This in turn, provides an opportunity for women to strengthen their vision, ideas and thoughts with the support of various parties. However, this factor requires women putting up efforts, which can be done by sharing their goals with the right people to help them succeed (Guptill et al., 2018).

Mentoring

The fourth factor is the role of the mentor as an advisor who helps and supports the advancement of women in the organization. Mentors above the age of 50 are more likely to give mentorship in developing women's career (Scheepers et al., 2018). The experience of a mentor in corporate world helps in providing advice to women in charting their career paths (Cho et al., 2019). The women opined that an experienced mentor can motivate them to be confident, enthusiastic, and always wanting to learn new things (Bardekjian et al., 2019). For instance, the female CEOs in South Korea conducted a mentorship programme via professional outsourced training programs in sharing their journey and process of becoming a CEO. Such guidance can build relationships between women in order to highlight the successful thinking that has been achieved (Longman et al., 2019).

The women can also find their mentors' strategies as a useful guideline to life coaching and career growth. This is important as to allow women to be aware of things they may have not done and to benefit from such enlightenment (Longman et al., 2019). The awareness can be given in many ways such as teaching them how to manage effectively (operations, estimation, supervision) and leadership skills (vision, influence, and communication) in order to strategically plan their career (Selzer & Robles, 2019). Therefore, the selection of mentors is not only limited to the same professionals, but rather can be made across different fields in order to examine the development process and thus, allowing women to identify and strategically plan their career (Guptill et al., 2018).

Soft skills

Soft skills are the fifth factor identified in this study which consist of five sub-skills. Any women experiencing gender discrimination are advice to sharpen their communication skills as it is one of the key skills in getting themselves opportunities to participate in top management (Arun et al., 2018 & Bardekjian et al., 2019). Communication also involves proficiency in English as the lingua franca and also the business language that needs to be learned in order to make them look professional and also to increase self-confidence (Carrim, 2018). Besides language, mastering informal communication skills is also important. Having a good communication skill, especially with supervisors is vital in managing work conflicts and to accurately identify any arising problems (Datta & Agarwal, 2017). From the findings above, the communication tools not only involve proficiency in English but also has to be able to interact with all employees across different levels of the organization (Cho et al., 2019). The second skill is the problem-solving skill. The ability to solve problems will be an added advantage for women to be selected in top management because these skills are important to show the feminine strength in resolving conflict management (Arun et al., 2018). The third sub-skill is flexibility or adaptability in the organization (Bardekjian et al., 2019). This is an important skill as the industry is constantly changing, thus requiring adjustments within the organization (Remington & Kitterlin, 2018). For instance, women need to take initiative by formulating strategies in securing projects by looking at the needs or changes in policy in

accordance to the stakeholders' need (Carrim, 2018). They also need to uphold their principles and identity which can be done by taking inspiration from the previous women leaders (Guptill et al., 2018). The fourth sub-skill is the interpersonal skills. Interpersonal skill leads to self-confidence, ambition and competence in their career (Bhattacharya et al., 2018) Women facing gender-based discrimination need to focus on honing their ability to manage social relationships, negotiation, and resilience in facing career challenges (Bardekjian et al., 2019). These skills can be inculcated through involvement in corporate social responsibility (CSR). By engaging with the community and raising the company's image, it can motivate them to perform well in their jobs (Selvadurai et al., 2020).

The fifth sub-skill is the personal work culture such as being enthusiastic, hardworking, accepting challenges, being persistent and having a positive attitude. These attributes become a value-added skill to women's personality in showing their work competencies (Cho et al., 2019). These sub-skills are significant because when combined, it enhances their leadership skills. This allows women to exhibit exceptional performance as decision maker which in turn, contributed to the organization's performance (Arun et al., 2018). As a result, it can strengthen women's communication skills, interpersonal skills, flexibility and problem-solving skills in the organization. Therefore, these skills will help women to develop their professional identity to be selected for top management position (Ballakrishnen et al., 2018).

Job Experience

Job experience becomes the sixth factor identified in this study. The work experience influences the selection of women in holding top management positions (Francis, 2017). The work experience which includes the abilities of women in the aspects of research, marketing and organization management can convince the stakeholders more as opposed to only having level of education (Cho et al., 2019). Besides that, women also need to be knowledgeable or to acquire knowledge through corporate trainings in the fields of law, finance, technology, quality systems and human resources to facilitate collaboration with the stakeholders. These experiences ensure that women have added value to gain experience in corporate sector (Selvadurai et al., 2020), thus helping women to be better prepared to advance their career progression (Datta & Agarwal, 2017).

Social networks

Social networks are the seventh factors identified in this study. Social networks are influential relationships and is key in the process of developing personal identity which is done through social interaction with employees of the organization or the stakeholders (Longman et al., 2019). The formation of social networks between women helps them to become a smart and visionary individual through sharing of process in becoming a successful person. Any women who have quality relationships with organizations will also have low workplace conflict, better job satisfaction and better well-being (Datta & Agarwal, 2017). The network ensures that new employees are approachable to build cooperation and coordination in various departments (Arun et al., 2018). It is important as to ensure women can aggressively build their career. This strategy can make their achievement more recognizable and in turn, will be considered for job promotion (Remington & Kitterlin, 2018). This is because, networking with top management shows the ability and professionalism of women in contributing to the organization (Selvadurai et al., 2020). Corporate culture also shows career mobility at the top management level depends on the social networks built by the individual (Carrim, 2018).

Therefore, women are advised to avoid conflicts in social networks so that the focus forms a culture of mutual help to achieve excellence (Guptill et al., 2018).

Career planning

The eighth factor identified in this study is career planning. Women need to be smart in overcoming challenges and to have an action plan as organizations is the ideal place to execute a variety of career strategies (Ballakrishnen et al., 2019). They also need to familiarize themselves with policies and procedures to undergo top management process (Selzer & Robles, 2019). Besides that, in some situations they need to take action such as building social networks or switching to other fields (Cho et al., 2019). This factor is able to build their confidence and strengths as decision maker, therefore allowing the women to further demonstrate their role in reducing gender leadership gaps (Guptill et al., 2018).

Discussion

This study has systematically analyzed the factors influencing women's achievement at the top level. Through the systematic literature survey, the study found that there are eight themes relating to achievement of the women and top management, namely, work-life balance, organizational support, sponsorship, mentoring, soft skills, job experience, social networks and career strategy. The work-life balance factors and organizational support does have a significant impact on women's career advancement. As stated by Berra & Cavaletto (2020), the lack of support by those around them will complicate the career building progress. Secondly, the soft skill factor consists of five sub-skills which is: a) communication; b) work culture; c) leadership; d) problem solving; and e) interpersonal. The findings indicate that these factors need to be considered in order to develop self-efficacy to be professional and to solve problems strategically with the stakeholders (Longman et al., 2019), which in turn addresses gender discrimination in career advancement (Zainuddin & Talib, 2018). For sponsorship, mentoring, job experience, social networks and career strategy factors, it needs to be planned and implemented by women because failure in career planning often results in women leaving their jobs or moving on to different sector (Emilia et. al., 2020).

These factors indicate that career planning in top management is an important process. As stated by Ederle (1951), career development is a process influenced by the actions taken by individuals. This process is lifelong learning for productivity to individuals and organizations (Watts, 1994). This is because, career development will undergo change depending on individual and organizational goals (Gilbert & Hanson, 1983). Therefore, this process developed with various themes and issues factor (Achour et al., 2017). This is consistent with Krumboltz's career theory that genetic endowments and special abilities, environmental conditions and events, learning experiences & task approach will determine career development (Krumboltz, 1979). This theory explains that genetic endowments and special abilities will influence individuals to adapt to the economic, social and cultural factors. Environmental conditions and events are the learning opportunities to individuals to make decisions in future actions. This theory also shows that learning experiences will help the career development process of women starting from the lower levels until they reach the top management position. Therefore, all these factors will lead to the support of task approach skills such as problem-solving skills & work habits will determine career development of women's career. As a result, women can identify their own skills to set appropriate career or training strategies.

Therefore, to continuously fulfil the gender quota, there are few changes that need to be implemented. The changes can be done by integrating their work-life balance and providing a conducive organizational environment (Katherina & Salvaj, 2018), through cooperation in corporate responsibility which can improve gender balance by reducing organizational conflict (Yarram & Adapa, 2021). Furthermore, the participation of women is not merely to meet allocated quota but rather to take into consideration the qualification and trust by employers towards women on their ability in improving organizational performance (Maggian et al., 2020). This can be seen in their focus on the aspects of management, social and financial relations of the organization (De Masi et al., 2021; Patnaik & Debnath, 2019).

Future Direction

The study on women policies and development needs to be further explored in accordance to the social dimension of women in every country. This study is important to help decision makers in identifying which development channels needs to be improved. The lack of research on women's achievement will prevent every countries' goal to increase women's inclusion. It is important to study the factors contributing to women's success in order to formulate a more effective and strategic national policies in every country. Besides that, a strategic and efficient solution is needed to improve the existing women policies that has not been able to elevate women's status (Zainuddin & Talib, 2018).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the lack of participation by women in top management have been an ongoing issue despite having various initiatives and policies implemented by the government. The findings show that there is an enormous gap between the numbers of prominent women at the top of their fields and the vast majority of women worldwide. Failure in addressing in issue will prevent the fifth Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) which is "Achieving gender equality and empower all women and girls" from being achieved. This study explores the factors influencing women participation in top management of their organization. This study shows there are eight factors influencing the women's success which is: (i) work-life balance; (ii) organizational support; (iii) sponsorship; (iv) mentoring; (v) soft skills; (vi) job experience; (vii) social networks; and (viii) career strategy. Therefore, this survey can be a reference to the stakeholders in developing women policy.

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