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#### LEVERAGE THE UNIVERSITY RESOURCES, DEVELOP YOUNG FEMALE LEADERS

**KEYWORDS:** leadership; women; students; university education.

**ABSTRACT.** How to break the glass ceiling of women has been extended from a political topic to many subjects such as economy, management and education, which has attracted more and more attention from all walks of the society. In a series of important documents, the United Nations has called for and urged governments to take active measures to focus on women's education, empowering women and improving women's participation in politics and competence. Since the Fourth World Conference on Women, governments have made a lot of efforts to effectively improve women's performance in education and participation in government. They accumulated many experiences and achieved much progress, but there are also still many challenges. According to a survey, in China, women's proportion in education, especially in the higher education, increased year by year, and girls have accounted for a stable proportion of 50% among the undergraduate and graduates and made up one-third of PhD students. But at the same time, female college students face more pressure from the traditional view on their role. Boys hold more conservative view gender and some teachers also lack awareness on gender equality. So, how should universities, which gather female elites, play a role in motivating female students, improving their confidence and breaking through the glass ceiling? Taking China Women's University as an example, this paper discusses how to create equal and inclusive campus environment, develop female college students' leadership, break through the glass ceiling and improve their confidence and encourage growth for both girls and boys through the gold setting of professional production, professional construction, building of teachers' team, students management and student association activities.

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#### УСИЛИВАЙТЕ РЕСУРСЫ УНИВЕРСИТЕТА, ВОСПИТЫВАЙТЕ МОЛОДЫХ ЖЕНЩИН-ЛИДЕРОВ

**КЛЮЧЕВЫЕ СЛОВА:** лидерство; женщины; студенты; высшее образование.

**АННОТАЦИЯ.** Проблема «стеклянного потолка», который сдерживает карьерный рост женщины, из области политики распространилась на такие сферы деятельности, как экономика, управление и образование, которые привлекают все больше внимания со стороны общества. В ряде важных документов ООН содержится призыв к правительствам стран акцентировать свое внимание на образовании женщин, давая им возможность стать конкурентноспособными в политике и других областях. После Четвертой конференции по проблемам женщин правительства разных стран прилагают значительные усилия для укрепления роли женщин в образовании и государственной деятельности. Накоплен значительный опыт и наблюдается серьезный прогресс в этой области, но тем не менее, существуют определенные трудности. Согласно исследованию, проведенному в Китае, число женщин, работающих в сфере образования, особенно высшего, растет с каждым годом. Девушки составляют 50% от общего числа выпускников и около 30% от общего числа аспирантов. Но в то же время девушки-студентки испытывают серьезное давление со стороны традиционной китайской культуры, которая четко определяет их роль. Юноши-студенты часто придерживаются консервативных взглядов, а многие преподаватели забывают о гендерном равенстве. Возникает вопрос, как должны действовать университеты, в которых обучаются девушки, для того чтобы помочь им стать уверенными в себе и прорваться сквозь так называемый «стеклянный потолок»? В статье рассматривается Университет для женщин в Китае, на примере которого описано равноправие студентов разного пола в кампусе, развитие лидерских качеств девушек-студенток, воспитание уверенности в себе, которая помогает достичь успехов в карьере, сплочение учительского коллектива, студенческие ассоциации и студенческое самоуправление.

How to break the glass ceiling of women has been extended from a political topic to many subjects such as economy, management and education, which has attracted more and more attention from all walks of the society. In a series of important documents, the United Nations has called for and urged governments to take active measures to focus on women's education, empowering women and improving women's participation in politics and competence. At the First World Conference on

Women, gender equality was clearly defined as "equality in dignity, value, opportunities, rights and responsibilities" (1975), pointing a clear direction for the development of women in all areas. In 1979, the United Nations enacted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and adopted articles like "to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life" (Article 7) and "to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights

with men in the field of education” (Article 10), which clearly states that this is a fundamental right of women and should be supported and guaranteed by governments; in 1995, the Fourth World Conference on Women adopted the Program for Action, which set seven strategic objectives for women’s participation in rights and decision-making, increased women’s political participation to minimum of 30% and made specific requirements for women to participate in group decision-making and management; in 2015, the United Nations has adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the 5th target of Goal 5 is to “ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life”. All these world agendas and documents provide the basis and guarantee for the importance attached to and development of women’s leadership, especially for young women, in the process of higher education.

### **1. Governments actively promoted and achieved effective results in women’s education.**

As one of the signatories, the Chinese government has been concerned about women’s issues for many years and has introduced a series of laws, regulations and policies to promote the development of women in China. In 1990, the State Council established the National Working Committee on Children and Women (NWCCW) and in the same year, previous president Jiang Zemin made an important speech on the Women in the Marxist perspective; in 1992, the National People’s Congress promulgated and implemented the Law of the People’s Republic of China on the Protection of Rights and Interests of Women; in 1995, the State Council promulgated and implemented of the China National Program for Women’s Development and the Chinese government formally proposed gender equality as a basic national policy to promote China’s social development at the Fourth World Conference on Women. In 2011, the State Council promulgated the China National Program for Women’s Development (2011-2020), which identified the main objectives and strategic measures for women’s development from 2011 to 2020. This Program is an important guiding document for the implementation of the basic national policy of gender equality, the protection of women’s legitimate rights and interests, the optimization of women’s development environment, the advancement of women’s social status, the promotion of women’s equal application of democratic rights, women’s equal participation in economic and social development and the equal enjoyment of results from reform and development. Clearer objectives and more specific indicators were set for the improvement of

the educational situation and the educational level of women. In September 2015, at the UN Summit of Women, the General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed policy frameworks for promoting gender equality and ensuring women’s rights and made China’s proposition in promoting women’s development, which points a direction for overall development of women.

Chapter 2 of Women’s Education of the China National Program for Women’s Development (2011–2020) set ten major objectives: “(1) Ensure comprehensive implementation of the gender equality principle in education work. (2) Work to ensure that the gross enrollment rate of children in kindergartens rises to 70 percent, and that girls enjoy equal access to three-year preschool education. (3) Increase to 95 percent the retention rate of children in nine-year compulsory education, ensure that girls enjoy equal access to nine-year compulsory education, and eliminate the phenomenon of girls dropping out of school. (4) Work towards ensuring that the gross enrollment rate of children in senior high school education rises to 90 percent, and that girls enjoy equal access to senior high school education. (5) Work towards ensuring that the gross enrollment rate of children in higher education rises to 40 percent and that girls enjoy equal access to higher education, and strive to achieve a balanced gender ratio in higher education institutions. (6) Step up the popularization of women’s studies courses in higher education institutions. (7) Expand the proportion of women in vocational school education and vocational training. (8) Ensure that women receive an average 11.2 years of education before working age. (9) Reduce the illiteracy rate of young and middle-aged women to less than 2 percent. (10) Ensure that the gender equality principle and concept are fully reflected in the standards and teaching processes of education courses of all categories and levels.” Among them, for the objective of stepping up the popularization of women’s studies courses in higher education institutions, the Program developed strategies and measures such as “to improve women’s theoretical research in gender theories and the building of women’s studies in higher education institutions; to include projects and subjects on gender and women’s development in State social science funds and other related funds to promote women’s theoretical studies; and to expand the discipline ranking of women’s studies, and encourage higher education institutions to offer a major or a course on women’s studies with a view to cultivating women’s studies professionals”. More notably, the Program also proposed other strategies and measures such as “to include gender perspective and carry out the gender equality principle in the formulation, revision, implementation

and evaluation of educational laws, regulations, policies and programs"; "to implement gender evaluation of education contents and process; to include gender experts in the staff of institutions providing guidance on school courses and textbooks; to fully reflect the gender concept in education contents and modes, and guide students to foster gender equality ideas"; and "to improve women's theoretical research in gender theories and the building of women's studies in higher education institutions; to include projects and subjects on gender and women's development in State social science funds and other related funds to promote women's theoretical studies; and to expand the discipline ranking of women's studies, and encourage higher education institutions to offer a major or a course on women's studies with a view to cultivating women's studies professionals" and so on.

According to the statistics, in 2014, the proportion of girls in the total undergraduates and graduates was 52,1% and 51,6% and the proportion of girls in total PhD students increased to 36,9%, which was achieved by a series of policies to support women's education and women's right to education. In 2014, the proportion of female teachers in colleges and universities was 48,1%, an increase of 18,1 percentage points over 1995. In 2015, there were 95 million female undergraduates and 13,76 million graduates, accounting for 49,7% and 52,4% of their total population and up by 1,8 and 1.6 percentage points respectively compared with 2010. More notably, more and more schools are beginning to introduce the concept of gender equality in educational content and teaching methods. Some places try to set up gender equality education courses in primary and secondary schools so as to guide students to develop a value on gender equality. To increase the gender equality content in some teacher training programs and normal university courses can enhance the awareness of gender equality among educators. The proportion of women in decision-making and management at all levels of schools and educational administration departments has increased and the participation of women in the teaching and management of higher education has improved markedly. The construction of disciplines on women's studies in colleges and universities has been continuously strengthened. At present, more than 100 colleges and universities set up more than 440 courses on women's studies and gender equality. The master's and doctoral programs for women's studies are increasing.

## 2. Acknowledgement of Gender Equality in Higher Education

College students are highly educated and active in thinking. They are the mainstay of knowledge economy and scientific and tech-

nological innovation in our country. They are also an important force to lead the trend in values. At present, do college students agree on gender equality?

More and more women have received higher education and they constitute an important part of elite women, so do they recognize gender equality? A survey shows that 1) more than 80% of college students agree that "the woman's ability is not worse than men's", and 88,6% of female students and 77,7% of male students are "very much agree with" this argument; 2) nearly 90% of girls "hope that they can make a difference in their career" and think that "women should also pursue their own career; only women who have their own career can achieve economic and personality independence; 3) nearly 90% of college students believe that "men should take the initiative to do some housework" and about 70% of them do not agree with the traditional division of labor model in a family, i.e. "men work outside the home, women inside it"; 4) students who have taken courses in gender equality have a higher degree of recognition of gender equality. The proportion of those who are "very much agree with that the woman's ability is not worse than men's" among boys who took such courses was 7.1 percentage points higher than those who didn't.

At the same time, the survey also found that despite the great progress made in the promotion of values of gender equality in higher education institutions, there are still some problems. The most prominent problem is that female college students face more pressure from traditional views. For the argument that "females encounter more obstacles in their career", the proportion of girls who agreed with it was 11.9 percentage points higher than boys and the older students are, the more they agree with it. Undoubtedly, these traditional gender perspectives affect women's career expectations and development plans. Nearly 80% of college students believe that "females encounter more obstacles in their career". Some of the female graduate students in the survey said that after women become married, they would devote more energy in their family. In addition, 41,4% of boys and 18,9% of girls agreed with the traditional division of labor model in a family, i.e. "men work outside the home, women inside it". Nearly 30% of the boys still believed that "women who are successful in their career are often not feminine" and close to 40% of boys believed that "successful businesswomen is often not happy in their personal life"; but only about 10% of girls agreed with this view. These show that there are large differences between girls' and boys' view on gender quality. More attention should be paid

to the lack of gender equality awareness in some college and university teachers and this will naturally affect students' view on gender equality. One-third of the girls have heard that their teachers has said things like "girls are not suitable for this major", "boys have greater potential for development", and "boys are more suitable for research" and so on.

### **3. Put the educational advantage of universities into full play, and development of Girls' Leadership in College Education**

As universities are important places for the growth of female elites, they have obligatory duties to develop girls' leadership. Therefore, it is of vital importance for universities to make the best of their resources in overall development of young women. As mentioned earlier, many universities in China have opened courses on women's studies, set up research center on women and carried out a series of activities to improve young women's confidence and ability. As a college for women, China Women's University has made a great effort in this particular field.

For the positioning, our university focuses on the top design and puts forward a schooling purpose of "taking the lead in advanced gender culture, implementing the basic national policy of gender equality, promoting the harmonious development of both sexes and serving to overall development of women".

For the goal of personnel training, the University's overall goal is: to cultivate students in moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic perspectives, improve their self-esteem, confidence, independence and self-reliance, public awareness, international vision, intelligence and personalities. To this end, our university has adopted a series of measures to develop and enhance the leadership of female college students.

First, we created a good environment to develop and enhance the leadership of female college students. The University has always attached much importance to teachers' awareness of gender equality. Teachers' behavior and attitude will have a demonstrating and guiding effect on the students' awareness of gender equality. The Training on Gender Awareness is a required course in the pre-job training of new teachers and a brand course with strong characteristics of the University. All undergraduates are required to take the course on Introduction to Women's Studies, which is an important channel for the school to cultivate the spirit of self-esteem, confidence, independence and self-reliance and to spread advanced gender culture. The course on Introduction to Women's Studies has been widely welcomed by students since its introduction. In 2014, the school made a survey on the influence of this

course among 10% of 4452 undergraduate students selected through random sampling. The survey report shows that the content of the course is closely related to students' daily lives, most of them think highly of it and believe it will be of some help to their future life and contribute to personality improvement and personal growth. Every student is required to get 2 credits in the Part of Women Development and Gender Equality of Boya Category that includes courses on Gender Representation in Media, History and Future of Gender Culture, Female Growth and Education, Gender, Marriage and Family and Women and Development (online course) and so on. These courses focus on women/gender issues in different areas and attach much importance to their positive role in improving students' awareness of gender equality. Teachers in our university take the initiatives to fulfill their social responsibilities and apply their own expertise to the drafting and making national and local laws, regulations and policies, such as the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests, the Marriage Law, the Family Law, the Law Against Domestic Violence, the China National Program for Women's Development, the China National Program for Child Development, and the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone Gender Equality Promotion Regulations and so on. They take the initiative to join practices of protecting women and children's rights and have played an important role in promoting gender equality.

With policy support and promotion of the University, many scientific research achievements are also transformed into undergraduate courses and parts of the teaching content. For example, teachers in the School of Law introduced contents such as gender and law, opposition to domestic violence, protection of women and children's rights into courses like the Women's Law, the Marriage Law and Family Law, Gender and Law, the Legal Protection of Vulnerable Groups and so on; teachers in the School of Social Work are teaching vital findings of their research or assigning students to read those findings in courses such as Social Investigation and Research Methods, Female Sociology, Literature Search and Thesis Writing, and Family Sociology and so on so that students can follow the trends and understand the research methods of the forefront of sociological research. The results of scientific research and the latest scientific and technological progress are presented in the required courses and lectures on academic frontier knowledge.

Second, we actively try to explore the training model of "female leadership". Our university is actively trying to establish a sound training model to develop women's leadership. This model is centered with cultivation and de-

velopment of female leadership and it aims at improving leadership of female students through various ways such as courses on theory of leadership, courses on application and practices of leadership and students activities and practices and so on. For example, the School of Management, which mainly produces professionals in business management, has opened training program of Development of Women's Leadership and Characters and course on Studies on Female Entrepreneurship. We also selected excellent students to join the Training Program of Female College Stu-

dent's Leadership under the Project of Capacity-Building of Chinese International Public Officials directed by the Ministry of Commerce. We also select outstanding students on regular basis for overseas exchange. For example, in recent years, the Communist Youth League carried out several overseas exchange programs for outstanding students in the training class of female leadership: "female participation in public services". The training amateur party school also produced a large number of female candidates for party membership. See the table 1 below for the detailed information.

Table 1

**Curriculum System of Female College Students' Leadership Development**

Type	Core Objectives	Name	Category
Theoretical Class	To Learn about Theoretical Knowledge of Leadership	Studies on Leadership	Boya Online Course
		Development of Individuals and Improvement of Leadership	Selective Course
		Business Management	Selective Course
		Female Leadership	Compulsory Course for Women's Studies Major
		Science of Leadership	Compulsory Course in School of Management
		Essentials of Management	Selective Online Course
		Entrepreneurial Leadership	Boya Online Course
		Entrepreneurship and Practice	Boya Online Course
Training and Application Class	To Train Leadership Skills	Studies on Female Entrepreneurship	Compulsory Course for some majors in School of Management
		Problem Analysis and Solving	Selective Online Course
		Effective Communication Skills	Selective Online Course
		Art of Talking and Etiquette	Boya Online Course
		The Art of Speech	Selective Online Course
		Personal Improvement and Career Development	Selective Online Course
Student Activities and Practices	To Practice Leadership	Development of Women's Leadership and Characters	Compulsory Course in School of Human Resource Management
		Program of Innovation and Entrepreneurship	The Second Class
		Student Society Activities	The Second Class
		Overseas Exchange Program	
		Competitions	The Second Class

Third, we aim at strengthening students' ability of innovation and entrepreneurship. To this end, our university has set up a multi-sectoral cooperative teaching and research office for college student career planning, em-

ployment and entrepreneurship and opened public compulsory course of "college student career planning, employment and entrepreneurship" for all students so as to promote such education among students. We also

opened selective online courses in the Boya Category to all students, such as Entrepreneurial Leadership and Entrepreneur and Practices to meet special needs of some students. The School of Management has set up professional course of Studies on Female Entrepreneurship to meet the needs of professionals. At the same time, our university actively supports students to carry out entrepreneurial competitions and action plans of entrepreneurial activities. College student innovation and entrepreneurship projects are increasing year by year. In 2005, 74 projects were set up, and 36 national college students innovation and entrepreneurship training projects and 38 action plans for scientific research and entrepreneurship of college students in Beijing were submitted. In 2016, 93 projects were set up, and 55 national college students innovation and entrepreneurship training projects and 38 action plans for scientific research and entrepreneurship of college students in Beijing were submitted.

Our university has also given special approval to the establishment of the College Students Incubator Center. Every year the Center allows 10 or so startup teams for trial operation. The Project of "Shuiyu Cafe" established and managed by students themselves has become a role model of entrepreneurship among students. In cooperation with the local Women Entrepreneurs' Association, our university invites women entrepreneurs into our classrooms to share their personal experience and encourage female students to establish confidence. Students' teamwork capability and innovative awareness are improved through various activities, interpersonal communications and the completion of the group tasks. Our students have achieved good results in various discipline completions above the provincial and ministerial level. For example, in 2014, they received more than 35 awards in provincial and ministerial level competitions. In 2016, their designs won a silver medal and 4 bronze medals in the Youth Entrepreneurship Competition for University Students in Beijing. In the 9th Chinese College Students Computer Design Competition, our students won 5 first prizes, 4 second prizes and 3 third prizes in Beijing area and won 2 first prizes, 5 second prizes, and 4 third prizes in the national level.

Fourth, We established a system of innovative education and entrepreneurial practice instruction. Courses on innovation and entrepreneurship begin in the first year of college study. Freshmen take courses on *Introduction to the Subject* and *Career Planning*. Sophomores and juniors learn systemically, taking courses on *Entrepreneurship Fundamentals*, *Studies on Female Entrepreneurship*, *Entrepreneurial and Innovative Leadership*, *Entrepreneurship and Practice*, and *Simulations*

*and Practices of Business Operation*. Seniors can develop their startup projects in the College Students Incubator Center. We hosted theme activities such as the Women Entrepreneurs Forum, the Women's Academic Salon and the Women's Stories to encourage students to deepen understanding on self-esteem, confidence, independence and self-reliance. The Student Law Education Team named the Youth Captain in the School of Law promoted knowledge on prevention of sexual abuse and some other know-how to the Beijing primary and secondary school students. This Team won the first prize among law education teams from 21 colleges and universities in Beijing. Our university also encourages and organizes students to participate in the 16-Day Activity against Sexual Violence. We have also introduced professional volunteer service into summer social practices, which are widely recognized by the students and achieved good social impact. These activities to improve the overall quality of students have played a positive role.

#### 4. Solutions and Suggestions

In recent years, colleges and universities have paid more and more attention to gender equality education, but for how to provide a better development environment for girls, how to effectively guarantee the implementation of basic national policy of gender equality in colleges and universities and how to make women more confident in facing the future challenges, we should also continue to work hard in the following aspects.

**First, to put gender awareness into educational decision-making mainstream.** To this end, we should first embed the gender equality perspective into the laws and national level policies. We should formulate and revise laws, regulations and policies that are conducive to gender equality and the overall development of women. This includes not only women's right to education, but also the whole process of education. We should avoid discrimination against women in the education policy discrimination against women in the enjoyment of educational resources, professional choice, professional development and other aspects. Special attention should be paid to strengthening of gender awareness education for leaders and teachers in higher education institutions. We should set up a special supervision and evaluation mechanism to ensure that the basic national policy of gender equality is implemented.

**Second, to create a good environment for the development of female college students' leadership.** Many studies have found that female college students are increasing year after year and their performances excel in school. Compared to male college students, female ones pay more attention to increasing of their own human capital, so they work harder

and are more motivated. But once they finish their study, the female college students would face a huge bottleneck in their employment. This is partly due to the influence of women's fertility role and traditional gender division of labor. It also reflects that there are some problems in recognizing the social value of women's fertility in the whole nation or society. The market-oriented reforms have reduced the state's protection for employees with family responsibility, shifting the responsibility of managing family affairs to some family member, more often to women, so this naturally lead to their difficulties in getting employed. A lot of people in society still hold some traditional views on gender, such as "women are not suitable for politics" and "women's leadership is born to be less strong than men's". This also affects women's choices and the discrimination against women in our society will undoubtedly reduce the women's confidence after they graduate. Therefore, to devel-

op young women's leadership, school education is far from enough. National policy and social media should actively create a good environment for women's development.

**Third, to take various actions to encourage young women's social participation in universities.** The participation in social activities during college life can enhance female students' sense of self-worth, sense of honor and social responsibility. This can provide them with rich opportunities for practices, develop their teamwork ability and improve their innovative senses, which will not only make them more independent, but also enhance their competitiveness. Therefore, universities should encourage girls to actively participate in social activities through providing more funding and opportunities and devoting more time so that they can acquire knowledge and skills, and more importantly, improve their ability and confidence.

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