GENDER MAINSTREAMING PROCESS AT THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to explore the impacts of gender mainstreaming process in the public sector in Malaysia. It is an attempt to see the achievement of gender mainstreaming process in the organization for public sector. Therefore, this paper reviews on the Gender Mainstreaming process impact by looking at decision making among leaders in the gender issues. The research relies on in-depth conversations with participants, both men and women, who work at high management levels in two particular government departments. The findings indicate that both organizations have women participating in the decision-making processes, but that multicultural education is still in its early stages. Results suggest that to increase support the decision making process, four main elements that indicate in this finding need to be considered in order to ensure that GM at public sector will be fulfilled

Keywords: Gender, Gender Mainstreaming, Organization, Decision Making, Participation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

An internationally recognized method of advancing gender equality is female normalization (United Nation Women, 2019). The process of gender mainstreaming was starting through reliable strategies to achieve gender equality (Stratigaki,M, 2005). This is part of Human Right issues under Beijing Platform for Action (Fatimah, 2014). In an effort to remedy glaring cluelessness for Women, gender mainstreaming was introduced in year 1995. On the whole, gender mainstreaming encompasses all aspects of planning, implementing and monitoring any social, political or economic actions

The concept was developed by United Nation (UN) through international platforms and gradually from there it came to be adopted as important of policy initiative in most of the developed and developing countries. Malaysia also was being one of the countries who are agree to implement the policy. Hence, process of Gender Mainstreaming (GM) is involving relationship at international and national strategies happening to achieve gender equality in Malaysia. GM that was introduced internationally and adapted in Malaysia will be discussed based on approach Political System Analysis and Policy Process that was discussed by Birkland 2001. The adoption of GM is based on global issues that have influenced the national issues and resolved through Malaysia's policies. Acceptance of global policies as the solution of national issues has shown that the process of implementation has resulted GM implementation practices in Malaysia. Policy formulation at the national level in Malaysia was implemented at national and local level to achieve gender equality.

One widespread misconception is that changing organisational "internal" processes will also need changing operating "outside" processes. The former relates to adjustments that must be made inside organisations in order to embrace the principles and aims of mainstreaming gender and to adapt policies and practises to achieve these objectives (Sen,2000). Political leaders will be compelled and able to include gendered standpoint parity in their programs by reforming the policy-making process. This approach will result in a fundamental shift, eradicating gender prejudices and reorienting policy

to support the objective of women's rights (Verloo, 2001). And therefore, GM is required for Malaysia to attain equality between the sexes, which is determined by the participation of women in centralized decision.

2. BACK GROUND OF MALAYSIA

Malaysia now has a greater population, up from 32.4 million in 2018 to 32.6 million in 2019. Males outweigh females in 2019 (p. 1). As of 2018, there were 16.8 million more men than there were in 2018. Likewise, there were 15.8 million more women than there were women as of 2018. Since 2013, there are 107 males for every 100 females in the population as a whole (Department of Statistic, 2020). The Malaysian women's population is increasing as well as their achievement in education as compared to the men, they are still experiencing challenges to entered remain at higher level management.

Malaysia has one of the lowest rates of female labour participation in Asean, per a survey by Moody's across the Asia-Pacific (16 Nov 2018, The Star). Despite the fact there are more women than men enrolling in higher education institutions and that girls often perform better in school, just 39% of Malaysia's workforce is made up of women, according to a World Bank Study published in January (2019) in working-age of labour force the 80.4% of were men , but women it is only 55.2%. But, more than 50% of graduates are women. Within all major educational groups, women's average earning are 70.6% to 83.2% of men's average earnings. In 2017, 22.1% of managers in Malaysia were female.

Overall, women participation in the public sector in Malaysia has increased. However, Women continue to be disproportionately represented in positions of higher leadership and decision-making (Ng, 2011; Nur Syakiran Akmal & Rozita, 2015; Zaharah, 2015). Besides, Zaharah (2015) mentioned that the promotion for women at work is slower than for men. It was influenced by many factors such as family and work life balance, discrimination, gender stereotype to women as a leader and, not comfortable to women's leader.

In many nations around the world, there are still few women who are involved in making decisions in the government sector. Statistics showed a rising trend for women in positions of greater responsibility in some countries. For instance, according to U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2002, women occupied 46% of managerial and administrative posts in industrialised countries like the United States, up from 18% in 1972 (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Although the percentage of women holding high managerial and administrative positions had increased, there is still very small percentage of women at the highest level of management in most men-dominated organizations.

According to Bernama (2018), the World Gender Gap Report, Malaysia ranked 70th overall out of 144 nations. The Malaysian Gender Gap Index (MGGI), which showed the mean score for four sub-indices (economic benefit and involvement, educational success, life satisfaction, and ideological supremacy) as 0.697 or 69.7%, was taken into account in order to determine the rank, according to Mohd Uzir Mahidin, chief mathematician at the Malaysian Department of Statistics (2018). The rating increased from 0.692 (69.2%) in 2016.

Meanwhile, in terms of women's representation in government, Malaysia was placed at 110, while behind Philippines, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Indonesia. The rating of political participation was based on the proportion of women in legislature and cabinet posts, as well as the length of time a nation has had a female head of state or administration. Due to this fact, Malaysia has put tremendous effort to rectify the situations through Malaysia Plan. According to the Malaysian 9th Plan, Malaysia sought to reach a goal of 30% female representation in decision-making groups inside an institution.

As per Ng (2011), the Ministries of Women, Family, and Community Engagement (MWFCD) and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) have done study on the attainment of 30% female participation in judgement in 2007. As a result of the plan, they have developed an action plan that aims to be completed by the year 2015. In both the public and private sectors, they discovered that women make up, on aggregate, 14% of judgement positions. As a result, MWFCD had intensified the efforts to increase the number of women in the decision making level to at least 30 percent. In 2010,

the 30 percent mark was finally achieved in the overall Malaysian Public Sectors but it is a different situation in the private sectors where more efforts are needed to accomplish a similar achievement. The question then is: Is there an orderly process for women to involve in decision making groups or does it only exists in gender mainstreaming? Thus, this paper will analyse what the factors which influencing gender mainstreaming process in decision-making process at public sector of Malaysia.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Development of the country influences by reflection and action to the changing in the an environmental, economic, politic, institution and cultural attitudes (Hirschman, C. 2016). All the changes impacted to women status in development especially in the context of the changes in cultural attitudes. The changes of attitudes develop a new challenging in women's world especially in the context to survive in male dominated. So, women need supported by the government through policies to ensure the survival of women in challenging world. By means of international platform, United Nation make an action by Sustainability Development Goal (SDG). In the SDG, one of the targets is integrating gender equality in development of country. According to Peterson and Camegie (2019), integrating gender equality was one the development objectives to support economic achievement, food security, poverty and, hardship alleviation of the featured rural community-based. Hence, an action that considering is so important to achieve gender equality is gender mainstreaming. The discussion of gender mainstreaming was starting since 1980s (True, 2015). However, it was drastically discussed in year 2005 when majority of academicians were debates the achievement of gender mainstreaming after Beijing Platform was announced in 1995. It part of research finding about the process and progress of gender mainstreaming at many countries that agreed to implement an action at national level (Nur Syakiran Akmal, 2016).

The fundamental tenets of women's empowerment are to strengthen the position of women and give them greater power to make decisions and deal with issues linked to their human rights, poverty, young women, violence against women, and other problems affecting women (Nur Syakiran Akmal and Ummu Attiyah, 2014). According Mukhopadhyay (2013) in Changachirere (2019), gender mainstreaming targets two broad vision. One of the targets is infusing gender analysis in development policy and programmes at all levels. Second target is to support initiatives that facilitate society participation in decision making. According Nur Syakiran Akmal and Ummu Attiyah (2014) in the context of decision making, it open involvement from grassroots to higher decision makers. Hence, social inclusion is a tactic to encourage policymaking and choice that takes into account the needs and desires of both men and women (Bradshaw, 2015).

There are already a lot of research that provide a thorough explanation of particular ways for gender mainstreaming in leadership. Gender mainstreaming was used by many organizations to improve the management in the context to achieve gender equality (Wittborn, E.E. 2015). While, success in implementation of gender mainstreaming has been achieved by some organizations, there does not shown conclusively proof that this approach returns preferred outcome to gender equality (Silva Rodríguez de San Miguel, J. 2018). Women continue to be under-represented in senior leadership roles and many confront a "labyrinth" of "gender-organization-system" challenges throughout their careers (Phillips, T. and Grandy, G. 2018). This is because some of manager or top management level not willing to share new knowledge in the organization such as gender sensitive. The organization should have managers who can improve knowledge-sharing activities in their organizations, which will have important implications in terms of fostering an environment (Halimah. 2017) such as gender sensitive.

So we can conclude that, even many action by countries that claim support gender mainstreaming in organization, but majority finding shown that this action not fulfill the target. According Anderson, etc (2018), the groups that, in their investigation, did not include some of the people who were the focus of the strategy (women). Women's subject positions in organisational policies were those of needing assistance and having insufficient abilities and competencies. Organizational procedures and institutions were usually undetectable in the materials, in addition to men and the patriarchal standards. The idea of gender equality was mostly devoid of authority and struggle. Hence, Åsa Corneliusson (2019) suggest that strategies of how a collective organizing of "outside–inside" gender

practitioners might push the internal work of implementing feminist perspectives forward. So, gender mainstreaming should be use as fundamental organizational change to foresight program development in the public sector (Janzwood, S. and Piereder, J. (2019). Males report more possibilities, increased degrees of inclusion, and less employment discrimination than do women. Throughout all career levels, there are different patterns of gender differences. Men and women experience the greatest gaps in opportunity and inclusiveness perspectives at the beginning of mid-career (Traavik, L. 2018). This situation proves that gender mainstreaming is very important to implement in all organization especially in public sectors to achieve gender equality. Some knowledge sharing practices that influences nature of knowledge, working culture and, motivation to share to support this issue (Usman & Halimah. 2018).

4. METHODOLOGY

The research utilizes qualitative conversations with sixteen (16) informants, ten (10) of whom are women and six (6) of whom are males who are in managerial roles at two (X and Y) selected Public Sectors companies. Both formal and unstructured interviewing techniques were used to speak with the informants. Results will be discussed in order to describe how GM is actually used in the organizations. The preponderance of the personnel at Organization X are women, thus that is why it was selected as the example illustrates for this research. According to recent data, there are 279,545 female employees compared to 127,171 male employees. Yet, male employees controlled the positions in the organizations that made decisions.

Table 1: Information of informants

NUM	INFORMANTS	GENDER	ORGANISATION
1.	Aminah	F	X
2.	Bidin	M	X
3.	Daud	M	X
4.	Fuad	M	X
5.	Ghani	M	X
6.	Hassan	M	X
7.	Intan	F	Y
8.	Kiong	M	Y
9.	Laila	F	Y
10.	Mila	F	Y
11.	Nora	F	Y
12.	Rita (GFP1)	F	Y
13.	Siti (GFP2)	F	X
14.	Tini (GFP3)	F	Y
15.	Umi (GFP4)	F	Y
16.	Yati (GFP5)	F	Y

Sources: Research by author

References: M= Male, F= Female, X= organization X, Y=Organisation Y, GFP = Gender Focal Point

All names stated are not the real names of the informant.

5. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Malaysia is moving in this direction as half of its work force consists of women and this motion also served as step towards achieving gender equality. As a member of United Nation, Malaysia constantly involves in international conferences especially the ones that are related to issues of women. Malaysia also responded positively to the agreements achieved in these conferences. For example, Malaysia has agreed to implement the policy of eliminating discrimination against women in the country as drawn in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. Since the provisions were believed to be at odds with Malaysia's domestic legislation, the nation first showed some reluctance to abide by the first accession to the Conventions. Nevertheless, with the establishment of Supporting Women as a method to promote gender equality and the debates on contemporary challenges facing women at that time, the Malaysian delegates pledged to carry out the Beijing Framework for Actions and to evaluate the Beijing Declaration issues of reservation placed under CEDAW. The head of delegation said;

It is a sign of our dedication to and willingness to adapt that we are gathering at this Fourth Global Conference. Our plan to bring about a profound shift will be put into practise through the Platforms for Actions. The Malaysian government is dedicated to ensuring that men and women have equal opportunities, privileges, and obligations (Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development, 2004)

In 2009, the Malaysian Government introduced the Second National Policy on Women as step to ensure the continuous development for women. The policy adopts GM as a strategy to achieve gender equality as suggested in the Beijing Declaration. The implementation of the policy portrays the seriousness of the Malaysian Government to promote gender equality and emphasize priority for women in the decision making groups. Uplifting the position of women especially in the field of management such as having more women in the decision making posts is a form of continuous action by Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development. Means that, Malaysia put the priority to support women empowerment through gender mainstreaming. Hence, two organizations were selected to explore gender mainstreaming process in public sectors in Malaysia. The organization namely X and Y. Therefore, this study tries to identify the gender mainstreaming process in the decision making from both organizations as to highlighted earlier. The informants involved in the interviews were selected from both genders to reflect the overall findings.

Table 2: Premier Grade Officers in the Federal Civil Service by Gender

Grade	**ORGANIZATION X**			
	Women		**Men**	
	No	**%**	**No**	**%**
Premier 1	5		28	
Premier II	0		0	
Profesional and Managerial (Gred 54)				
Department	46		55	
State	27		137	
Unit A	9		14	
Unit B	19		34	
Total	**100**	**27**	**269**	**73**

Source: Organization A. Human Resources Department

Table 3 : Premier Grade Officers in the Federal Civil Service by Gender

Grade	**ORGANIZATION Y**			
	Women		**Men**	
	No	**%**	**No**	**%**
Premier 1	1		0	
Premier II	0		0	
Premier III	1		0	

Premier A	1		0	
Expert A	0		1	
Premier B	0		1	
Expert B	0		0	
Premier C	3		1	
Expert C	2		0	
Profesional and Managerial (Gred 54)	8		15	
Total	**16**	**47**	**18**	**53**

Source: Organization Y. Human Resources Department

The requirement for a location as a decision maker at top management level is grade of 54 and above (refers to Table 2 and Table 3). The findings showed that both organizations offer opportunity for women to hold senior positions in the decision making groups. This demonstrate, both organizations constitute both gender and did not practice gender bias in the decision making structure. Yet, majority men dominated all positions in the management and policy making levels in organization X, despite the majority of staff were female. It can be assumed that imbalance of opinions and values in decisions existed and worked heavily in favor of the men. The situation was self-confessed by the Deputy Secretary General of Organization X and she was not so sure of the factors that led to such situation. According to Hassan, women decision makers are mostly attended in every meeting. His agreed that women are more committed with their work. Even though, the decision making group consisted mostly of men, the meeting attendance showed more women were present than the men. However, Hassan stated that the meeting outcomes were never gender bias even though the meeting compositions were dominated by men or women were presented more than men. Meanwhile, the decision making structure indicated that women exceeded the 30 percent in the Organization Y.

Referring on the table (3) above, the organization's Deputy Secretary General post is also held by a Deputy Secretary woman and followed by other main administrative positions. Umi mentioned that since women hold majority of the senior positions in the organization Y, there has been a presumption that it is a feminine organization. On the other hand, she emphasized on the balance of gender in which men must also hold important positions among the women decision makers. The word "must" from her statement proved that there are some successful women who are unsupportive and have doubtful thoughts about women empowerment in organization. This situation usually happens when women are in comfort zone and they believed that women are content with what they have attained.

According to Nora, the committee meetings among the decision makers, at the top of the decision-making pyramid, men still dominate. The majority of senior roles are held by women, though, thus she acknowledged that in some situations, topics raised can be gendered. She asserted, nevertheless, that gender concerns do not affect policy-related sessions. The findings above proved that women had participated as decision makers at the management level in both organizations and hence, both organizations have gender mainstreaming process. The success of the gender popularization process, however, in the context of concerns relating to gender equality is not just restricted to the representation of women in top management positions of decision-making, but also as a content of contribution to gender matters. The lady should be able to fulfil her responsibility as a spokesperson on all matters pertaining to women's rights. This also implies that the gender mainstreaming (GM) process is applicable in order to guarantee sound judgement, which will eventually lead to the realization of gender equality.

Regarding the finding, since majority of informants in the interviews have no prior knowledge pertaining to the concept of GM, the assumption is: the process of GM was not implemented in their administrative routines. In contrast, the findings indicated otherwise; the practice of GM proses did occur among the decision makers but not intentionally. The process of GM can be identified through discussion regarding gender issues in their main services which involves gender stereotype illustrations in their resources for target group. The depictions were said to have instigated the culture of gender bias in daily routines. Rita said that she had been discussing the issue for the last ten years in meetings among the decision makers.

Kiong is generally familiar with the idea of women's rights. In one of his managerial practises at Organization Y, he had inadvertently used the GM method. After working late into the night, he once made sure the parking lot was secure and safe for the personnel to board their cars. On the other side, Umi had stated that certain judgements ought to be made according to gender. For example, while sending staff members for training, she occasionally has to take into account gender viewpoint in addition to the staff members' ability and qualities. A mentor-mentee system is one of Organization Y's career support program for its staffs. Even though, the system is still at an early stage, the designers have created the system to the best of their capabilities. The system is part of tacit knowledge that manager should use to increase the effectives of the organization (Halimah etc. 2017). One of the designers was Yati, who among others had outlined that the mentor and mentee must be of the same gender as the safety of the two parties can be greatly ensured. The findings also showed that indirect GM approaches occurred among decision makers in determining or conducting an action. However, only three persons in organization Y had taken actions based on the GM approach as compared to only one in organisation X.

Following that, it is assumed that decision-makers did not employ any GM methods during discussions at their various firms based on their awareness of the GM idea. The findings, meanwhile, indicated that while women are involved in decision-making in both organizations, there has been little progress towards implementing a women's participation strategy. The issue of gender stereotype in resouces for their target group was also discussed in Organization X as mentioned by Aminah. As a result, all the resources are closely monitored by the organization as to avoid gender stereotype illustrations or examples. The critical shortage of male staffs in Organization X was also discussed among the decision makers. Inadvertently, this circumstance has raised questions about the effects of the male crew, which formerly dominated every notable sector in the world of human resources. In addition, during the meeting of decision-makers, sexual misconduct was also covered. The debate on this subject revealed that both organizations' meetings have discussed the GM approach. Sexual harassment problems have received a lot of attention from the two groups, and it was on the agenda for one of the meetings. Due to the fact that it affects their primary business, Organization X is extremely worried about this problem. But in the case of Organization Y, the Secretaries General's concerns as a woman are more likely to be the cause of the emphasis. The many scenarios demonstrated that a woman in the top position inside an organization will inadvertently use a GM strategy and be more understanding of gender politics. It means, nature of knowledge of information (Madugu, U. & Halimah, 2018) of the women at top management level such as Secretary General in Public Sector also can influence the cultural of gender sensitive.

One of the key parts of the framework for supporting employees is the issue of childcare for staff. According to the research findings, decision-makers have discussed this issue. Yet, departmental conferences in each company brought up this issue. The childcare issue is viewed as an unmistakable support for female employees. As a result, this topic was considered in the higher tier conferences by both groups. Despite being stressed in each and every term of the Malaysian Plan, offering nurseries at employment is still only at a minimal, which suggests that this problem continues to be in its adolescence.

This result revealed that GM approaches occur in the exercise of decision-making. The judgments, nevertheless, do not fully understand the concept's genuine meaning, hence the methods used were considered oblique.

Resulting of the finding analysis, the research found four (4) themes that can be used as elements that must be considered when implementing the process of GM in an organization. The next section will discuss these elements as suggestions in implementing process GM in organization.

SUGGESTIONS OF GENDER MAINSTREAMING PROCESS IN PUBLIC SECTOR?

The results have shown four main elements should have in the process of GM practice in an organization. The four components are I knowledge; (ii) understanding; (iii) empathy; and (iv) practise at the beginning of the GM process. These components are theme findings derived from analysis of source responses and the following part is the discussion of the four elements found in the analyses.

Table 4: Elements of GM in Organization X

KNOWLEDGE		COMPREHENSION		COMPASSION		PRACTICE	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
	Aminah		Aminah		Aminah	Aminah	
	Bidin		Bidin		Bidin	Bidin	
	Daud		Daud		Daud		
	Fuad		Fuad		Fuad	Fuad	
	Ghani		Ghani		Ghani	Ghani	
	Hassan		Hassan		Hassan		

Table 5: Elements of GM in Organization Y

KNOWLEDGE		COMPREHENSION		COMPASSION		PRACTICE	
YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO
Intan		Intan		Intan		Intan	
	Kiong		Kiong		Kiong	Kiong	
	Laila		Laila		Laila	Laila	
	Mila		Mila		Mila	Mila	
	Nora		Nora		Nora		Nora

a. Knowledge

Based on the tables 4 and 5, With the exception of one informant from Organization Y, neither of the two organizations' whistleblowers who were questioned had ever heard of the GM notion. In studies on most countries that practice GM found that majority of the workers are incapable to relate the concept of GM to their work and organizations' objectives. As result, the practice of GM was not seriously considered (Stratigaki, 2005; Sen, 2000; UNDP, 2002; UNESCO,2005; Silva Rodríguez de San Miguel, J. 2018). Consequently, these workers need more exposure on the issues in gender through specific trainings and programs. The interviews results have shown that most informants were unaware of the concept of GM and had asked for an elaboration at the beginning of the interview. There were some informants who did not respond to the GM concept related questions. In fact, when the same question on the subject was re-posed to the informants for the second time after three months of the first interviews, none had answered satisfactorily. Below are some examples of the answers given:

[…](gender) mainstreaming means to implement in the main stream, meaningto have more women in the administrative field […] (Fuad)

[…] to my understanding, trying to give more attention to gender, meaningspecific attention to gender in the public sector. That is all I know […] (Kiong)

Intan was the only informant who has knowledge about the concept of GM. Prior to her current position she had served with Organization Z which is the only organization to completely implementing GM in its overall operations based on current needs. There, she had experienced GM implementation through Gender Responsive Budget. However, the researcher concluded that majority of informants still lack the knowledge of GM concept.

b. Comprehension

Since the majority of informants lack the knowledge of GM, the researcher concluded that the informants also have no comprehension regarding its concept. In reality, if a person has knowledge of a

certain subject then the person will also have an understanding of its concept. However, the case of Intan, she was exposed to the approach of GM during her tenure at Organization Z; therefore, she has the grasp of the concept. In other words, the researcher inferred that certain extend of knowledge of the GM is required in order to have a comprehension of its concept.

c. Compassion

Compassion of the concept of GM can only be thrived if the informants have an in-depth comprehension of GM. The researcher concluded that since almost all informants do not have significant comprehension regarding the concept of GM then compassion cannot be inferred to exist. On the other hand, Intan, as the only informant who had experienced and comprehended the concept of GM, had demonstrated the elements of compassion through her justification on gender's needs.

d. Practice

Based on the results above, the author's assumption is that actual GM approach was never practice in management routines. However, decision makers do refer to gender perspective needs in certain cases even though they claimed that their action were gender neutral. In fact, implicit GM approach did occur either in individual or collective decision making.

6. CONCLUSION

Overall, this paper focuses on the issue of mainstreaming gender in a company's decision-making processes. The importance of measuring the gender mainstreaming process in organization to know the level of support from public sectors in the context to support women policy's in their organization. It is also important to know the opportunity of women as decision makers in public sectors. The survey found that while there are many possibilities for women to engage in the decision-making process, there are very few of them in top managerial positions. The study's findings also demonstrated that both organizations have gender popularisation policies in place. The implementation and existence are, however, still quite minimal. This is a result of the president's lack of commitment to putting suitable policies and initiatives in place to promote gender parity. As a result, the promotion of GM is still lacking and most organizations do not have adequate information of it. Insufficient knowledge of GM affects the effectiveness of its implementation in organizations as the decision makers do not have the comprehension of the concept. Because of this, the administration should place a focus on the assertive marketing and delivery of knowledge regarding gender issues to companies in order to build a solid and effective gender balance throughout the country.

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