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Barriers to and facilitators of female deans' career advancement in higher education : an exploratory study in Vietnam

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Abstract

Although the slow progress of female academics compared to their male colleagues and the challenges that female academic leaders have to face in taking leadership roles have been well-documented, very little is known about female academic leaders and managers? career advancement in developing countries like Vietnam. This paper reports on an exploratory study of a research project funded by the Cambridge?Viet Nam Women Leadership Programme, which aims to advance an understanding of the status of, and identify strategies to empower, female academic managers in Vietnamese higher education. The focus of this paper is on university leaders and female Deans? perceptions of the barriers to female academic Deanship and female Deans? reflections on the facilitators for their career advancement. The study found that the main barriers are strong family obligations, negative gender stereotypes regarding females as leaders, and female academics? unwillingness to take management positions. The major facilitators of female Deans? career

advancement are self-effort, strong family support, and, what is perceived to be, a favourable or ?lucky? selection context. The paper provides empirical evidence to support the view that family support is a crucial factor for female academic career advancement in Vietnam. Women are both an agent and an object of change in empowering female academic leadership.(HRK / Abstract übernommen) Nguyen, T. L. H., E-Mail: nguyentl@student.unimelb.edu.au