Facilitators of Women's Career Advancement in Public Service: A Study in A Developing Country

I. Abdul Ghani Azmi, S. H. Syed Ismail, and S. A. Basir, *Member, IACSIT*

Abstract—This paper aims to identify facilitators of career advancement in Malaysian federal service especially as perceived by the Muslim women. From purposive sampling technique on eight federal ministries, 241 questionnaires were distributed and 103 questionnaires were returned and usable whereby the rate of response was 43 percent. These women strongly agreed that the facilitators towards their career advancement were advice from immediate boss, education, perform abilities, commitment and dedication and seniority. They also agreed that current policies such as the same assignments and equal opportunities to further studies and pay as men facilitate towards their career advancement. Furthermore, their religion does not prohibit them to be leaders of men and they are treated equally as men in terms of respect and authority. This study also found that these women put their family as priority. Thus, the public organizations need to entice them in order to lure them to work hard in their career advancement by providing more facilities such as child care, longer maternity leave, flexible working hours, work at home or job sharing and reducing travelling time and geographical relocation.

Index Terms—Career advancement, facilitators, women, public service, Malaysia.

I. INTRODUCTION

Women constitute nearly half of the world's population. They also comprise half of the workforce. Their contribution is important for the development of their country. However, they work just to supplement their family's income. This is due to their major role is to look after their family. Thus, women need facilitators in order to lure them to contribute to the workforce. The developing countries also feel the need for the women's contribution to their economy, especially Malaysia to no exception where majority is Muslim. Women start to work in Malaysian public service in the year of 1903 [1]. However, in Islam, women's contribution to society is secondary to men. Thus, what are the facilitators of these Muslim women especially in Malaysian federal public service? This paper will try to answer this.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Why Women Work?

There are so many reasons why women work. First and foremost is to supplement their family's income especially

Authors are with Department of Syariah and Management, Academy of Islamic Studies, Universiti Malaya (e-mail: ilhaamie@ yahoo.com; sashsiaq@um.edu.my; sitiarni@um.edu.my).

when their husbands are sick and cannot work or when the income is not sufficient to support the whole family [2]. It is also could due to the satisfaction that the women are seeking out of their formal education that they have. Furthermore, their working parents could also influence them to work.

Some rules and regulations such as The Equal Pay Act, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, and Executive Orders laid the foundation for affirmative action and equal employment opportunity for women [3]. Due to this, the number of women working increases [4].

B. Definition of Career Advancement

Newman in 1993 defined career advancement as the consequences of human capital, socio-psychological and systemic factors [5]. It is an objective measure of being successful in one's own career.

C. Human Capital Factors

The human capital factors are the investment in one's future. Newman (1993) identified these factors as advanced education, training, experience, continuous full time employment and overall effort such as ability, hard work, perseverance, determination and luck.

Women are working longer hours than their male counterparts. Women have to work harder and smarter to attain the same levels that men sometimes attain with less effort. Kanter (1977) found that almost a quarter of the women spend more than 61 hours a week at work (24 percent) compared to only 10 percent of the men. It appears that women are making more sacrifices than men for career advancement in terms of time spent on the job and, by implication, away from the home. This is because women perceive a need to work harder and outperform their male colleagues to succeed. Keeton (1996) called this as the queen bee syndrome whereby they have to perform extra work several times a week to every day. 55 percent women compared to 9 percent men agreed that a woman had to perform better than a man to be promoted. A closer examination of the data reveals that women tend to be promoted at a slower pace than men for the first five to six years of their employment, and then their rate of promotion speeds up to the point that it exceeds the rate for men, as if women must work longer to "prove themselves" before they are accorded the same advancement opportunities as men [7]. Thus, hard work and determination would be the other reasons to accelerate the path toward success [6].

Moreover, human capital economists hypothesized that workers' skill levels increase over their careers but at a decreasing rate. This is because workers invest in early skill enhancement more heavily than late in their careers [8].

Furthermore, Olson and Pringle (2004) highlighted on the

qualities that women need to possess in order to advance in their careers such as creativity, risk taking, self confidence, able to make decisions and think strategically, possess people skills and being politically astute [9]. Meanwhile, Dreher and Ash (1990) stressed on having the opportunity to display talent and competence to senior management and to acquire information through informal network as the facilitators [10]. According to Keeton (1996), intelligence, competence on job, interpersonal skills, motivation and take advantage of opportunities are the drives for their motivation. Morrison et al. (1987) concluded that a strong achievement record, ambition to succeed, managerial ability, and the capacity to be tough, decisive, and demanding were all major facilitators of female executive success. Indeed, women's stereotyping as communal being clashes with commonly held notions that executive advancement requires single-mindedness and the display of agentic traits such as independence and assertiveness [11].

D. Socio-psychological Factors

Meanwhile, socio-psychological factors are the societal pattern that impact individual decisions such as gender-role socialization and gender role stereotypes. However, according to Keeton (1996)'s findings, socio-psychological factors are the most important factor (44.4%) compared to human capital (25.9%) and systemic factors (29.7%) towards women career advancement.

The influence of the family members has a great impact on the life of the women and their careers paths. Family members have directly influenced them to work hard and be achievers. The support given to these women by their loved ones have influenced them to be what they are today. Parents and in-laws also enhanced career/family balance by helping with home and children. Finally, husbands were cited as significant support source in both personal professional realms, providing financial, professional, and emotional support. Vert (1985) asserted that spouse support is very important in facilitating women's career advancement. Women in advanced positions perceive their spouses as viewing their work as more important than do women in lower-level positions [12]. In their case according to Ezzeden and Ritchey (2009), there were enabling factors such as supportive work environment, and intensive outsourcing such as hiring live-in nannies, babysitters and cooks and outsourcing cleaning; and eating out. These had helped in increasing a woman's amount of free time despite acknowledgements of the cost involved. Outsourcing was also a means for the women to avoid spousal conflict over house chores.

In contrast, Naff and Thomas (1994) stated that postponing marriage or remain childless could help women to advance in their careers [13]. Ezzeden and Ritchey (2009) also suggest that women have a hard time finding eligible partners to begin with because their professional ambitions are generally not appealing to men. Moreover, the foundational career building years generally coincide with women fertility, and women can find themselves having to make choices that men do not experience. Thus, some of the respondents described them as single, childless, and "miserable", or married with children whom they never saw "because they were trying to keep up with the guys". Thus, female middle managers like female academic administrators are less likely than their male counterparts to be married and are actually more willing to move to new jobs [14].

Nieva and Gutek (1981) suggested that women are more likely to believe that hard work, perseverance and talent are the primary determinants of advancement and therefore, are more likely to pay less attention to forming ties with influential superiors. Thus, having the opportunity to display talent and competence to senior management and to acquire important information through informal networks are more likely to enhance career success. Dreher and Ash (1990) stated that social learning theories would suggest that the protégé acquires important managerial skills by observing an effective senior manager. Vertz (1985) agreed to this that skills such as able to work effectively with others, possess high self esteem, and managerial personality, aggressive are equally important. However, at the same time, it does not mean that women should lose their feminine self identity.

Ezzeden and Ritchey (2009) stated that women are also provided direct career support in the form of technical assistance and encouragement and validation, especially when they occupied common professions from their supervisors, mentors, peers and others in their field. The findings indicate that social support is critical to women, such as mentoring and creating networking opportunities. Morrison et al. (1987) found that 100 percent of the women in their study who had reached the highest levels of their occupation had mentoring support, as opposed to only 55 percent of men. Mentors often facilitate advancement for their women proteges. This is because men often hold powerful positions in the organization, thus, they often provide greater opportunity for their proteges than women mentors can. Hence, women with male mentors have a more positive view of their own opportunities than women with female mentors or no mentor at all [15].

These support networks within the organization and in the industry or profession in general stimulate women's career achievement. Burke, Konyucu and Fiksenbaum (2006) also found that women who reported more supportive organizational experiences were more engaged in their work and were more job and career satisfied [16].

E. Systemic Factors

On the other hand, the systemic models try to explain differences in success based on two broad concepts which are distribution of power and distribution of opportunity. Keeton (1996) stated that under the distribution of power includes gender access to training, information, mentors and power.

Some organizations provide opportunities for career development such as access to mentoring, professional exposure inside and outside the institution, equal opportunities for promotion, and equal opportunities to assume demanding new challenges that contribute to professional development such as attending seminars, workshops, and conferences [17]. Professional programmes have been designed and offered to women focusing organizational analysis, policy and skill, and including issues associated with gender sensitivity within the organizational as well good governance and effective administrative process

or specifically designed management training and development programme [18]. Thus, Clarke (2011) found that women development programmes provide a safe and supportive environment for improving self-confidence, learning new skills, and learning from the experiences of successful role models. They are useful addition to other strategies designed to increase the number of women in senior positions.

Furthermore, a value system that stresses on hard work, passion, integrity, continuous learning, tenacity and risk taking also could facilitate women in their career advancement in the sense that they would signal to everyone in the organization that gender is not the factor for career progression but their capabilities are [19].

Burke et al. (2006) and Arokiasamy, Ismail, Ahmad and Othman (2011) suggested organizational policies such as top management support and commitment, the explicit used of gender in decision making and recruitment, career planning and employee development, the provision of rewards for providing the required support and achieving agreed upon goals for women's advancement, flexibility in work and better promotional structure could definitely facilitate women's career advancement [20].

There has been a substantial commitment at European and national levels to introduce policy initiatives to enable employees to better balance their work and home lives, particularly to facilitate women's participation in the labour market. The employees wanted different things from their work-life balance. These included spending time with children, pursuing hobbies, leaving at a reasonable hour and being able to switch off from work [21]. Gallhofer, Paisey, Roberts and Tarbet (2011) found that many work-life balance choices were driven by a desire to spend more time with children [22]. In regard to this, according to Hojgaard (2002), facilities and working condition such as maternity leave, easier access to extended leave, child leave and flexible working time are some of the family friendly policies issued by the public sector in order to facilitate women to work in their sector.

Based on their research in regard to barriers to women's career advancement in Lebanon, Tlaiss and Kauser (2010) suggested that it is imperative for employers to address their structural and cultural practices to take account of gender discrimination at work. This should include improvements in selection procedures, investments in training for women managers, efficient use of qualifications and experience, performance appraisals. The author further suggested that employers need to improve their governance structures and decision-making practices in relation to helping women progress in their careers. Employers might do this in a number of ways such as raising awareness of the obstacles to progression at work, inspiring a work culture that values women's contributions and motivates women to improve their productivity and performance, and creating a gender-free culture [23].

In addition, Newman (1993) found that power is one of the least motivating factors for women and men alike. Successful women in high-level positions have been identified as having a greater need for power and a greater need for achievement. Morrisson et al (1987) stated that factors that are directly pertain to position power include: power networking, recognition and personal control or autonomy of the job. Kanter (1977), among others, has considered the strategic use of power to be one of the most important determinants of women's advancement.

F. Women Career Advancement from Islamic Perspective

Islam granted women not only the right to education, but also the right to inherit and own property before women in the West enjoyed such privileges. Islamic *hijab* is never an impediment to women's participation in any type of experience [24]. Islam also emphasizes on women's right to practice their religion as equal believers as well as their rights to employment, entrepreneurship and political participation [25]. In short, Islam prohibits discrimination on the basis of gender especially in career advancement [26]. Thus, Muslim women are permissible to earn their own income and allowable to work provided that they seek permission from their husbands and to adhere to Islamic ethics the same as their male counterparts i.e. not to talk to other men unless there is some work that they have to settle [27-29]. This syariah ruling is important because it prevents the problems of sexual harassment which are common in many Western countries [30].

G. Women Career Advancement in Malaysian Public Service

The women's official entry into Malaysian public service is based on their academic qualification and their performance during the selection interview. Normally, a basic degree will earn them with the post of deputy director. Thus, having a higher level education would certainly help them to be promoted to the next level or job grade. Possessing experiences and seniority or continuous full time employment also are the reasons for them to accelerate the path toward success. This is proven by the age of women who hold the top positions. Most of them are in between 40 to 60 years old [31].

According to Shahrizat, women at the top management in Malaysian public service have increased to 32.3 percent [32]. However, women at the decision-making level in Malaysian public sector are only 20 percent from the overall workforce even though Malaysian government has agreed 30 percent target for decision making positions in the public sector to be held by women [33]. Meanwhile, the retirement age has been extended to 60. This is due to the public sector acknowledged that women at that age are still productive [34].

At present, Malaysia has no legislation concerning employment discrimination, although the Federal Constitution does state that discrimination shall not be committed against citizens on the ground of religion, race, descent or place of birth [35]. However, Malaysian women have the right to get access of maternity leave and allowances [36].

There are few top Muslim women managers in Malaysia like Zety Akhtar Aziz as the National Bank Governor, Nooryah Md. Anvar as the Chief Royal Traffic Malaysia, Siti Norma Yaacob as the Chief Judge Malaysia, Professor Dr. Sharifah Habsah as the Vice-Chancellor of the National University of Malaysia and Professor Dr. Zaleha

Kamaruddin as the Rector of the International Islamic University of Malaysia. In conjunction with this, the 10th Malaysian Plan Report stated that Malaysia's government has put serious effort to enhance numbers of women's involvement in the decision making level. The report also suggested that women should be provided with opportunities and environment mindset to enable them to get involved actively in the national development process [37].

The policies supporting the advancement of women in Malaysian public service contradict with the number of female enrolment for bachelor, master degrees and PhD in 2010 as to be 208, 552 [38]. The issue of low number of women involvement in decision making whereas the high number of female students enrolment in higher education institutions rise concern that studies need to be conducted to examine what are the factors that could facilitate women to be successful in public service.

III. METHODOLOGY

Federal public service is the population of this study. This is due to its function as the main employer in Malaysia. Federal agencies consist of Ministries, Federal Departments and Federal Statutory Bodies. However, the data was collected purposively by choosing ministries which were perceived to be masculine in nature such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others. It is assumed that women's career advancement is harder in these organizations. Furthermore, data was collected from Muslim women in top management and professional and managerial posts. Muslim comprises the majority in Malaysia, up to 60 percent of the total population. Moreover, women constitute nearly half of Malaysian population. Based on the literature review, a questionnaire was developed which later was tested on five female Muslim public managers. From their feedback, the questionnaire was edited. The final questionnaire was sent to 241 respondents in eight out of 27 ministries.

IV. FINDINGS

A. Respondents' Profile

From 241 questionnaires distributed, a total of 105 completed questionnaires were returned but only 103 were usable. This amounted to 43% rate of response. Majority of the respondents were Malay women (97.1%), aged in between 26 to 35 years old (53.4%), married (66%) for six to 10 years (21.9%), possessed a bachelor degree as the highest education or qualification (68.2%) and earn in between RM2000 to RM3000 for their basic salary (48%). They have been in their current position that is professional and managerial post of grade 41 (91.3%) from one to five years (92.2%). Please refer to TABLE I for the details.

Majority of them have in between one to five children (52.4%). Their parents had worked in the public sector as they do (30.5% and 15.2% respectively). Majority of them spent 10 hours at work per day (47.6%) whereas they spent from one to five hours for their household chores (37.1%). They sometimes bring work back home (61.4%). However,

they are not the primary provider of the family (66%). Thus, they put family as the first priority (63.1%) whereas career as the last (41.7%). This shows that these women are very committed with their work even though it is not their first priority.

TABLE I: RESPONDENTS' PROFILE

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Race (Malay)	100	97.1
Age (26-35 years old)	55	53.4
Marital Status (Married)	68	66
Length of Marriage (6-10 years)	23	21.9
Qualification (Bachelor Degree)	71	68.2
Basic Salary (RM2000-3000)	42	48
Position (Professional and Managerial)	94	91.3
Tenure (1-5 years)	95	92.2

B. Respondents' Satisfaction

Majority of them were satisfied with their current positions (63.1%), salary grade positions (62.1%), and power (64.1%). Thus, they have not applied for promotion (79.6%). This is because they only have been working in the public service for not more than five years (46.6%).

C. Facilitators to Career Advancement

These women strongly agreed that the facilitators to their career advancement were advice from immediate boss (45.6%), education (35%), perform abilities (29.1%), commitment and dedication (26.2%) and seniority (13.6%). Please refer to TABLE II for further details.

TABLE II: FACILITATORS OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT FOR MUSLIM WOMEN

Factors	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Advice from immediate boss	47	45.6
Education	36	35
Perform abilities	30	29.1
Commitment and dedication	27	26.2
Seniority	14	13.6

D. Policies on Career Advancement

These respondents agreed that women were given the same assignment (65%) and equal opportunities to further studies (32%), the rules treat them equally (58.3%) with the same trust and confidence (56.3%) and they are paid equally as men (42.7%). Please refer to TABLE III for the details.

However, they perceived that they are better than men in terms of being long term employees (50.5%) and concern of their staff (41.7%). They also believe that Muslim women are capable of leading an organization (61.2%) and thus, being physically weaker than men does not prohibit them to be leaders (46.6%).

TABLE III: POLICIES ON CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Attitudes	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Women are given the same assignments as men	67	65
The rules treat men and women equally	60	58.3
Women are treated with the same trust and confidence	58	56.3
Women are paid comparable salaries	44	42.7
Women are given equal opportunities to further studies	33	32

Furthermore, they agreed that their religion i.e. Islam does not prohibit them to be leaders or managers in the organization (63.1%) and that they should be respected (61.2%) and obeyed (53.4%) as male leaders/managers. Islam also does not discriminate people on promotion based on gender but stresses on their capabilities (43.7%). However, if there are other capable males, women play secondary to them (43.7%). This is due to their family is more important than leadership in the organization (52.4%). Furthermore, even though if their husbands were sick or unemployed, their husbands were still the leaders in the family and not the women themselves (35%). This again indicates that Muslim women in Malaysian public sector stress on their families more than their careers.

E. Recommendations on Career Advancement

In order to facilitate Muslim women career advancement, these women agreed that their travelling time (38.8%) and geographical relocation (29.1%) to be reduced and they are to be given flexible hours (36.9%), longer maternity leave (28.2%), child care (48%) and job sharing (38.8%) or they could work from home (32%). Please refer to TABLE IV for the details.

TABLE IV: RECOMMENDATIONS ON FACILITATORS OF CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Recommendations	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Child Care	42	48
Reduced Travelling Time	40	38.8
Job Sharing	40	38.8
Flexible Hours	38	36.9
Work From Home	33	32
Reduced Geographical Relocation	30	29.1
Longer Maternity Leave	29	28.2

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusion

The facilitators of Muslim women's career advancement in Malaysian federal public service as perceived by the respondents were found to be advice from immediate boss, education, perform abilities, commitment and dedication and seniority. Their commitment and dedication to their work could be seen from their total working hour i.e. 10 hours per day and they sometimes bring work back home. They also agreed that the current policies such as the same assignments, equal opportunities to further studies and pay as men facilitate them towards their career advancement. This shows that the current policies and rules in Malaysian federal public service treat Muslim women public servants with the same dignity and trust as men. Furthermore, their religion does not prohibit them to be leaders of men and they are treated equally as men in terms of respect and authority. However, when it comes to family, these women put it as the first priority rather than their career.

B. Recommendations

Thus, they recommended that their employer to provide extra facilities and benefits to them such as child care and longer maternity leave. They also asked for reduced travelling time and geographical relocation. Furthermore, they requested that some changes to be made to their working structure whereby their working time should be flexible or they could do work at home or even share it with their colleagues. Hopefully, by providing these, they could be coaxed to put their career as the first priority and eventually, there would be more women sitting at the top of the organization. This is in line with their attitudes towards their capabilities that they can lead an organization, they are better in managing their staff and they are more loyal towards the organization than men.

REFERENCES

[1] M. Y. Janat, "Gender and management: a case study of Malaysia public sector," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, USA, 1993.
[2] A. Fatimah, "Wanita dan pekerjaan: satu analisis konflik peranan," *Akademika*, vol. July, no. 27.
[3] M. A. Newman, "Career advancement: Does gender make a difference?" *The American Review of Public Administration,* vol. 24, no. 3, pp. 361-385, 1993.
[4] J. M. Rita and M. L. Jean, "Women's and men's attitude about woman's place and role," *American Association for Public Opinion Research*, vol. 53, pp. 265-276, 1989.
[5] S. Mavin, "Women's career in theory and practice: time for change?" *Women in Management Review,* vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 183-192, 2001.
[6] K. B. Keeton, "Characteristics of successful women managers and professionals in local government: a national survey," *Women in Management Review,* vol. 11, no. 3, p. 37, 1996.
[7] R. M. Kelly, M. E. Guy, J. Bayes, and C. Johnson, "Public managers in the states: a comparison of career advancement by sex," *Public Administration Review,* vol. 51, no. 5, 1991.
[8] R.M., Kelly, M. E. Guy, J., Bayes, and G. Duerst-Lahti, "Public managers in the states: a comparison of career advancement by sex," *Public Administration Review*, vol. 51, no. 5, pp. 402-413, 1991.
[9] S. Olson and J. K. Pringle, "Women executives: public and private sectors as sites of advancement?" *Women in Management Review*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 29-39, 2004.
[10] G. F. Dreher and R. A. Ash, "A comparative study of mentoring among men and women in managerial, professional and technical positions," *Journal of Applied Psychology,* vol. 75, no. 5, pp. 539-546, 1990.
[11] S. R. Ezzedeen and K. G. Ritchey, "Career advancement and family balance strategies of executive women," *Gender in Management,* vol. 24, no. 6, pp. 388-411, 2009.
[12] L. L. Vertz, "Women, occupational advancement and mentoring: an analysis of one public organizations," *Public Management Forum,* vol. May/June, pp. 415-423, 1985.

[13] K. C. Naff and S. Thomas, "The glass ceiling revisited: determinants of federal job advancement," *Policy Studies Review*, vol. 13, no. ¾, pp. 249-272, 1994.

[14] G. N. Lewis, "Men and women toward the top: backgrounds, careers and potential of federal middle managers," *Public Personnel Management*, vol. 21, no. 4, pp. 473-488, 1992.

[15] K. C. Naff, "Subjective vs objective discrimination in government: adding to the pictures of barriers to the advancement of women,"*Political Research Quarterly*, vol. 48, no. 3, pp. 553-557, 1995.

[16] R. J. Burke, M. Koyuncu, and L. Fiksenbaum, "Organizational practices supporting women's career advancement and their satisfaction and well-being in Turkey," *Women in Management Review,* vol. 21, no. 8, pp. 610-624, 2006.

[17] L. Hojgaard, "Tracing differentiation in gendered leadership: an analysis of differences in gender composition in top management in business, politics and the civil service," *Gender, work and Organization,* vol. 9, no. 1, pp. 15-38, 2009.

[18] K. Oriel, "Placement in management training for Bangladesh civil servant," *Women in Management Review*, vol. 10, no. 4, pp. 11-16, 1995.

[19] M. Clarke, "Advancing women's careers through leadership development programs," *Employee Relations,* vol. 33, no. 5, pp. 498-515, 2011.

[20] L. Arokiasamy, M. Ismail, A. Ahmad, and J. Othman, "Predictors of academics' career advancement at Malaysian private universities," *Journal of European Industrial Training*, vol 35, no. 6, pp. 589-605, 2011.

[21] F. Doherty and F. Murphy, "The experience of work life balance for Irish senior managers," *Equality Diversify and Inclusion: An International Journal*, vol. 30, no. 4, pp. 252-277, 2011.

[22] S. Gallhofer, C. Paisey, C. Roberts, and H. Tarbet, "Preferences, constraint and work-lifestyle choices," *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal,* vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 440-470, 2011.

[23] H. Tlaiss and A. Kauser, "Perceived organizational barriers to women's career advancement in Lebanon," *Gender in Management: an International Journal*, vol. 25, no. 6, pp. 462-496, 2010.

[24] A. Hamdan, "Women and education in Saudi Arabia: challenges and achievements," *International Education Journal*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 42-64, 2005.

[25] APMM. (2009). ASEAN Region: APMM statement on the growth of politicized Islam. Available: http://www.awid.org/eng/Issues-and-Analysis/Library/ASEAN-Region-APMM-Statement-on-the -growth-of-politicized-Islam.

[26] J. Syed and A. J. Ali, "Principles of employment relations in Islam." *Employee Relation,* vol. 32, no. 5, pp. 454-469, 2010.

[27] S. H. Syed Ismail and I. Abdul Ghani Azmi, "Women leadership in Islam: A special reference to women's involvement in Malaysian public sector," *Journal Excellence*, vol.1, no. 1, pp. 70-85, 2009.

[28] I. Abdul Ghani Azmi, S. H. Syed Ismail, and S. A. Basir, "Career advancement barriers in Malaysian Federal Public Service," in *Proc. 2011 IFME Conf., 2011,* pp. 324-328.

[29] I. Abdul Ghani Azmi, S. H. Syed Ismail, and S. A. Basir, "Facilitators of women career advancement in public service: a study in a developing country," presented at the ICIMS, Singapore, Sept. 17-18, 2011.

[30] A. Omar and M. J. Davidson, "Women in management: a comparative cross-cultural overview", vol. 8, no. ¾, pp. 35-56, 2001.

[31] Malaysia Report. Report on the state of women in urban local government Malaysia. Available: http://www.unescap.org/huset/women/reports/malaysia.pdf.

[32] NST. (27 Feb. 2011). Ministry focusing on women's participation in private sector, GLCs. Available: http://www.nst.com.my/nst/articles/Ministryfocusingonwomen_sparticipationinprivatesector_GLCs/Article/

[33] Ministry of Women Affairs. (2010). Women at decision making level in Public sector. Available: http://www.kpwkm.gov.my/BM/Upload/BAB2POLITIKandSEKTOR AWAM.bm.pdf.

[34] Bernama. (19 August 2009). Women's participation in decision making needs to be improved. Available: http://www.thewomensummit.org/2009/08/19/women-participation in decision making needs to be improved more.

[35] Becker and McKenzie. (2009). Malaysian termination, discrimination and harassment guide. Available at qr-malaysia_terminationdiscriminationharassmentguide_2009.pdf

[36] Malaysia Employment Act 1955.

[37] Bernama. (4 May 2011). 10th Malaysian Planning: Strengthening effort in empowering women. Available: http:/www.bernama.com/bernama/v5/bm/newsrmk10.php?id=504894.

[38] Ministry of Higher Education Statistics. (2010). Female students enrolment in Malaysian Public Higher education Institutions, 2010. Available: http://www.mohe.gov.my/statistic2010/BAB2_IPTA.pdf.

G. A. Ilhaamie. She is now a Senior Lecturer at Department of Syariah and Management, Academy of Islamic Studies, University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. She obtained her PhD at USM, Malaysia. Current research interest: Service quality and human resource practices.

Dr Azmi. IASCIT. First best paper award in HRM category: the third International Business Management Conference, UNITEN, 2007. Second best paper award in the International Conference of Business and Economics Research, Global Research Agency, 2010.

S. I. Sharifah Hayaati. She is now an Associate Professor at the Department of Siasah Syar'iyyah (Islamic Political Science), Academy of Islamic StuFdies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Her current research interest: effective governance and comparative ethics. She obtained her PhD at University of Bristol,UK.

Assoc. Prof. Sharifah Hayaati was awarded Fulbright fellowship, Genesee University Community College, Batavia, West New York, USA. She has had her articles published in international and national journals.

B. Siti Arni. She is now a SENIOR LECTURER at Department of Siasah Syar'iyyah (Islamic Political Science), Academy of Islamic Studies, University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Her current research interest: MS ISO. She obtained her PhD from University of Salford, UK. She has had her articles published in international and national journals.