

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
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Dr. **Rola Othman**, Director, Client Services, Saint Xavier University, USA

Trailblazing Purposefully: Narrative Analysis of Female Chief Information Officers' Accounts of Their Path to Leadership in Higher Education

Keywords: information technology, higher learning, female leaders

The goal of this narrative research was to share first-hand accounts of these female leaders' experiences, illuminate pathways they have taken, and uncover vital information that answers the questions presented as well as add to the limited literature available on the female information technology leaders. In essence, my aim was to explore ways by which women advance their professional careers toward the position of a chief information officer in higher education and define themselves as leaders and persons while on the path to this position. Six female chief information officers participated in this narrative research encircled by the three dimensions of interaction, continuity, and situation. The seven common threads that emerged from the participants' narratives are: (a) Importance of Support Systems; (b) Roadblocks to Success; (c) Coming to Terms with Who and What I Am: Identity Confirmed and Problematized; (d) Creating and Diversifying Her Portfolio: What's in the Tool Belt; (e) Enacting Leadership: The Chief Information Officer; (f) Being the Translator in a Babylonian World; and (g) Inspiring the Next Generation. As these females progressed to the top information technology spot, they not only developed their identities, but they found their voices and used their voices to advance their careers, and become leaders who change and transform institutions of higher learning. This study can assist female aspirants as they prepare for this leadership position as well as give institutions the opportunity to formulate strategies, policies, and approaches to better recruit and retain the next generation of female information technology leaders.

Dr. **Diane Boothe**, Director of P-20 Outreach and Professor of Literacy, Language and Culture, Boise State University, USA

Gifted and Talented Females: Multidimensional Perspectives Impacting Gender Diversity

Keywords: giftedness, STEM, inclusion

Gender has often been a critical factor when identifying multidimensional perspectives of giftedness. The early literature on giftedness, dominated by male authors, focused largely on mathematical and scientific manifestations of giftedness, and had a highly misogynistic character. Subsequent research and expanded definitions of giftedness have made significant

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

changes in these views and encouraged a more diverse population that will enrich others and allow gifted females to reach their full potential. Recent literature has been valuable in its stress on leadership, learning, and providing professional insight in narrowing the gender gap and facilitating a stronger female presence. Current literature features important research by female gifted education specialists. The objective of my research for this symposium is to provide an overview of gender differences among intellectually gifted students and examine the literature and research addressing gender in a variety of dimensions of cognitive giftedness. There are fascinating additions with a wide variety of perspectives on gender and high ability or highly talented females and academic achievement. The methodology includes longitudinal developmental research to examine this topic, identifying changes in approaches, specifically addressing STEM inclusion for females. Pertinent perspectives on the challenges that gifted and talented females encounter will be explored in an attempt to empower and serve gifted females. The findings are centered on the benefits, predicaments and determination of gifted and talented females as we embrace multiple facets of diversity and gender equity. Powerful questions must be asked relating to the worldwide emphasis on STEM education coupled with equal opportunities for gifted and talented females focusing on their identification, inclusion, contributions and a broad range of acquisition, support and success. Conclusions focus on the need for wider recognition and extensive educational programs aimed at developing opportunities and areas of talent appropriate in level, scope and pace for highly capable females.

Dr. Tsfiria Grebelsky-Lichtman, Associate Professor, Hebrew University and Ono Academic College, Israel

Gender Effect on Political Leaders' Nonverbal Communicative Structure During the COVID-19 Crisis

Keywords: political communication, leadership, gender, crisis, nonverbal communication, COVID-19

We analyzed 20 televised appearances by 10 heads of state (five males and five females) from democratic Western countries during COVID-19 pandemic. The analysis of the leaders' NCS was based on a multi-tiered coding system. The findings revealed that gender had a significant effect on leaders' NCS. Male leaders presented masculine NCS of competition, warning, threatening and scaring behavior, broad proxemics, tension leakage, and illustrative gestures. By contrast, female leaders presented an alternative novel feminine NCS for

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

leadership, which expresses cooperative, emotional communication, empathy, optimism, eye contact, and flexible expressions. Interestingly, the effect of gender on leaders' NCS had an interaction effect with the situation of the pandemic, indicating that countries with a female leader that presented calm, empathic, and cooperative feminine NCS had fewer diseased and severe cases. These findings are new and important because it was previously assumed that the key to political success for female leaders was the performance of masculine NCS. Our innovative conclusions are that contemporary female leaders do not adopt the masculine NCS of leadership; instead, they present an alternative leadership style based on feminine NCS. The conclusions develop theoretical and analytical frameworks that explain the central effect of gender on leaders' NCS. Furthermore, this study presents advanced distinctive profiles for male versus female leaders' NCS of emotions, cognition, and behavior during crisis.

Ms. **Nicole Russell Pascual**, PhD Candidate, University of Exeter, UK

Who Benefits? Reducing Inequality through Job Advert Framing

Keywords: gender equality, COVID-19, flexible working

The pandemic has set us back in terms of workplace gender equality. Women have been more likely to lose their jobs as a result of the pandemic than men, and have had to decrease their working hours while spending more time on childcare. The shift to flexible work could allow people to better balance work and home life, and thereby move us forward again. To better understand how companies should describe their flexible working policies to encourage women's participation in the workforce, we tested the impact of four different ways of framing flexible working policies in job adverts. This involved showing 404 participants one of four versions of a fictitious job advert, where we varied the way flexible working is described. We compared two commonly used flexible arrangements (flexible hours and flexible location) to a control condition where flexible working was merely mentioned. We also tested a version where flexible working was clearly described as the norm at the company, highlighting that the majority of employees worked flexibly in some way. To our surprise, we found no differences overall in disclosure of caregiving or comfort asking to work flexibly regardless of what type of flexible work was described. However, we found that presenting flexible working as the norm makes those with a stronger caregiver social identity more comfortable disclosing that they have caring responsibilities. In addition, people who did not have caring responsibilities were more comfortable asking to work

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

flexibly when flexible working was presented as the norm. The social norm - a 'non-rational' feature of communication - is an enabler of flexibility for both caregivers and non-caregivers.

Dr. **Daihnia Dunkley**, Full Time Lecturer, Yale University School of Nursing, USA

Outsiders Within: The Lived Experiences of Black Female Nurse Executives

Keywords: nursing, nursing leadership, women in leadership, diversity, minorities in leadership

The underrepresentation of minorities in nursing is well documented. Few Black nurses occupy positions of leadership and even fewer Black female nurses advance to careers as nurse executives. In essence, a Black female nurse in an executive role is a rarity, deserving further inquiry, because of the limited available research about this population. The purpose of the study was to explore the lived experience of being Black and female when becoming a nurse executive, specifically targeting the nuances of being both a racial and gender minority as part of that journey. The research question was, what is the essence of the experience of being Black and female when becoming a nursing executive? Using a hermeneutic phenomenological method, this study described and interpreted the experiences of a purposive sample of Black female nurse executives in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. Data collection involved semi-structured telephone interviews with ten participants. van Manen's approach and Collins' Black Feminist Thought as the theoretical framework guided data analysis. Three themes emerged, which captured the essence of the phenomenon of study: (a) living in a constant state of readiness, (b) embracing the responsibility beyond the job description, and (c) overcoming. Participants testified of the psychological dynamics of Black woman-ness, and the burdens of the intersectionality of race, gender, and class discrimination, while managing the complexities and rigors of a thriving career. The underrepresentation of minority nurses in positions of leadership reduces equity and equality in healthcare. Discussing the results of this research will help leaders in nursing, healthcare, and related professions to understand further the experiences of Black female nurses, which will inform national efforts to (a) increase minority representation in healthcare professions, and (b) eliminate health disparities among minority racial and ethnic groups.

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

Ms. **Vani Jain**, PhD Candidate, Durham University, UK

Explicit Gender Roles and Underlying Mental Health Trends in Gender and Sexual Minorities of India

Keywords: gender roles, LGBTQIA+ community, India, mental health

The study of gender has become increasingly popular in social sciences. Gender roles are based on what is considered appropriate behaviour for men and women according to society's expectations. In a ground-breaking paper, West and Zimmerman (1987) proposed that gender is something we do, and not who we are. They further said that individuals are judged as immoral if they fail to perform their duties which could be a possible explanation of the violence against transgender people. When compared to general population, mental health issues are twice as prevalent in LGB people (Medley et al., 2016), and four times more in transgenders (Wanta et al., 2019). Even though we know feelings of anomie and alienation are common in LGBTQIA+ community, it is one of the least represented groups in health equity research in India (Rabindran and Seshadri, 2018). Ranade (2018), in her presentation on health inequities among LGBT persons highlighted that the assumption of heterosexuality and the gender binary of male and female leads to the false categorization of people as 'normal' and 'abnormal'. The cis-genderist and heteronormative population's refusal to accept LGBT individuals as regular members of society pushes the LGBT community to its margins either physically or in terms of social visibility. This evident variance between people's sexualities, gender identities and their experiences with gender roles could lead to mental health disparities. This paper looks at how gender and sexual minorities deal with these gender role expectations in a modern India by drawing on the literature of gender roles, sexual stigma, and mental health in LGBTQIA+ Indian community. An overarching aim of the paper is to question how do these archaic, though prevalent, gender roles impact the mental health of people who don't conform to the traditional binary view of gender.

Dr. **Lori Head**, Retired Professor, Idaho State University, USA

Meditation Medication

Keywords: female, stability, health, consideration, breathing, focus, sensing

The classic terms of meditation and medication both harness energy from a holistic approach. The acquired research allows all of us, regardless of sex, weight, age, and/or interests to

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

indulge in the act of relaxation with a focus. The hands-on class will explore a few options within the act of meditating i.e., group (large or small), and within our own being. We must allow our brain to have options like walking meditation, nature healing, group breathing, and of course guided reflections. As a group leader, you look to support movement patterns as well mental socialization. The internal experience of sensing with our brain and body will also be explored. Sensing and feeling is a response from our cells in our body. Sensing is part of the action. For example, are we hungry, are we angry, confused, grieving? Emotional knowledge is connected to our entire wellbeing... let's address this fact with interesting practical direction. In conclusion: As one encourages a self-dialogue with your deeper rhythms, sensations, and feelings, your body begins to talk in new ways.

Ms. **Anamika Bandopadhyay**, Assistant Professor, L.V. Prasad College of Media Studies, India

Media Literacy and Women in the Age of Fake News and WhatsApp: Mapping Awareness and Possibilities of Implementing Media Literacy in Rural India

Keywords: media literacy, women, rural India, fake news and women, digital literacy

Gender-selective rhetoric and misinformation is wrongly targeting the teenage rural community in India. Women are being used as both consumers and the carriers of fake news and misinformation that often intersect with patriarchal and misogynist propaganda. In 2021, in a village in Birbhum in India, women received a WhatsApp-forward that said - wearing jeans can damage the reproductive organs of young girls. WhatsApp was largely responsible for spreading this misinformation. Women of varied demographics, including some school teachers, also forwarded this to parents. In rural India, the need for media literacy with a gendered perspective is greater than ever. There are 400 million WhatsApp users in India. According to the National Crime Record Bureau, "India recorded 50,035 cases of cybercrime in 2020, as 578 incidents of "fake news" on social media". This study takes a theoretical approach to examine the intersection of media literacy and women's participation in civic media engagement. This probe will fortify with ample case studies. The paper concludes with recommendations on how media literacy can be implemented through school curriculums and community media.

Dr. **Darya Maoz**, Senior Lecturer, Hadassah Academic College, Israel

Late Bachelorhood: Gender Dependent Reasons

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

Keywords: late bachelorhood, gender, pronatalist society, significance

Our qualitative phenomenological research study tries to shed light on the prevailing issue of singlism and the experiences of this phenomenon for Jewish-Israeli men and women, who are not married and have no children. Israel is an extremely family oriented society, which sees family as its basic unit. It is also a pronatalist society, in which fertility levels are very high relative to other developed countries. As a result, single men and especially single women may face stigmatization because of their relationship status. Single women struggle with images of defected and incomplete and experience heavy pressure from their family and society. Using the snowball sampling method, 23 respondents between the ages of 33 and 61 were located, all of whom were interviewed in depth using a semi-structured interview. The objective of the study was to discover the reasons put forward by male and female bachelors to explain their status. The data was analyzed using the Grounded Theory method, which assumes that there are detectable patterns in human behavior. The analysis process included identification of recurring prominent and important topics in the data, and these were defined as themes for analysis. Themes and categories were refined concurrently with the categorization of all the data in our materials. The data analysis results of our study yielded four main themes regarding the causes and background of late singlehood among the respondents: 1. A strong sense of self-efficacy, importance and significance. 2. Experience of relationships as being constraining. 3. A fear of closeness, communication problems, and a fear of abandonment. 4. A lack of experience in long-term relationships. Those singles, especially the older ones, feel need for control over their life and believe it can be obtained alone only. Their quest for significance, their desire to matter, to have dignity and merit respect – led them to believe in themselves while seeing an intimate partner as an obstacle.

Dr. **Linda Yang**, Associate Professor, University of Yaounde 1, Cameroon

Misery and Complementarity: The Visibility Paradox of Women in Cameroonian Traditional Societies

Keywords: misery, greatness, Cameroonian traditional society

Every civilization or society structures itself around the complementarity of man and woman. Man and woman are two beings identical in many ways but different in several platforms by reason of multiple natural and cultural factors. Both old and new civilizations have had the

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

experience of patriarchy or the domination of women by men. Women experienced discrimination in matters of social, economic and political inequality. This notwithstanding, the traditional Cameroonian woman has known various fortunes in the past. A striking paradox emerges between her social status, her economic and religious role and her political functions. If the political and religious roles of women differ radically from one tribe to another and are for the most part rewarding, the economic functions and the social position are broadly the same and sometimes indicate the subjection of women to men. The paradox stems from the fact that in African civilizations for the most part women are simultaneously valued, dominated and sometimes oppressed. This work therefore presents the original status of the traditional Cameroonian women as an important component of their patriarchal societies. This research seeks to present the two facets of the conditions of the African woman; the gloomy situations and the blissful side. Even though dominated culturally and naturally, African women through their daily activities proved their visibility and relevance. They were confronted and evolved within an atmosphere of sexism.

Mrs. **Siju Yusuf**, Doctoral Researcher, University of Brighton, UK

Storytelling on Social Media: The Sub-Saharan African Feminists Tool

Keywords: storytelling, digital tools, social media, feminism, Nigeria, sub-Saharan African

Storytelling on Facebook is being used to gain voice and visibility for feminists. The affordance of Facebook as a story-based platform- (owing from the allowed characters) and possessing a wide reach/audience in terms of size and accessibility is leveraged to connect to a wide audience and empower self/voice. Nigerian feminists are engaging in feminism on Facebook as a personal process whilst giving interpretation to the concept using their personal experience, projects and activities. Previous research has explored the use of social media and particularly Facebook for collective action, community building etcetera. However, there is still a dearth in literature on the impact of Facebook engagement on identity production. My study explores how feminists in Nigeria are using Facebook as a digital tool to connect personal stories to feminist ideologies and causes. It also explores storytelling not only as activism but as a creative practice for articulating identities. This is achieved by exploring questions such as; 'What Facebook platform affordances are used to narrate / tell feminist identities and possibilities? What is the relationship between feminist storytelling and identity production? Using data from Facebook page observation and

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

interviews, data is thematically analysed to identify emerging patterns to give meaning into the concept of storytelling as a feminist tool. Preliminary findings from this research identifies creation of new identities; an opportunity for further explication of Nigerian feminists use storytelling on Facebook to comprehend, resist and transform from patriarchy's constraints, gender inequality issues and various layers of oppression.

Dr. **Luz Martín del Campo-Hermosillo**, Faculty & Past Co-Chair of Gender Studies, Long Island University-Brooklyn, USA

Mapping the Commodification of Tourism, Rainforest Conversion, and Lacandón Maya Self-Identity Resulting in Evolving Biodiversity Indicators

Keywords: Lacandón Rainforest, gender, biodiversity, eco-tourism, land-use, landscape change

The Lacandón Rainforest, an autotrophic system, is the largest Neotropic rainforest in North America. Located in the Southern State of Chiapas, México, it is the home of the Lacandón Maya community, and other indigenous and nonindigenous residents. My research in a Lacandón community reveals how tourism and governmental bureaucratic policies calibrated an "eco-tribal" image of the Lacandónes being "Guardias de la Selva (Guardians of the Rainforest)," a term specifically used to identify, authenticate and commodify an indigenous community. This identity expression has been used by the federal government for the purpose of promoting tourism and geopolitical stability in the State of Chiapas while masking their political role as architects of the socioeconomic inequalities and disparities existing in the region. Needless to say, to understand the Lacandón Maya self-identity conundrum involves familiarity with evolving biodiversity indicators governing the regional rainforest conversion and landscape change, and the Lacandón historical social-economic origins in the State of Chiapas, México.

Ms. **Emma MacTavish**, PhD Candidate, University of Birmingham, UK

The Historical Context of Kurdish Women's Participation in Peace and Conflict

Keywords: feminism, Kurdish, collective memory, peace and conflict

Kurdish women have been lauded for their participation in fighting extremism, particularly in relation to the so-called Islamic State. However, their motivations and willingness to fight against these groups is often obscured in Western-based media or overarching patriarchal

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

narratives on Kurdish nationalism. For Kurdish women in the areas of Iraq and Syria, their understanding of gender, peace, and security is situated within Kurdish collective memory. This memory informs their perception of the past, allowing them to seek empowerment through reproducing the Kurdish “myth” of gender equity and tolerance in ancient Mesopotamia, forming the bedrock of their views in present-day for why women seek stability and peace. Through qualitative methodological research and semi-structured interviews with activists, politicians, and freedom fighters, the narrative of this collective memory is reviewed in the context of peace, conflict, and gender. Findings indicate that women have complex reasonings for participating in armed conflict; thereby rejecting the traditional and essentialist-based explanations of protecting their rights to motherhood or avenging fallen family members. This paper explores the different levels of this myth and how these are applied to the understanding of how Kurdish women see their role within society and as champions of peace.

Ms. **Pramila Acharya Rijal**, President, South Asian Women Development Forum, Nepal

Women's Leadership Development

Keywords: politics, empowerment, Nepal

Gender inequality in Nepal persists across various dimensions, including but not limited to politics, economic independence, property rights, and health issues. The intersection between gender and caste/ ethnicity is particularly important, with women from ethnic minorities and low-caste groups bearing the brunt of caste and gender discrimination. As Nepal's systems of political governance have changed, so have the rights of Nepali women – Nepal's brief stint with democracy in the 1950s saw women's groups demanding rights to education, property, and equality before the law; following Nepal's adoption of constitutional monarchy in 1990, a number of Nepali women rose to positions of prominence in government; and finally, Nepal's democratization brought about the Constitution of Nepal (2015), which enshrines equal rights for women, the poor, the vulnerable, and the marginalized, as well as the 2015 Constitution and Civil Service Act, which has dramatically improved female representation at national and regional levels. As a result, Nepal has made ostensible progress in achieving gender equality, as corroborated by metrics such as the Gender Development Index, the Global Gender Gap Index, etc. While Nepal's progress in achieving gender equality has

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

improved female rights and representation, Nepali women are still held back by norms and practices that are deeply ingrained in the fabric of Nepali society.

Dr. **Naznin Tabassum**, Senior Lecturer in Strategy and Leadership, University of Derby, UK

Investigating the Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Women Entrepreneurship in Bangladesh

Keywords: women entrepreneurship, gender stereotypes, patriarchy, Covid-19, Bangladesh

Over the years, Bangladesh has suffered due to political instability, intense population growth and extreme poverty. However, in recent years, the economy has shown remarkable improvement with steady economic growth, reduction in poverty and improved health and education conditions (BBC, 2019). Bangladesh showed a steady positive economic growth during past 10 years until Covid-19 pandemic started in 2020. Since Covid-19 started, the poverty reduction declined as job creation slowed and country's economic growth slowed. The lack of job created has increased youth unemployment rate and among them most affected are females (World Bank Group, 2021). The economic and social benefits of women's involvement in business and entrepreneurial activity is immense. Women represent 49.4% of the total population in 2020, but their participation in the labour force is low (WorldData.info, 2021). In Bangladesh, although 99.93% are cottage or micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), women owned businesses are only 7.2%, as per a study conducted in 2016. Although Bangladesh Bank ensures a significant portion of credit funding goes to women entrepreneurs, introduced "Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Credit Policies and Programmes" in March 2010 (Rahman, 2018), however, research suggests that women business owners confront a range of patriarchal and gendered problems in Bangladesh which hinders entrepreneurial activity (Jaim, 2020a, b). The study proposes to conduct 35-40 semi-structured interviews either face to face or online involving women entrepreneurs both in rural and urban areas in Bangladesh to investigate the impact of Covid-19 on women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh. Undertaking this research will help to understand the experience of women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh and ways to support them. This is in line with UN sustainable goals – reducing gender inequality through enhancing women entrepreneurial activities, therefore, benefitting the country economically and socially. This research will be beneficial for government and policy makers to understand how women entrepreneurs can be supported to flourish in Bangladesh context. The research will provide

Oxford Women's Leadership Symposium Proceedings
8-10 August 2022

food for thought for academics and future researchers to undertake further research in this area.