

The Career Development of Women with Different Educational Backgrounds

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Abstract. The gender division of labor in families is fading slowly. As more women enter the workforce, their career growth has become central to social equity and development, with women's educational level being the primary determinant of it. Educational stratification shows gendered occupational traits, shaping the dynamic link between education and other factors. Marked differences in women's educational attainment affect their occupational characteristics and expand career opportunities. Society imposes numerous demands on women, leaving work-family balance a pressing issue in their career and personal life. Within social concept frameworks, this paper explores the career development changes and empirical features of women with unequal education levels, shedding light on the distinct challenges and diverse demands they face in career growth. Women's sustained career development needs societal concerted efforts, which will realize their intrinsic workplace value and boost economic and social vitality.

1 Introduction

It is in the context of the world push towards gender equality and massive changes in economic systems that the issue of women education ceases to be that of educational development alone. Rather, it overlaps with a plethora of interrelated problems, such as family education, social values, career development and wage, cultural heritage and inheritance, and social division of labor. With the continuous social development, the career advancement of women was redefined, and it is education that has become an important variable defining their career paths. It is important to note that the development of career paths in women with disparate educational backgrounds has significantly heterogeneous peculiarities. The male and female division of labor is also becoming weaker and women are coming into the formal employment sector in rising numbers. However, because of the difference in educational opportunities, there are still significant disparities and barriers in their opportunities: their employment opportunities, career paths, and promotion will still lie ahead, as well as being able to accomplish the feeling of self-worth.

In the perspective of women with different educational attainment, this study identifies the level of education among women as its variable of central change and targets three distinct groups of women, namely, junior high school-educated women, high school-educated

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women, and women with a university degree. In this way, it explores the disparate characteristics of the occupational decisions, wage rates, and career progression through occupational preferences among women taking into account various levels of education. Moreover, this study explores how women balance between the conflicting needs of family and work under the impact of the prevailing social perceptions. This paper systematically examines the historical progression and their modern day traits of career development in women whose educational achievement stands at heterogeneous levels, and the unique predicaments faced and needs of women in various educational levels in their career paths. It also explains the differentiated driving forces behind acquiring a career by women depending on the level of education thus offering theoretical support to comprehend inherent laws behind career acquisition by women.

2 Research approach and methods

First of all, the study conducts extensive literature review of scholarly articles, literature and reports related to the subject of female education, career development and family education both within and without the UAE with the aim of providing an uncompromising theoretical analysis. The targeted interviews are then conducted with women who have different levels of education to bring out their perspectives about education. The author then goes on to unravel the tangible roles played by education into the development of self-esteem, enhancement of competence, and life-choice decisions among women. Besides, the author explore the challenges that women face during their education processes and the empowerment worth of education as a transformative factor. The sample of the interviewees is presented as follows; Ms. Feng A, 57 years old, with a junior high school education (married, self-employed, with 2 children), Ms. Wu B, 50 years old, with a high school level (married, self-employed, with 2 children), Ms. Huang C, 25 years old, with a bachelor's degree (unmarried, teacher, no children), Ms. Zhang D, 25 years old, with a bachelor's degree (unmarried Lastly, educational attainment and career development correlation are systematically analyzed on the basis of cross-referencing the interview information to the theoretical literature and comparing the results with them. More in-depth explanation is also done on social resources and personal development women find on the way to education and the career challenges faced by women with various educational backgrounds.

3 Research result

Through semi-structured interviews conducted with seven female participants, the author reveals that educational level exhibits a marked correlation with women's career decision-making, income levels, occupational adaptability, and family education practices. A multi-perspective analysis is then performed to elucidate how educational attainment shapes women's career development trajectories.

3.1 The correlation between basic information of women with different educational level and their occupational distribution

A total of seven women participated in the interviews, covering a broad spectrum of ages, occupations, educational levels, marital statuses, and parental statuses. Specifically, their ages ranged from 25 (a newly graduated participant) to 57; their educational backgrounds varied from junior high school to a bachelor's degree; their occupations encompassed self-employment, the education sector, and the medical profession; and they were categorized as either single or married, with some having children and others not. Specifically, two of the

participants had a junior high or senior high school education, both of whom were self-employed, married, and had two children each. Meanwhile, four participants held a bachelor's degree, with their occupations consisting of one physician, two teachers, and one self-employed individual. It can be inferred from the above analysis that variations in educational level have a marked influence on shaping women's career trajectories. Specifically, women with relatively low to moderate educational backgrounds are predominantly concentrated in self-employment, while those with higher education have access to a more diverse array of career paths (e.g., self-employment, teaching, medical practice). Moreover, the latter group tends to gravitate toward careers that emphasize professional expertise and knowledge-based competencies.

3.2 The career development characteristics and differences of women with different educational levels

3.2.1 Career choice: educational attainment exerts a dual influence on both career entry thresholds and the autonomy of career decision-making

For women and their families, the acquisition of relevant skills and the availability of employment opportunities have produced far-reaching and tangible effects [1]. In the course of the interviews, two participants—Ms. Feng with a junior high school education and Ms. Wu with a senior high school education—consistently noted that their educational backgrounds had shaped their career options to a considerable degree. They recounted: “Owing to relatively low level of educational attainment, employees were precluded from pursuing occupations that demand high professional qualifications, leaving employees with no alternative but to opt for roles with lower entry thresholds. For this reason, they began working lives with stints on factory assembly lines.” They tend to adopt a more passive stance in career decision-making, and are mostly employed in low-entry-barrier sectors such as service and catering industries, which do not demand specialized technical skills. Ms. Feng commented, With a limited educational background, she's job options were quite narrow. She had no choice but to take up manual labor and start out as an apprentice; later on, she transitioned to running a small-scale personal business. The four interviewees who have bachelor degrees, three of them are in jobs which demand highly professional competencies and knowledge. In particular, Ms. Huang and Ms. Zhang used their backgrounds in teaching to focus on employment in the teaching industry, because of their education in undergraduate. Ms. Wang is also a bachelor degree holder in the field of medicine, and after acquisition of this degree he studied more before venturing into the medical profession. She indicated that her undergraduate university education was just a means to an end of getting hired to work in a hospital. Although Ms. Cai is also an independent businesswoman, her company has experienced a comfortable growth, supported by not only the professional background that she developed in the course of her university education, but also the social connections that she established over the years. She said, the technical knowledge that she acquired in college has helped she carry out a business that demands the use of specialized knowledge. In the modern day dynamic society, such knowledge assists she in securing a strong presence in the market and thus standing up against the simplistic transactional business and remaining outsmarted easily. Based on the analysis provided above, one can tell that the educational level has a clearly defined correlation with the form of occupation that people engage in. Education serves as a powerful access gate to the professional areas and sound educational preparation forms the fundamental port to education, which in turn provides a wider range of life and career options [2].

Particularly, women who having low educational backgrounds are mainly focused in the area of self-employment as compared to women having higher education where they tend to

choose careers they have a professional knowledge of and in addition they can utilize their technical skills. With the continued increase in the educational levels of women, they are slowly penetrating into the high-profile spheres that were once under the control of men and are wielding an even stronger influence [3].

3.2.2 Educational attainment impacts salary level and career advancement potential

Education attainment is one of the fundamental factors as far as career choice is concerned. Profession jobs with high performance demands and complexity will always consider high level of education as pre-requisite. Moreover, the level of education is a decisive factor that will allow women to receive a good job opportunity and increase their quality of life. Those women who have little educational backgrounds are largely engaged in manual jobs or in self employment. However, the self-employment is especially exposed to the unpredictability of the market- an issue that not only leads to changes in individual earnings, but also limits career growth opportunities in the long term. Ms. Feng earnings are very unstable put in by Feng. “In times of peak business, employees easily make tens of thousands or even more in a single month; at other times, employees may have no earnings whatsoever, a whole day. The income is intermittent. They have been running this business for decades, yet there has been no substantial growth.” Another self-employed participant, Ms. Feng with a junior high school education, has somewhat offset the disadvantages of her limited educational background through years of accumulated work experience. She remarked, “When it comes to certain tasks, employees actually have to spend more time and take quite a few detours to resolve them. If employees had a higher level of education, these matters might not be so cumbersome for employees.” Education and learning embody a more profound value, which lies in nurturing critical thinking patterns and refined expression skills [4]. Though Ms. Wu, a high school graduate, has built a larger business scale than her counterparts with only a junior high school education, her income still fluctuates by more than 40%. As such, how to further expand her business has remained a persistent concern for her. Educated women hold a notable edge when it comes to income stability and long-term career growth potential. The systematic knowledge and professional competencies acquired via formal education not only boost their work efficiency but also enable them to navigate sophisticated work arrangements with greater proficiency. Take Ms. Wang, a senior doctor, as an example: she enjoys a steady salary and a well-defined promotion track based on professional title evaluations. Having recently advanced to the rank of deputy chief physician, her income has seen consistent growth aligned with her upward career trajectory. As young teachers new to the profession, Ms. Huang and Ms. Zhang currently earn a moderate income, but they enjoy a well-defined career advancement path. They elaborated that they can increase their salaries and get promotions through passing recruitment tests, acquiring professional title qualifications, and also through different overall competency competitions. There is the increased ability of women to control the direction of their own lives as more women are becoming economically stable and more educated as well [3]. Educational background is often used by the employer as one of the most important criteria to evaluate an applicant in the workplace and understand their prospects and achievements in a position. Though Ms. Cais self-employed income has been fluctuating, series of events have paid off in her total earnings being high as compared to those who have low education. She has developed an elaborate business strategy, capitalized on professional tools that she has used to diversify her business business and has developed a precise, focused development strategy.

3.2.3 Educational attainment influences risk resistance capacity and transformation confidence

The world has been changing the lives people live and the manner with which people work at an unprecedented rate over the last couple of years owing to the fast changing technology. Even though technology has produced much benefit and convenience, it has also brought about massive changes in social values, professionalism and routines. Technology is supplementing or alternative to the human labor through automation hence transforming the working techniques people used in the past. An array of ageing skills as well as business models are therefore gone. Although there are a number of people striving to keep up with such changes in technology, a substantial amount of people have lost their jobs especially those who were in low-skill sectors like manufacturing and catering services. The prevalence of automation technologies in the market, not only in an attempt to reduce the mean vehicle of labor costs and reduce the overall cost of operation, but also contribute to the expansion of the gap between highly skilled jobs that require complex skills and substantial specific competence, and the low-skill jobs. Those women who are less educated are highly reliant on the market volatility in their selected careers. They do not have an underlying background of the specialized expertise and the technical competencies therefore they not only display a low interest in undertaking career transition, but they are actually confronted by immense adversity in even trying to do so. Ms. Feng A and Ms. Feng E have both run independent businesses for more than 25 years, weathering numerous industry fluctuations over this period. Yet, as they put it, “employees lacked other marketable skills”-a reason why they never even considered making a career transition. Ms. Wu B, by contrast, sought to adapt to societal development and explored switching to an e-commerce role focused on online sales. Unfortunately, she noted, “employees had no grasp of complex computer operations nor any relevant knowledge of online business management,” so she ultimately abandoned the transition plan, having to settle for first trying to accumulate technical experience through hands-on exposure. Women with access to high-quality education tend to exhibit stronger job stability and adaptive capacity. With a long-standing experience of a hospital worker, Ms. Wang F is well-equipped with professional competencies and, therefore, despite the changes in her career path, she feels confident. This is applicable; as she pointed out, whether she is transferred to another position in the hospital or she transfers to a private hospital to do medical consulting work. In addition to working full-time, Ms. Wang is also making preparations to set up a side business, where she believes strongly that her professional work and expertise would help her deal with the business successfully. One of the ways to prepare the long-term career growth is by joining professional title evaluation programs among teachers and the comprehensive skills competitions designed to serve the field of education these two are planning to participate. In her turn, Ms. Cai G noted that despite her entrepreneurial venture possible operational problems in the future, she can receive a well-paid job simply because of her specific professional skills. The skill-building capacity improves the economic capacity and risk resilience of women by increasing the level of social activities, which in turn encourage and increase their autonomy, overall well being, independence, and self-confidence [1].

3.2.4 Educational attainment shapes family education practices

Exploring the correlation between the family relational patterns and family education practices it is possible to make a conclusion that the educational level of women tangibly and positively affects the educational development of their children [5]. The behavior that each individual member of a family reflects is used to be quoted as a reference in which the new generation will base and follow suit. Also, women are considered as a defining force of the

overall health of their children since they are one of the most influential figures in the family setup. In a social setting where the average educational levels of women are low or where there exist strong differences between educational opportunities available to men and women, removing the hindrances to upward mobility of women towards a good education would be a clear route to improving the housing conditions of the women and their children. On the same note, the education of women is also found to be another important factor leading to the increase in the education of their children [5]. Majority of women are educated before they have kids and when they get married; they form a family union with their spouses that forms the background of rearing the new generation. A core of life choices, which include the time, place, and choice of partner during marriage, number and time of having children, and the ultimate educational level of children, are indirectly determined by the educational level of the woman [6]. When women educational attainment has impact with heterogeneous family education models, it works on two ranks that are hierarchical, one is micro level of individuals and families, and other is the one of the general population; macro level. In a variety of social settings the level of educational achievement of women is strongly linked with the number of children they bear- with a familiarized pattern of female educational achievement with a relatively low level bearing a high rate of fertility in comparison to educational achievement of a relatively higher level [7]. These dissimilar situations are also an extension of two fundamental family level variables: the economic approach of a household and allocation of the in-house assets. Precisely, the greater the number of children in a family, the lower the amount of educational resources per child; this is because a larger family population will subject the amount of educational resources to more limitations. As a result, parents find it such a difficult task to amicably divide the cultural and economic aspects they toil to provide their children. It should also be noted that the level of education of women has a direct effect on the application of the family education. In particular, the educational level of the woman will be a crucial determining factor in how she philosophizes family education and what degree of investment she has in the upbringing and learning of her children. When mothers are better educated in terms of education level, they are in a better position to provide quality and focused educational instructions to their children. Conversely, married women who have a relatively lower education level are faced with the unending pressure of balancing it in work places and family. Even those who are occupied with the self employed jobs where the working hours can be adjusted according to their requirements, they usually choose to exchange working hours or narrow down their ventures to focus more on taking care of the family and implementation of family education. Ms. Feng A observed that her tight schedules often did not give her time to interact with her children, at most instances, she was only able to meet them well once after every couple of days. By doing so, she was compelled to forgo family time spent in caring and nurturing to her job. By contrast, Ms. Wang F, who works as a doctor, has a relatively fixed schedule, but the high intensity of her job means she still faces occasional requirements for temporary overtime. To ease the pressure on her family, she coordinates the division of household responsibilities with her husband. She also strives to spend quality time with her children on weekends and never neglects their upbringing. In her view, family education constitutes a vital component of a child's growth and development. For their part, the unmarried Ms. Huang C and Ms. Zhang D stated that they need to prioritize improving their own capabilities at this stage. This, they believe, will not only boost their confidence in managing future family life and conducting family education, but also equip them with greater resilience to navigate life's challenges ahead.

3.3 Career predicaments of women with divergent educational backgrounds

3.3.1 Shared predicaments: Gender bias and family pressure

After the interviews, it was found that the common difficulties they faced all stemmed from gender and family pressures. Nowadays, the number of female employees has increased markedly across a wide range of roles in the job market. Women are even represented in certain key positions and management roles. Yet this does not mean that gender-based stereotypes have been eliminated; such biases continue to impede women's career advancement. A substantial body of evidence indicates that during recruitment, men with equivalent qualifications are more likely to be hired, whereas women are required to demonstrate stronger credentials to pass the screening process [8]. While female employment rates have seen a notable rise in recent years, the vast majority of working women are still clustered in occupations conventionally perceived as "female-oriented" [2]. Those who adhere to traditional gender stereotypes often assume that women are unfit for managerial and leadership roles in occupations not conventionally deemed suitable for them [9]. What is more, women often have to invest considerably more time and effort than men to gain access to equivalent employment opportunities. Ms. Wang F commented that in hospital settings, promotion opportunities are often prioritized for male employees. Leadership teams typically hold the view that women have family care responsibilities to fulfill and thus regard family as a higher priority than professional work for female staff. Several interviews revealed that a subset of respondents still hold the view that women should not take on the dual roles of mother and employee at the same time, contending that women's participation in the workforce implies insufficient attention to their families [10].

3.3.2 Disparities among different educational groups

All married women are required to navigate the impact of childbirth and parenting on their careers [11]. When considering the career development potentials of the female employees, leaders always ask them about their future plans as regards having families. The limited opportunities facing women who are highly educated revolve mainly over the dilemma between professional development and family. Women in this group who are married have to find a balance between the time and energy spent at work and family, those who are not married have to overcome the high competitive pressure at the beginning of their career. Women of lower educational attainment might face the problem of lagging in technological adoption, a threat of being displaced in technology, and a high distance to further re-employment. Conversely, women who have elevated levels of education struggle with balancing work career and childbearing. In addition, they also experience increased demands of gender-based scrutiny in some disciplines where skill and technological advancements are fast paced, and periodic professional training is an upfront requirement.

4 Conclusion

Because of the twofold forces of gender equality activism and socioeconomic growth, the trends of career growth by women have changed over a traditional paradigm of subordination to the family to a more modernized paradigm of core members in work place, thereby, creating a diversified pattern of career growth. Career development of women is not to be understood as mere metamorphosis of women occupational roles, on the contrary, as the overall outcome of the synergism created by three driving forces namely the gradual change of the social awareness, the thorough reorganization of economic systems, the application of

the conducive government policy and institutional assurance. Global advancement of the gender equality awareness focus has broken traditional gender-based stereotypes that existed and hence widened the number of career opportunities that women could pursue. At the same time, the military implementation of policies related to educational equity was also central in promoting the possibility of women getting equal employment opportunities. The governments are also expected to create an environment that enables the development of women by establishing special institutions to support women and other policies.

That notwithstanding, the path of women in the career ladder has remained riddled with setbacks. The projection of a gender equal professional ecosystem has not been completely put into practice. Globally, the level of female employment is grossly inferior to their male counterparts and the challenges of the past, such as the existence of gender-based wage disparities and unequal access to promotion opportunities, are still not resolved. The socioeconomic changes have also contributed to the complexities in career development of women and this multifaceted issues can only be solved by government intervention coupled with that of businesses and the society at large. To help women development of professional careers in the future successfully, it is a priority that society enhances the spread of the ideology of gender equality and better refines a more accurate system of legal and policy guarantees. This will empower females to realize their intrinsic worth within the process of career development, and at the same time offer sustained impetus to the socioeconomic development.

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