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Becoming and being academic women: Perspectives from the Maldives

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Abstract: This exploratory study aimed at understanding the role of women teaching in a university in the Maldives is a first of its kind. The many studies of academic women in Western countries guided the 20 semi-structured interviews. The data were thematically analysed with the assistance of NVivo. Becoming an academic appeared to be an independent decision for the majority of women. There was little parental influence. A common theme was the women perceived that, in general, they worked harder than men. They perceived little or no work differences, despite the observation that men filled senior positions at the university. Although work/life balance was difficult to maintain, a striking finding was that the majority of the women were quite satisfied. From the point of view of most of the women interviewed, gender was little or not an issue, in that there was no indication of frustration or anger amongst the women interviewed. Several issues are identified for future research.

Subjects: Gender & Development; Gender Studies; Higher Education Management; South Asian Culture & Society; South Asian Studies; Study of Higher Education; Women's Studies

Keywords: gender; higher education; academic work; Maldives; South Asia



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Higher education is relatively new in the Maldives. There is one university. This is the first study of the role of academic women in the Maldives and previous studies guided the research. The 20 interviews of 10 senior and 10 junior females were carried out in Dhivehi or English by five young female researchers, translated by them and then analysed with the assistance of NVivo to find the main themes. Becoming an academic appeared to be an independent decision for the majority of women with little parental influence. The women perceived that they worked harder than men. They perceived little or no work differences though men filled senior positions. Work/life balance was difficult to maintain, but the majority of the women were quite satisfied. Amongst these women, gender was not an issue, in that there was no indication of frustration or anger amongst the women interviewed.

1. Introduction

This study is a first for the Maldives, thus making a contribution to the small amount of literature on higher education (HE) in the Maldives and the role of academic women there in particular. Very few studies of academic women have been undertaken in South and South East Asia in contrast with the West (Maxwell, Nget, Am, Peou, & You, 2015). This study is part of a research programme in six countries of South and Southeast Asia with the aim to answer the question “Why do women in South and Southeast Asia take the roles they do in academia?”

Studies such as this are important because they can contribute to gender equality which is a human right. Millennium Development Goal Number 3 states “To promote gender equality and empower women”. Gender equality is “smart economics” (World Bank, 2011, p. 13; Yasar, 2010, p. 544) because it produces benefits for societal productivity, it feeds directly into other development outputs and to a “deeper democracy” (Kim, Öjendal, & Chhoun, 2014, p. 2; World Bank, 2011, p. 14).

We provide some background to the Maldives, gender issues in the Maldives and some theoretical explanations in the coming sections. This will be followed by the research method utilised, the results followed by a discussion of the results of the study.

2. Background

The Republic of Maldives is a small island nation consisting of 1,192 islands, formed by a double chain of 26 atolls in the Indian Ocean approximately 700 kilometres west-south-west of Sri Lanka. The Maldives is also the smallest Asian country in terms of population and land mass: 328,536 people inhabit 185 islands, of which 105 are tourist resorts. One-third of the population live in Malé, the capital. Maldivians are uniquely homogeneous, sharing the same language (Dhivehi), religion (Islam) and culture (Naseer, 2013).

The Maldivian economy is based on tourism, fisheries, agriculture and industries such as construction and shipping. Looking at the Human Development Index (HDI) indicators, the Maldives has maintained its rank of 103 out of 187 countries moving from 0.599 (2000) to 0.698 (2013) well above the HDI average for South Asia (0.588) and is about at world average (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2014). It is the top-ranked medium-developed country.

3. Status of women in the Maldives

There is little research into the lives of women and girls in the Maldives, though Fulu’s (2007a, 2007b) work is an exception. A small number of NGO and other reports are available. Women in the Maldives play an important role within the Maldivian community. The report on gender and development by the Asian Development Bank (ADB, 2007) summarised the status enjoyed by many women in Maldivian communities.

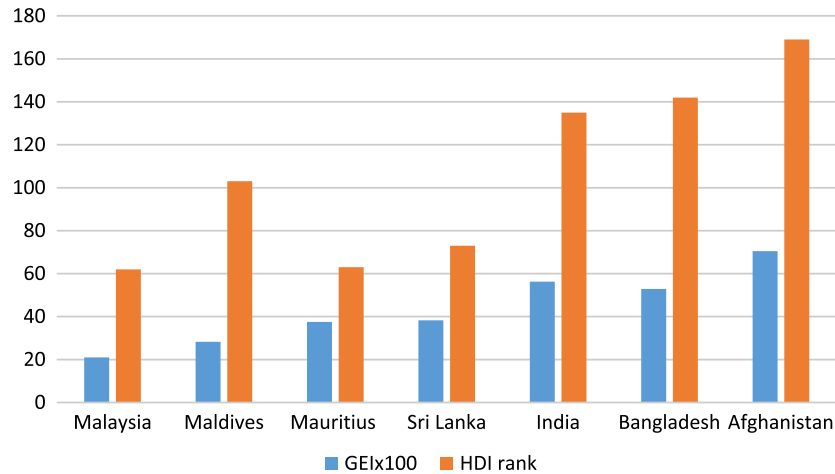
Maldivian women are among the most emancipated in South Asia and the Islamic world. There is no institutional discrimination along gender lines in access to education and health services or for jobs in the public sector (p. 1).

The Maldivian constitution upholds these principles of equality of all, guaranteeing the same rights and freedom without any discrimination. The policy direction of the government regarding gender equality is also based on these principles of equality for all. The report by ADB (2007) further describes this equality, in that men and women socialise freely and expect to have equal pay and access to education.

The Maldivian Government places importance on gender equality in its policies. The Maldives has signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1993, the Beijing Platform for Action, as well as the Commonwealth Plan of Action on Gender and Development. The National Gender Equality Policy was drafted in 2009 but a bill on gender equality is still to be sent to the Parliament (The Maldives National University [MNU], 2014).

Figure 1. GEI × 100 against HDI rank for selected countries, 2013.

Source: UNDP (2014).
Note: HDI rank and GEI need to be low.



Women continue to play an active role socially and in the economic sector. Traditionally, both social and class position as well as wealth in Maldivian societies have been inherited matri-lineally (Saeed, 2003). Women also played a key role in the traditional Maldivian economy which was based on tuna fishing. A gender-based division of labour exists in every stage of the fishery production, with women dominating the post-harvesting, value addition activities of curing and processing the tuna (ADB, 2014). According to ADB (2014), women comprise over half of the civil service employees, while a larger percentage of those employed in the agriculture sector is women. Comparing gender equality in the Maldives with other countries in the region, the Gender Equality Index (GEI) value of the Maldives in 2013 was low (Figure 1).

The positive appraisals identified from the ADB Report above are balanced by the identification of a number of social issues that impact on women's lives. Some of these include gender stereotyping, gender gaps in women's participation in public office and decision-making, and labour force participation, among others (ADB, 2007; 2014). For example, participation of women in the labour force declined from 60% in 1975 to 21% in 1995, returning to 37% by 2005 due to increased participation in the service sector in Malé (MNU, 2014). MNU (2014) also reported that the number of women in the decision-making level is significantly low with only 5.9% and 16.4%, respectively, at parliamentary and ministerial positions. Fulu (2007a, 2007b) further identified women's lack of employment opportunities, the unequal burden of family responsibilities, violence against women and girls and increasing religious extremism as key issues negatively impacting on women.

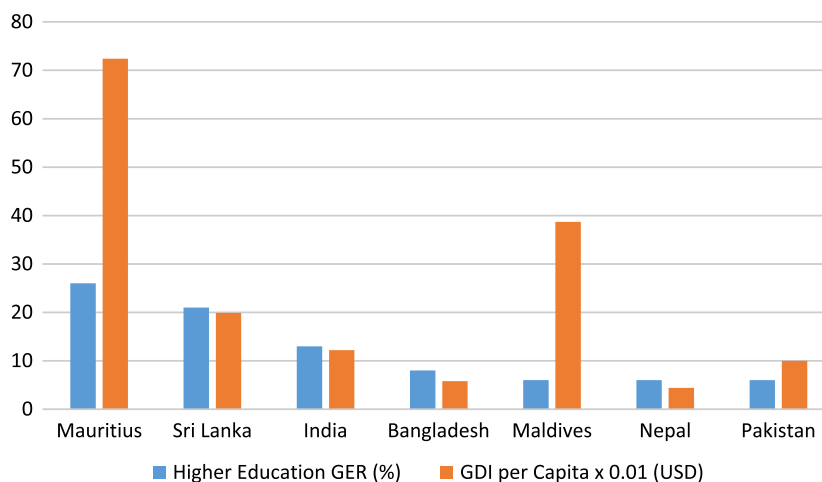
Women leaders, such as academic women, often face major constraints of culture, tradition and other more subtle barriers to their work (MNU, 2014), though a most important step taken recently has been the removal of the gender bar on women running for President by the People's Special *Majlis* (Constituent Assembly) in January 2008. Saeed (2003, p. 69) has identified that "Maldivian women have held public positions at various levels of government, the titles equivalent to the male positions of similar level".

4. Gender and higher education in the Maldives

Education has always been given a priority both by the people and the Government of the Maldives. The Maldives has achieved the Education for All (EFA) goals of universal primary education and gender parity in providing access to education (Government of the Republic of Maldives [GRM], 2008). There is a cross-sector gender disparity in favour of females which continues into the higher secondary level, though the overall higher secondary net enrolment is lower (GRM, 2008). In the past, secondary school leavers obtained scholarships funded by the Government and overseas donors to gain a degree. Such assistance declined at a time when the secondary school-leaver numbers have rapidly increased (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization, 2009).

Figure 2. Gross enrolment in higher education, Maldives and selected countries, 2009.

Source: World Bank (2011, p. 7).



“In 1998 ... various uncoordinated institutions were amalgamated to form the Maldives College of Higher Education (MCHE)” (United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization, 2009, p. 4) which became MNU in 2011. MNU, another public and several private institutions offer “mainly undergraduate certificates and diplomas most of which are accredited and/or awarded by overseas universities” (World Bank, 2011, p. 2, 11).

However, cultural expectations mean the numbers of female students studying abroad and hence female attainment of overseas tertiary qualifications is less than for males. For example, between 2001 and 2005, only 22% of doctorate scholarships went to females (ADB, 2007, p. 2). Similar cultural demands and the fact that MNU has offered traditionally female health and education programmes may explain the higher proportion of females compared to males enrolled in public institutions in the late 2000s.

The World Bank (2011) noted that HE enrolment in the Maldives is low for a middle-income country (see Figure 2), despite its relatively high GDI per capita. The main reasons were the limited access to higher education opportunities in the Maldives and the cost of studying overseas, poor access to, and completion of, higher secondary education in the country (Saeed, 2003, p. 210).

5. Women in academia

Qualifications of Maldivian academics are very low (Table 1). MNU has mainly been a teaching university, with only a recent focus on research. A research centre was established in 2013 to promote research within MNU. The same year the first group of PhD students started their work and in 2014, a research grant scheme was established.

In summary, HE in the Maldives has a huge task in front of it. Young women’s access to a local university is higher than young men’s. Virtually nothing is known about the working conditions of academic women, how they came to be academics or about the environment in which they work.

Table 1. Number of full-time academic staff by qualification level in public HE institutions: 2006 and 2009

Year	Total number of staff	Less than first degree (%)	1st degree & PG Diploma (%)	Masters (%)	PhD (%)
2006	143	35 (24.5)	61 (42.7)	46 (32.2)	1 (1.0)
2009	146	40 (27.4)	51 (34.9)	52 (35.6)	3 (2.1)

Source: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2009, p. 6).

6. Theoretical explanations for gender inequity

Several authors have provided explanations for gender inequity. Gender positions are not constant but are “constantly redefined and negotiated in the everyday practices through which individuals interact” (Poggio, 2006 in van den Brink & Benschop, 2012, p. 72). Explanations have to account for “gender inequity (being) deeply embedded in social and workforce norms, traditional divisions of labour and breadwinner roles, established family and marriage dynamics, and a strong adherence to gender stereotypes” (Fox, 2013, p. 23). Määttä and Dahlborg Lyckhage (2011) refer to a normalising process, that is gender differences can be seen as natural (taken for granted).

Social-cognitive theory has used schemas wherein men are overrated and women underrated in barely visible ways in professional settings that accumulate over time (Valian, 2005). Consequently men are advantaged. Whelan (2013) contends that unconscious bias, associated with unconscious thinking, is the “key reason” that gender inequity remains. Unconscious thinking, Whelan (2013) says, “maps onto” associative rather than propositional thinking (p. 57). This kind of unconscious cognition is developed over time, by intensity of experience and from contextual variables. Generally advantageous, the resulting pattern recognition systems can lead to three disadvantages in the context of gender: (1) they are not updated often, (2) not based on logic and so not fact checked, and (3) not readily recognised and hence not easily rectified (Whelan, 2013, p. 58). Behaviours in relation to women, consistent with these disadvantages, are:

- (a) stereotypical thinking such as “think manager - think male”;
- (b) backlash in which, by displaying behaviours that are considered masculine, women are likely to be penalised and/or evaluated negatively; and/or
- (c) stereotype threat where women themselves “are more likely to conform [to the stereotype] and behave in accordance with others’ expectations” (pp. 59–62).

Unconscious thinking leads to decisions that help to create gender inequity. Decision-making theory has it that a decision is essentially a (rational) selection from many options. However, options are not limitless and decisions are from a possible set based on psychological, local and social structures. Kallos and Lundgren (1979), in Maxwell (2010) used the idea of a frame which circumscribes decisions to the limited number of decision options available. This gave rise to frame factor theory which adds to solely social-cognitive explanations. Lundgren (1999, p. 2) summarised this way: “external frames limit and regulate changes in [human] internal processes indirectly. Rather than in direct cause-effect relations, changes in frames enable or disable certain process possibilities”. Frame factor theory is useful in considering humans’ choices, or lack of them.

Psychological, local and social influences impact on decisions of academic women. For example, Elg and Jonnergard (2003, p. 157) pointed out: “the career demands at work are often especially strong at the same time as women’s private biological clock calls for starting a family” and add that the management of the domestic sphere, lack of extra time for the workplace and lack of access to work social networks contribute to gender inequity. Research more than a decade ago by Carmen Luke, based upon 12 interviews of female academics in each of Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong, found that work, childcare and home management—the triple burden—contributed to gender inequity alongside “enduring resilience of locally embedded cultural values and structures” (Luke, 2001, p. 237). She also found that gender inequity persists alongside the idea that women should not receive special treatment and that merit would prevail (Luke, 2001). However, Luke’s study was of senior academic women. Newly appointed female academics could be understood as having had a different set of experiences, and even outlook, based upon the introduction of the internet in recent years.

Luke (2001, p. 73) observed that “there are indeed global patterns of women’s exploitation and oppression, their marginal economic and social status”. However, it would be a mistake to conclude that the forces impacting upon women in South Asia are similar to those of Western women or to uncritically transfer Western theoretical explanations to other cultures despite globalisation. With

these caveats in mind, we considered two guiding research questions: How did junior and senior women become academics? How did these women negotiate roles in their academic world?

7. Method

This research is constructivist and it is also exploratory since there have been no previous studies of this kind in the Maldives. Following Luke (2001), interviews were the key sources of data for this research. For purposes of this research, a senior academic was defined as having been in university service for five years or more. The MNU was the site for the research. Two sampling frames were developed: one for senior academics and one for junior academics based on a list of 101 female academic staff (60% of the total) working at the university. A random sample of twenty staff was selected with four additional staff as a backup from the junior and senior categories.

The interviews were conducted by five female research assistants (RA) recruited from MNU. All research assistants had had interview experience and the level of English spoken was quite high. Each RA was allocated two participants from each category to interview. Interviews were set up at a time and location that was mutually convenient. The semi-structured interviews, which took between 30 and 60 min each, were completed in Dhivehi or English and were audio recorded with permission from the participants. The interview recordings were transcribed by the RAs into English for analysis using NVIVO (2012) by the senior researcher. Any subsequent study should be more extensive than this one which was limited by resources available.

Procedurally, two meetings of the research team were held in Malé. The study research question, the sampling strategy, the wording of questions and probes in the interview schedule, the information sheet, the transcription schedule and the University of New England ethics approval were discussed during these meetings. Questions/clarifications were discussed and minor culture-related word changes were made to the interview schedule.

8. Results

The 10 juniors averaged 2.1 years as an academic in contrast to the 10 senior academics who ranged between 5 and 21 years of academic experience (average = 12.6 years). Several of the junior academics had additional professional experience (education and health sectors) before becoming academics. MNU is a new university so the data take into account work done in previous institutions and includes periods of time studying overseas. The analysis essentially follows the key interview questions. The strongest theme was spelled out by a junior academic.

I feel on the whole we women take a bigger workload. [laughs] Because we go home and do everything. We take all the family responsibility. There are probably few husbands who go all the way and do everything for the family. But the woman actually has two jobs. And that is a truth nobody can deny.

Despite this, the women interviewed appeared satisfied.

8.1. Influences on becoming an academic—Shaping their role

The sense given by the 20 women was essentially that becoming an academic was a largely independent decision. Four juniors and three seniors mentioned this to be the case specifically. One junior said, for example, “it was entirely my decision based on the fact that if I had to go back to the island that it (was) the only thing available then so I think I was more influenced by *myself* than anything else”. In terms of career choice, the women were either inspired ($n = 11$) or it happened by chance ($n = 5$). Amongst the juniors, the idea of a career was important. Not so for the seniors; following personal interests or passions together with role models were more important. Three said their chance came through beginning teaching: “there is nothing else to do on the island”. The only evidence of social pressure came from an academic qualified in hospitality management: “No parent wants their daughter to go to a resort. I had the qualifications and I had the drive. But I didn’t want to disappoint my parents. I also knew deep down that they were right”.

Support provided during the time of becoming an academic was not mentioned often, but when it was ($n = 7$) then it was clear-cut. For example, “My husband has been very supportive of that decision. My family too. They always want what is best for me”. Several mentioned the important influence of a scholarship. In summary, decisions about becoming an academic were apparently based on being inspired, chance or personal interest. Juniors often thought in terms of a career.

8.2. Factors influencing their daily academic life

The dominant themes here were work/life balance and, relatedly, time for self. However, in the majority of cases, these were not major concerns. Two junior single women indicated they had no problems at all. By and large, the other eight junior women who had children and a home to run indicated that they “managed”. One busy young woman commented:

Trying to juggle my life as a mother and a wife and a lecturer and a student, it is a lot of work. But I enjoy it. Very much. Actually I am only an Associate Lecturer because I don't yet have my degree... [My husband] is very good. ... He will do the shopping for me and everything is ready when I go home. I work from 10 till 5 then I have classes for my degree course from 5 till 7 so it is usually 8 by the time I get home. I put the children to sleep at 8. ... After dinner I will study. I do the cooking. The maid will do the cleaning and laundry and ironing and looking after the children.

Not only she, but a number of the women had a maid. The sense amongst the senior women was that most managed though three indicated that they found balancing life's demands with the demands of work difficult. Four complained of not enough time with their children. One woman found it

Very, very hard. I have two kids. School aged. Actually my husband is a manager at [a resort]. He has always been very supportive of my decision to be here and encouraged me a lot. ... We see him only for a four day weekend every month. ... My mother lives with us so she is the one who takes care of [the children] and cooks and does all the work at home. I try to keep weekends free ... sometimes it just isn't possible.

Time for self was explicitly a problem for four of the women (two of each group). Two examples indicate the difference in emphasis.

I have not had time for myself at all for so many years. I think it is a sacrifice I have to make when I became a mother. Any free time I get I spend at home. I don't go out or have any kind of social life. I just don't have time. I am completely dependent on others to make my life flow smoothly - my maid and my husband for example.

I get absolutely zero time for myself. I am a slave to the university for about 12 h of my day. Then when I go home, I give all my time to the kids. So me as a person doesn't exist these days.

In contrast, two informants indicated they would like more time at work. It comes as no surprise that *all* the women interviewed were happy with what they were doing. This comment is typical:

Definitely, I am pretty much happy but of course there are so many constraints and difficulties that we go through every day in terms of resources and other stuff so definitely there is a lot of space for improvement but I would say I am pretty much happy with the time I have spent over here [her emphasis].

In almost every case, there was an added “but” and this led on to a wide range of potential changes that were wanted (see below.).

In summary, the majority of women were satisfied with the balance they had between the work lives and the demands upon them of being mothers, wives and homemakers. A complex of factors combine in individual lives in different ways to make the informants' life/work balance “manageable”.

8.3. Gender differences in academic role

The first point to note is that the academic role was essentially seen as teaching with some additional administrative work. Research was hardly mentioned. When asked if there was any difference in the academic work that men and women do, three-quarters indicated that there was no difference. By this they meant that there was no teaching load difference—usually 12 h per week, but in some departments, 15. More broadly, men were seen to have more time ($n = 3$ seniors), yet women were seen to do more work ($n = 3$ juniors, $n = 1$ senior). However, an important caveat is that at least two of the departments, in which the women worked were dominated by women. There, department heads were more likely to be women. One junior academic noted that men's ideas appeared to be more appreciated and another junior mentioned that it was difficult for women to organise field trips, for example, for teaching practice observation because of home responsibilities.

8.4. Differences in treatment

Three-quarters of the informants ($n = 8$ juniors and $n = 7$ seniors) thought that male and female academics were treated no differently. Similarly, half of the women thought promotion was not gender biased. However, several women mentioned that they had to restrict their higher studies due to family responsibilities and this would impact directly on their promotion prospects. Five women observed that the most senior positions at MNU were taken by men. For example,

Why even at the university [men are] at the very high rank like the chancellor, vice chancellor, academic vice chancellor... The ultimate decision takers are them. Even though more females are employed [at MNU] they are at lower [rank]. At the top level the top decision maker[s are] always the men.

However, the dominance of women in some departments has had positive effects at MNU. For instance, one academic from the Faculty of Education described the positive influence of having women in senior positions.

The senior lecturers at the Faculty of Education all are now women. And so it's easy for me to sort of trace my pathways in the professions ... So it's good and they being the senior people they do help the juniors like us ... so it's quite supportive.

"I actually don't really think about the gender thing". This comment effectively sums up the situation: gender differentiation in the Maldives, at least at MNU, has become normalised. Awareness crept in only sometimes:

Actually I think I want to say that I think there is something like a mistrust, mistrust of women lecturers here. But this happens not everywhere and not always. But there is always this feeling of can she do it? Does she have children? Can she give time for this?

Another commented:

When we talk about islands sometimes we have to deal with the island chief and *administrative staff* there. Sometimes it was difficult for me to deal with them because they think as I *woman* I won't be able to do all these things. But uh I think I did show them that I am capable of doing it [her emphasis].

There must be pressures for some Maldivian women, for example, one junior woman observed:

I was on vacation recently and I had full time house work. I wasn't relaxing. ... I noticed then that yes the moment I step into my house after work at four, my other duty starts. ... I realized that more because right after my vacation I started back at work my husband took his vacation and it was vacation in a real sense. He has travelled. He took three days off to go and travel.

So, some gender inequity has been commented on. More research is needed.

To summarise, mostly the women perceive no difference in treatment on the basis of their gender, despite that the most senior positions are taken by men and some women were seen to be restricted in their study and promotion opportunities. Differences in treatment appear to have become normalised. Acceptance of the situation is again evident in the informants' lack of ideas about possible future actions or even the need for action.

8.5. Possible future actions

Chief amongst desired changes were policy development, especially regarding promotion ($n = 4$), better facilities/resources/library ($n = 6$) and a more equitable "workload", meaning teaching load. Five women observed that MNU needed to develop a gender policy and another four were less specific about the need for action. Five others thought there was no need for change and four were positive about the gender future. There was no discussion of government policy or international recognition of the importance of gender equity.

There are socially constructed pressures that appear to be taken for granted by many Maldivian women. These appear not to be being challenged to any degree at the present time. The responses to the future of gender equity highlighted a lack of sophistication in the gender debate, if there is one, in the Maldives.

9. Discussion

Contextual factors appeared to have framed some decisions (see Lundgren, 1999), particularly of the junior academics, about becoming academics. Not only was HE strongly education and health oriented at the local colleges/university, employment on the islands was largely restricted to teaching and health. These are largely female-dominated occupations. Child caring and work at home appear to be done by women in most cases. Moreover, as Valian (2005) explained, unconscious thinking appears to have led to, amongst other things, stereotypical roles in the workplace: the men as more often managers. The explanatory device for much of these data is that the role of women, as explicated by the 20 women interviewed, is normalisation. Much of what they experienced was taken for granted (Määtä & Dahlborg Lyckhage, 2011) and there were few ideas on how to improve the gender situation. There was no evidence of frustration, anger or speaking out; rather, an acceptance of the gendered status quo amongst these women was evident.

Contrary to most other academic women in the world, how is it the majority of those interviewed indicated they could balance their lives to their reasonable satisfaction? There appear to be several reasons. Firstly, context is important. Most would live on Malé, a small island where a walk across the island takes 10 minutes. Second, five women specifically mentioned that they employed maids. Third, "family support ... is a benefit actually because of the way our living arrangement is in the Maldivian society that we can do mostly living with the extended family". Of those who had a family ($n = 18$), eight (four of each group) identified the extended family as supportive of their lives. Additionally, two informants identified colleagues, and six their husbands, as being supportive though not central. For example: "My husband also helps, but in our culture the men don't really do very much in the house. That is where they eat and sleep and watch TV. The work is done by the women. But he does take the children to school and bring them back". Role stereotyping (Whelan, 2013) is evident here. Fourth, hours at MNU are flexible and work time is officially seven hours. "We can arrange to work at any time we wish. So I start late so that I do not have to rush in the morning". Fifth concerns the definition of "academic work". At MNU, teaching is the focus. "We have classes only from eight to three. So we have to work during the time the classes will be there. ...[but] when it is for two shifts it is difficult". Lighter teaching loads presumably meant less working hours. Research did not have to be fitted in. Finally, combinations of these factors often mentioned by the women would have had an accumulative effect. Taken together, normalising (Määtä & Dahlborg Lyckhage, 2011) or unconscious thinking (Whelan, 2013) may provide theoretical explanations, but more close research work is required.

10. Conclusions

Among the 20, of the potential 101, academic women interviewed, becoming an academic appeared to be an independent decision for the majority of them. Frame factor theory appeared to be useful to explain this finding as contextual gender factors dominated the decision-making. Most perceived little or no work differences between the genders, despite the observation that men filled senior positions at MNU. Yet, work practices could be managed according to some women's needs. Consequently, there was evidence of institutional discrimination (positive and negative) contrary to the ADB (2007) Report. Some women reported discrimination in the home. The women perceived that, in general, they worked harder than men. Although work/life balance was difficult to maintain, a striking finding was that the majority of the women were quite satisfied, despite the evidence of stereotyping present in their work and home lives. A range of contextual variables were suggested as combining to elucidate this finding. There was little or no articulation by the women interviewed of gender inequity issues.

The present study is the first of its kind in the Maldives and is consequently exploratory. Any future study should be more extensive incorporating a larger sample and preferably a multi-method approach. More research is needed into the (1) reasons for women becoming and not becoming academics, (2) female academics' ideas about promotion and research and (3) gender differences in academic roles. The reasons (4) for the apparent acceptance of the gender status quo and (5) that female academics appear to "manage" the triple burden and especially how support structures contribute to this are additional areas for research. Potential affirmative action policies/strategies and the importance of role models also deserve attention.

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