

Recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the workplace: a literature review

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Abstract: The women in the workplace did stood up for their rights to get an equal position in the workplace, women had limited opportunity to grow in the industries. The companies preferred male employees over the female for the filling the leading positions like managers, executive officers, and others. The findings in this study that answered each research gap by removing the lack of growth and development opportunities for the women, engaging introductory courses of female students to recruit high talents and skills, performing detailed outcome evaluations to ensure the effectiveness of women's performance in the workplace. These implications are very helpful for the management in the recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the organizations,even in the presence of gender discrimination. Moreover, the better understanding of the role and importance of female workers are possible to attain under these three practices of management.

Keywords: Recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the workplace, Absorptive Capacity Theory

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

The women in the workplace did stood up for their rights to get an equal position in the workplace, women had limited opportunity to grow in the industries. The companies preferred male employees over the female for the filling the leading positions like managers, executive officers, and others. In ancient times, there were less than 30% percent females all around the world were part of any significant firm (Blaxall & Regan, 1976). Later on, the importance of women workforce has increased in the different countries such as America. The firms have started to consider women for the management position due to their high education and professional capabilities. Thus, 40% labor force of the companies was based on the female employees. However, still, the women were unable to acquire equal wages to men for the same work or practices (Wallace, 1982). It was not beneficial for the female workers because their importance in the workplaces has decreased. The organizations were more focus on the progress of male employees. That is why the women had limited opportunities to develop their career. They were mostly recruited to the positions like secretary and assistants as well as had no promotions on the leading designations (Schwartz & Zimmerman, 1992).

However, the acceptance of women role in the workplace is changing since the female workers have started to work on the position of managers and executives. There are more than 50% women have acquired respectable jobs in leading firms like retail, banking, manufacturing, and others around the world. The overall earnings ratio of the female workers has also increased by 20% to 30% in different regions, except developing countries (Hewlett & Desai, 2010). The Absorptive Capacity Theory explained women should keep on learning to get a competitive advantage in the workplace. The abilities of women are effective for the growth of businesses. The women in the workplace can support the organizational diversity and help to increase innovation capabilities of the companies. Moreover, the progress of female in the workplaces is significant to overcome social barriers (Lambert, 2016).

The women in the workplace in Malaysia are facing discrimination between men and women in the different companies of Malaysia. Therefore, female employees get limited chances of promotion. Even their salary ratios are lower than the male co-workers (WAO, 2016). Most of

the women were used to work on the lower level jobs, their hard work was less appreciative than the male employees. Therefore, the growth of women at workplace was also very slow as compared to men workforce (Noor & Abdullah, 2012).

1.2 Problem Statement

The problem faced by women in the workplace is the wage gap. The National Statistics Department reported women are earning RM 2,071 monthly, whereas the monthly income of male employees is RM 2,260 (Lee, 2015). Women are provided with availability of least career opportunities as out of 100%, only 47% women have achieved effective professional development (Dishman, 2015). There are limited opportunities for final selection, the ratio of male employees has been increased in different industries in the comparison of female workers (Reddy, 2017). Also, there are stereotype positions for the female workers, the proportion of women has been raised in the jobs like secretary, receptionist, assistant and line staff (Symkal, 2015).

The promotion for women in the workplace is least preferences for the leading and managerial position, the organizations gave priority to male employees over the female for technical functions (Martin & Barnard, 2013). Women's level of power of control in the organizations is limited, the world's statistics illustrated that only 28% of 30% women are based on the position of manager (Catalyst, 2017). There is lack of growth and development opportunities for women in the workplace, survey indicated that less than 40% female employees are working on the leaders' position (Training Journal, 2015). There is lack of social support for the women in the professional world, the industries showed more trust and belief in the skills of male employees than female workers (Sandberg, 2013).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this research is to study recruitment, retention, and retention of women in the workplace. The specific research objectives of the current study are:

- 1) To examine the relationship between recruitment and women in the workplace.
- 2) To study the relationship between promotion and women in the workplace.
- 3) To find out the relationship between retention and women in the workplace.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The purpose of research design is the development of proper research plan in order to get correct analysis about the relationship between independent and dependent variables (Creswell, 2013). The quantitative method in this research is used by studying the findings related to Recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the workplace from statistical facts and journal articles.

The chosen research approach for the current study is explanatory approach due to the presence of independent and dependent variables. The chosen research approach for this research due to the need to check cause and effect association of different variables, by examining the relationship of recruitment, retention, and promotion of working women. Explanatory approach is helpful when collecting the research data.

This research is deductive research with the aim to test selected theory. Researcher will apply this approach by examining the contribution of Absorptive Capacity Theory in the matter of women in the workplace. Researcher will use this approach when performing literature analysis and survey.

The latent constructs not measured are the significant factor of market value for women in the organizations (Darmadi, 2013). Also, this study does not research on training and development of the female workers for career growth (Moser, 2012). The focus area to study women in the workplace are based on predetermined independent variables recruitment, promotion and retention to answer the problem statement of this research stated in Chapter 1 regarding difficulties of female workers in the organizations.

2.2 Data Sources

The secondary data has been used. The permission to gather secondary data is taken by presenting the overview of the study to the research authority. The past researchers' findings who suggested to further research on recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the workplace is presented in front of the supervisor in order to discuss and get approval on genuine reason behind the execution of the study (Neuman, 2016).

2.3 The Proposed Research Framework

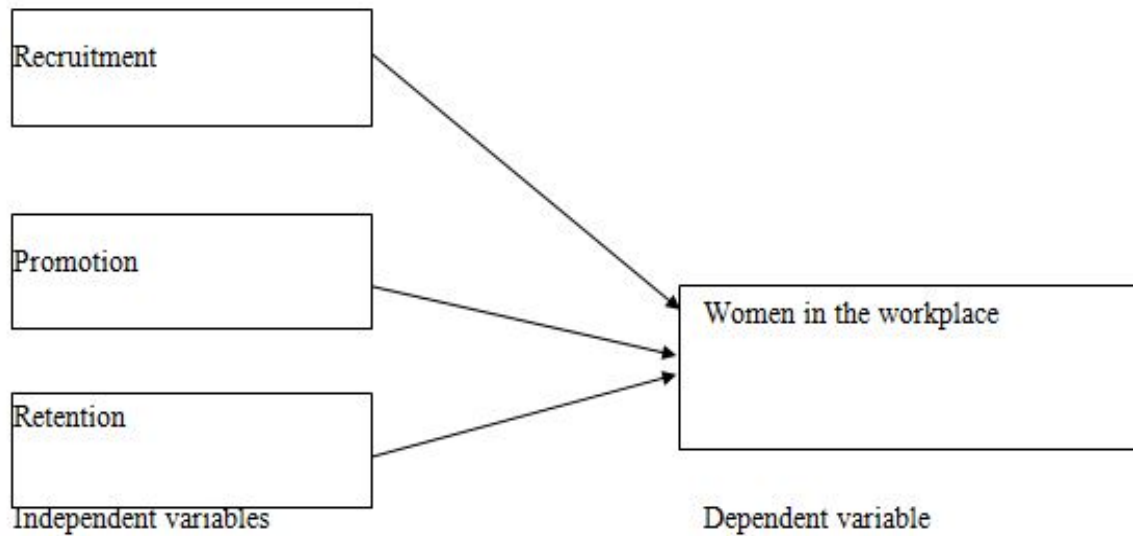


Figure 1: Research Framework

(Source: Researcher)

The Figure 1 assists to achieve research objective to study recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the workplace by investigating the effective factors and the theoretical relationship of identified variables. The framework is important to lead the study in the right direction and get appropriate findings (Ritchie, et al., 2013).

3.0 Literature Review

3.1 Absorptive Capacity Theory

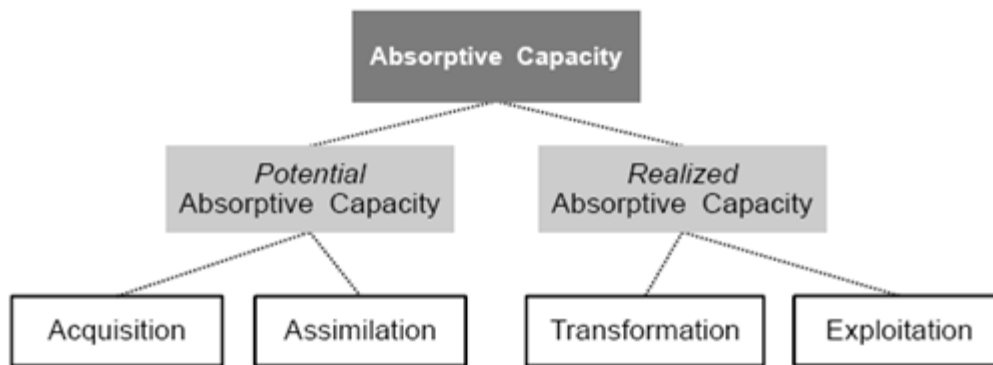


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of Absorptive Capacity Theory

(Source: Paul4Innovating, 2011).

Absorptive Capacity Theory in Figure 2 above suggested that the organization should set those programs and policy structures the support organizational diversity in order to increase the innovation capability of a firm. The organizational learning and employee knowledge is helpful to increase the effectiveness of implementing innovation strategies. Further, the theory has presented that the social actors are a significant part in the development of organizational diversity. Since, each social actor is potential to add value in the progress of a firm as well as has the strength to build an innovative mechanism of a business (Lambert, 2016).

Absorptive Capacity Theory analyzed that firms do adopt diversity and new knowledge for the development of the innovative process as organizations constantly learn new things and inherit updated techniques in order to become highly innovative and dynamic in nature (Chang, et al., 2013). Absorptive Capacity Theory analyzed that the implementation of innovation is based on the organization's recognition of new techniques and information. The application of latest procedures is highly important for the effective growth of a company. However, this process is required diversity in the workforce due to the possibility to get distinctive knowledge (Qian & Acs, 2013).

The evolution of Absorptive Capacity Theory has started from the stage of organizational learning, where members of the firm possess new information and strategies. This step has led towards the integration of innovation in the firms. Though, the next stage of the theory has emphasized on the organizational diversity for the achievement of dynamism in the business process (Castellacci & Natera, 2013). The further research is needed on Absorptive Capacity Theory because the approaches of the organizations towards the development innovation are changing continuously. The new perceptions and views about the organizational diversity have been developed in the companies which are causing modifications in the internal business process such as the positioning of women on the leading roles (Huarng & Ribeiro-Soriano, 2014).

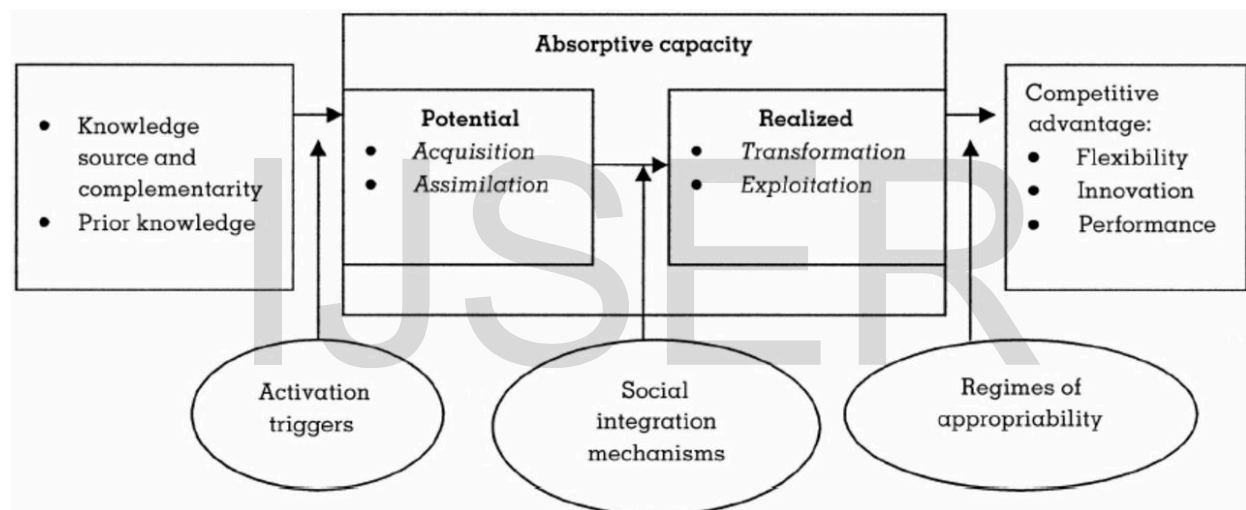


Figure 2: Extended Theoretical Framework on Absorptive Capacity Theory

(Source: Di Stefano, et al., 2014).

Figure 3 showed the extended theoretical framework on Absorptive Capacity Theory is able to identify the role of women in the development of an organizational diversity. It must be competent to clarify the contribution of female workers' knowledge and capabilities in the integration as well as enchantment of innovation in the workplace. The Absorptive Capacity Theory can relate to proposed variables of this research by explaining the part of recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the constant\development of a firm under innovative environment. The theory is needed to describe the effectiveness of identified variables in the acquisition of diverse knowledge and transformation of internal capabilities. The Absorptive

Capacity Theory relates to research problems by providing the clarity of women's role in the formation of organizational diversity as well as innovation.

3.2 Women in the Workplace

In most of the organization, women do not advance in their careers, they have limited scope to progress in their jobs due to the dominance of men in the business sector (Burke & Major, 2014). The market investigation has illustrated that the female workers are often engaged in teaching and patient care type jobs. It is because the organizations find women incapable of performing difficult and technical functions (Neff, 2013). In most of the industries, women are found less likely to have salaries commensurate with men due to the traditional practices in the industries. The capabilities of female workers are still neglected in the workplaces (Harkness, 2013). The study has presented that the organizations blamed women as being unprepared in their understanding of expectations, which is not appropriate to grow in the career. That is why the women are lacking behind the men in the professional world (Carr, et al., 2017). The major cause of the slow progress of women in their career is the traditional issues of gender inequality and discrimination in the societies. The women are always considered inferior to men in terms of professional knowledge and capabilities (Waber, 2014). As per current research, there are few numbers of women in the leadership role due to the organizations' preference towards men. The leading firms consider female employees incapable of handling the pressure of leadership positions (Rhode, 2016).

The most common challenge for the women in the organization is related to the unequal salaries and wages to men. The female employees always get fewer increments than for the same job and responsibilities (Sandberg, 2013). Female workers get limited opportunities to develop their career as compare to men in the firms. They struggle to achieve a significant position in the development of an organization (Martin & Barnard, 2013). Another challenging point for women in the workplace is the acquisition of leadership role. Since, the organizations consider male workers to fill the position of executives, senior management and team lead (Glass & Cook, 2016). It has also observed that the companies give importance to the men over women for creativity and technical jobs. Since, there is perspective in the business world that the female employees are unable to handle work pressure (Denissen & Saguy, 2014).

The basic reason behind the gender pay gap in the workplaces is less the recognition of the women's capabilities. The industries belief that the female workers perform less efficient than the male that is why they have low pay scales (Sandberg, 2013). The dominance of males in the societies is one of the major causes behind the limited opportunities of growth for women in the organizations. Since, the capabilities of male workers are always considered superior to female employees (Martin & Barnard, 2013). Actually, the firms perceive women to be insufficient to the handle the responsibilities of a leader. There is a perception in the society that women are unable to handle the certain expectations and undetermined tensions (Glass & Cook, 2016). The restricted education and development of female workers is the cause of their absence from the creative and innovative fields. The women have found occupied in the household matters that is why they get a less chance to work in the technical and artistic tasks (Denissen & Saguy, 2014).

The implication of traditional working system is one of the main reasons for gender pay gap. The organizations still follow past practices related to salary distribution instead improvised ones. Therefore, women are struggling to earn equal wages for the same position (Sandberg, 2013). Moreover, the perception of the people in the societies regarding the role of women in the workplaces is the origin of this limited opportunities of development. The nations still believe that the women are suitable to lead in the professional race (Martin & Barnard, 2013). Also, the power imbalance between men and women in the societies is the origin of male leadership. The men are not ready to work under the women leadership. For that reason, females find it hard to acquire the position of the team lead in the companies (Glass & Cook, 2016). Furthermore, there are many nations in the world that not support their women or girls for higher education, such limitations are causing issues for the women in order to develop their importance in creative, technical and innovative fields (Denissen & Saguy, 2014).

The salary and wages records of multiple organizations have shown that the women pay ratio is lesser than men. The women's struggle all over the world for the acquisition of equal pay is the clear evidence of the presence of this issue (Sandberg, 2013). The statistics have shown that less than 40% women are successfully working in the leading firms. It is a factual indication that the women have limited possibilities to develop their careers (Martin & Barnard, 2013). The market survey has presented that the 70% to 80% positions of the leadership and management are under

control of male employees. The women have complained about these biases of the organizations towards men on different forums (Glass & Cook, 2016). The education survey has illustrated that the men are still more educated than women in their own field of interest. Since, the household responsibilities and family issues left no time for the females to increase their educational knowledge (Denissen & Saguy, 2014).

3.3 Recruitment

The market analyses have shown that percentage of women receiving bachelor's degrees continued to drop in different regions, the ratio of men is higher than women in the recruitment process of the firms (Popaitoon & Siengthai, 2014). There are limited of girls or women who attending higher education programs in different parts of the world. That is why the female's qualifications are comparatively restricted for leading fields (Smith, 2015). Another study has illustrated that the first-year female college students participate in extracurricular activities can enhance their social and practical skills for the achievement of appropriate professional role (Clarke, et al., 2013). The option of mentoring has described as the effective tool for the recruitment of women in the organizations for distinctive positions (Alvarado & Judson, 2014). The recruitment personnel have to perform market research for the selection of appropriate female workers in the fields. This step is helpful to acquire a large number of applicants for the single position and to provide opportunities to all eligible female candidates (Khan, 2015). It has evaluated that engaging female students in introductory courses is advantageous to recruit a large number of women worker at the same time. The best talent is possible to acquire through this technique (Lee, et al., 2014). The important role of Absorptive Capacity Theory to influence recruitment in shaping women in the workplace is guidance about those ways that can use to find appropriate and talented female workers (Alvarado & Judson, 2014).

The relationship between recruitment and women in the workplace is growing opportunities for the firms to find talented female students in the recruitment process, as the number of female applicants in the recruitment process of different companies has been increased by 20% to 25% (Lambert, 2017; Smith, 2015). This relationship is regarding an increase in the number of females attending higher education and professional development programs, as the strength of female students has been raised by 30% in the leading universities of the world such as Oxford

University, Monash University and others (Feeney, 2015; Altbach, 2015). This relationship explained the increased engagement in introductory courses by the female students and workers, as the organizations successfully acquired 20% their female workers through the recruitment of introductory circulars (Deleon, 2014; Alvarado & Judson, 2014). This relationship explained the limited mentoring for the female employees in the workplace, as more than 50% women workers have faced hardships in the development of their careers (Jones, et al., 2017; Lap, 2015). This relationship explained the reduction in the percentage of women receiving bachelor's degree in the technical fields, as the universities have reported that their strength of female students 15% decreased in the fields of engineering and science (Yirka, 2017; Ceci, et al., 2014).

The evolution of Absorptive Capacity Theory has started from the fact that the innovative development of the organizations is depended on the gender diversity. Afterward, it has stated that the firms should acquire dynamic knowledge and capabilities in order to increase the level of effectiveness (Nicotra, et al., 2014). The further research is needed on Absorptive Capacity Theory due to the growing interest of female workers in their professional development. The women are now getting a professional education in order to achieve a favorable place in the firms (Mariano & Walter, 2015).

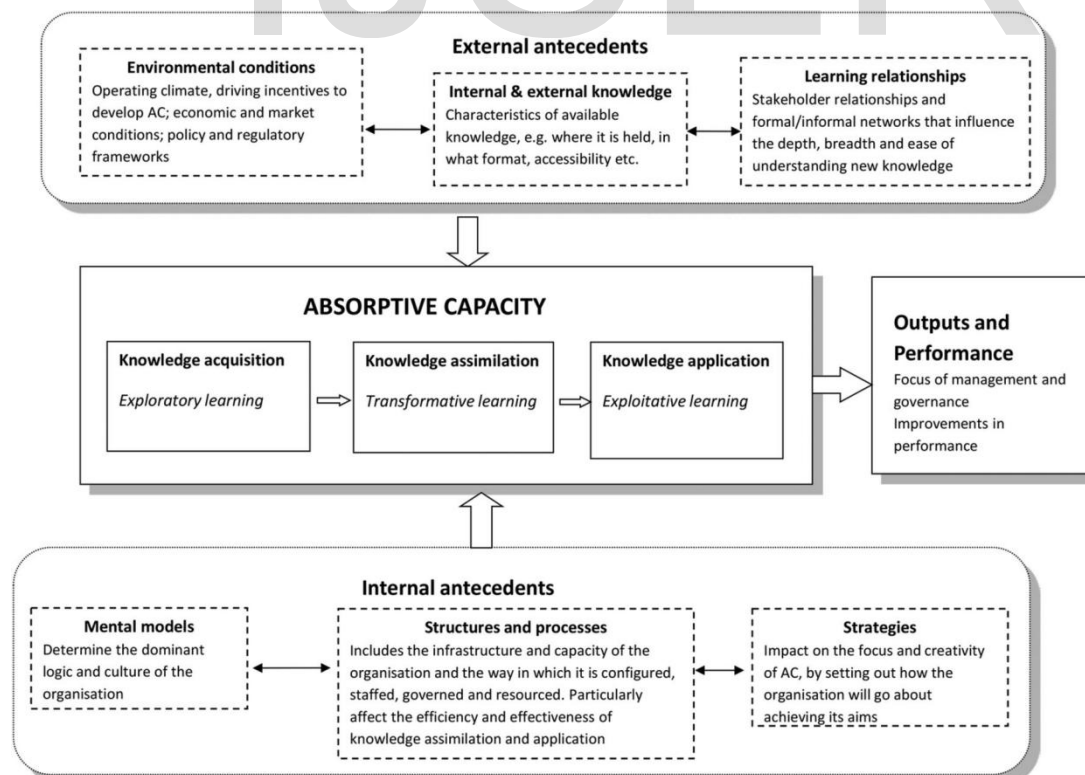


Figure 3: Extended Theoretical Framework on Absorptive Capacity Theory

(Source: Harvey, et al., 2014).

Figure 4 showed the extended theoretical framework on Absorptive Capacity Theory is capable of elaborating the factors that can use to recruit the female workers and their presence in the organizational development. The extended theoretical framework can solve problems between recruitment and women in the workplace as the variables emphasized on the different antecedents of external knowledge for the development of innovation in the internal operations. It has mentioned that the organizations should adopt breadth as well as the depth of capabilities in order to bring diversity to the workplace.

3.4 Promotion

The promotion for women in the workplace is based on the high belief on strength of managers on their behavior (Braun & Turner, 2014). It is important to run outcome evaluation against the performance of women workers in order to decide their level of promotions in the workplace. Since, this process helps to build the belief of managers over the behavior of female employees (Barak, 2016). The study has presented that the high strength of control belief is required to develop positive intention of managers towards the performance of female workers to promote them in the fields of technology and science (Cook & Glass, 2014). The progress of the women in the workplace is based on the power of control belief of managers on the factors and outcome of performance of female workers (Johns, 2013). The referents' preferences regarding organizational development are highly effective on the managerial decisions for women's promotion and growth (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013). The managers are needed to focus on the motivation to comply of female workers before making the decisions of internal promotions of employees. This is helpful to gain trust over the actions of women in the organizational development (Lückerath-Rovers, 2013). The important role of Absorptive Capacity Theory to influence promotion in shaping women in the workplace is the provision of directions regarding the estimation of female workers. The theory has guided to analyze the performance outcomes of women in order to take decisions on internal promotions (Braun & Turner, 2014).

The relationship between promotion and women in the workplace is related to the development of high belief strength of managers for the performance of female workers, as the promotion ratio of female workers has increased from 22% to 26% in some important organizations (Catalyst, 2017; Cook & Glass, 2014). This relationship is regarding the constant outcome evaluation in the companies against the performance of female employees, as more than 20% organizations have started to believe in the capabilities of women for their overall development (Barak, 2016; McKinsey & Company, 2016). This relationship explained the enhancement in the strength of control belief of managers towards women's efforts and effectiveness in the workplace, as the 15% women have received promotions on the respectful positions of the firms (Braun & Turner, 2014; Woetzel, 2015). This relationship between Promotion and women in the workplace is the limited belief of managers on the motivation to comply of female employees, as 40% of 50% women have complained about the negligence by management at the time of internal promotions (Lebowitz, 2015; Johns, 2013). This relationship has presented the lack of referents' preferences on the promotion and development of women in the workplace, as the male employees got partiality over women to fill the leading positions (Covert, 2014; Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013).

The evolution of Absorptive Capacity Theory has started from the fact that organizational diversity is highly important for the achievement of innovation in the business process. Then, it has suggested attaining gender diversity to enhance the internal capabilities of a firm (Seo, et al., 2015). The further research is needed on Absorptive Capacity Theory due to the requirement to analyze the promotion system of female workers. It is important to study those factors that can influence the decisions of managers towards the development of women (Sandberg, 2013).

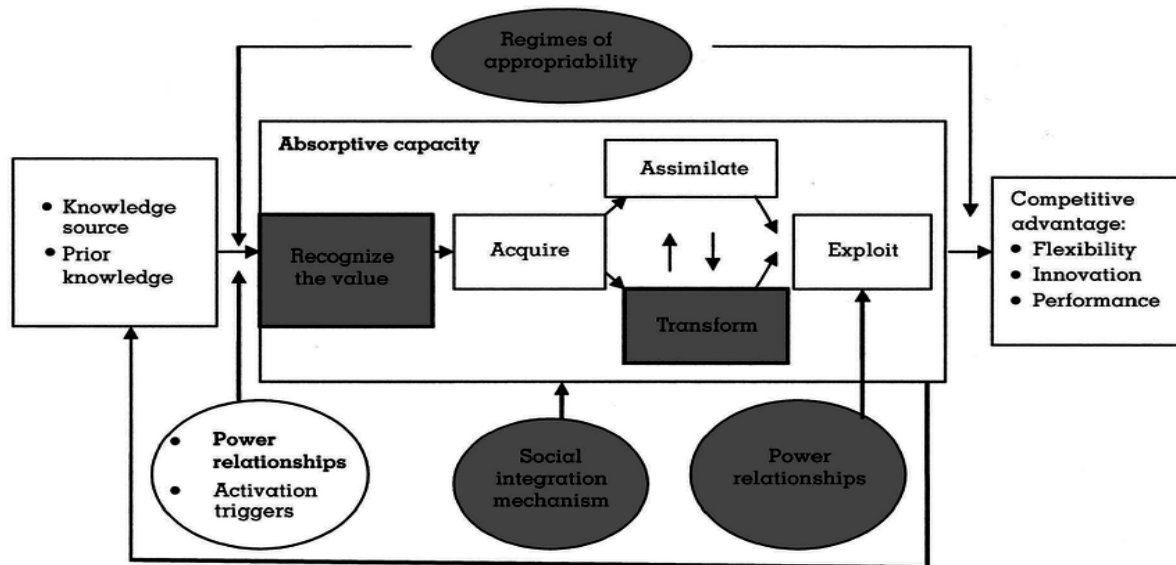


Figure 4: Extended Theoretical Framework on Absorptive Capacity Theory

(Source: Murphy, et al., 2011).

Figure 5 showed the extended theoretical framework on Absorptive Capacity Theory is able to analyze the drivers of women promotion in the workplace. It must study the impact of female workers' development on the overall performance and innovation of a firm. The extended theoretical framework can solve problems between Promotion and women in the workplace as the variables emphasized on the different knowledge sources such as the skills of men and women to transform the internal capabilities of the firms. These variables have emphasized to acquire social integration mechanism and power relationships for the achievement of factors of the competitive advantage.

3.5 Retention

The study has explained that the main issue in the retention of female workers is their hindrances of productivity such as parental leave or preference over flexible work system rather than full-time (Ribeiro, et al., 2016). Women are unable to handle the job overload due to their personal and household commitments. That is why their retention ratio is lesser than male employees (Earl & Taylor, 2015). Most of the women leave their jobs due to the lack of growth and development opportunities. They find humiliating to work in the gender discriminated organizations (Waller & Lublin, 2015). It has analyzed that the women have less social support in their career development than men. That is why they face hardships while

sustaining their position in the organizations (Lahoti & Swaminathan, 2013). One of the major reasons for high turnover of female employees is the unequal remuneration and benefits for the same jobs and tasks in the organizations (Blau, 2016). The role of women in the organizations did not remain as much an art as a science, they were not offered with opportunities to work for technical positions. Therefore, female workers easily get frustrated with their jobs (Shen, 2013). The important role of Absorptive Capacity Theory to influence retention in shaping women in the workplace is an explanation of the reason behind the short-term stability of female employees on the jobs.

The relationship between retention and women in the workplace is about the removal of hindrances to productivity for the progress female workers, as the number of women has achieved a significant role in their organizations such as the CEO of Facebook, Sheryl Sandberg (Coontz, 2013; Lot, 2015). This relationship is regarding social support for women in the career development, as the ratio of female workers has been increased by 30% in the fields of engineering and technology (UC Riverside, 2016; Elwér, et al., 2013). This relationship is related to the occurrence of growth and development opportunities for the women in the workplace, as the professional achievements of the women have become double in the last few years (Lot, 2015; Boushey, 2014). This relationship explained a lack of flexibility to manage between household commitments and job loads, as the preference of flexible work hours has been raised by 28% to 35% among the female workers (Waller & Lublin, 2015; Slaughter, 2015). This relationship highlighted that the women are still earning unequal remuneration and benefits in the organizations, as the market survey has shown that the women pay scale is 40% lesser than men for the same responsibilities and activities (Catalyst, 2017; Blau, 2016).

The evolution of Absorptive Capacity Theory has started from the stage of employee selection. Afterward, it has led towards the fact that the retention of human capital and capabilities is important for the innovative development of a firm (Lambert, 2016). The further research is needed on Absorptive Capacity Theory due to the concept of employee retention in the matter of organizational diversity has been changed according to the developments in social trends (Qian & Acs, 2013).

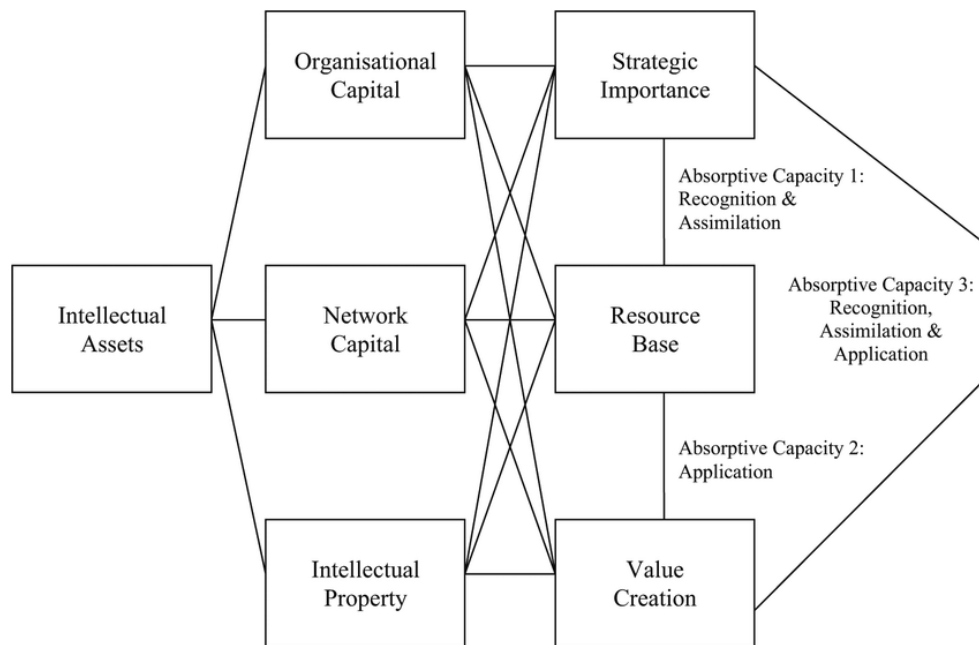


Figure 5: Extended Theoretical Framework on Absorptive Capacity Theory

(Source: Huggins & Weir, 2012).

Figure 6 showed the extended theoretical framework on Absorptive Capacity Theory is competent to find the factors for the achievement of long-term retention of women in the workplaces to enhance the overall performance of the organizations. The extended theoretical framework can solve problems between retention and women in the workplace as the variables emphasized the importance of intellectual assets for the attainment of innovative in the firms. The variables have shown that the value creation of intellectual assets is used to acquire expansion in the level of knowledge and competitive advantage.

4.0 Discussion and Future Research Direction

4.1 Consolidation of the Various Findings

The first common trend between past literature reviews is the lack of growth and development opportunities due to the male dominance in most nations of the world (Onrec, 2016). The second common trend is the preference of male employees over the female to fill the leading position of the companies due to the limited belief of managers on the professional capabilities of women (Lap, 2015). The third common trend is unequal pay and wages for women in the workplace due to lack of recognition on the efforts of female employees (Shen, 2013). The fourth common trend

is an evaluation of motivation to comply for the promotion of female workers due to the lack of confidence of the management on the women behavior (Marcus, 2016). The fifth common trend is a lack of social support on the career growth and enhancement of women due to the continuation of traditional perspective and practices (Reddy, 2017).

The first irregularity between past literature reviews is about the outcomes evaluation of female employees due to the use of different aspects by researchers to measure the performance of women (Burke & Major, 2014). The second irregularity is regarding the job overload due to the fact that in some cases households' commitments creates pressure on the women instead of work duties (Batty, 2016). The third irregularity is related to the factors for women retention in the workplace due to the use of different ways to prevent the turnover of female employees (Ribeiro, et al., 2016). The fourth irregularity is a percentage of women receiving bachelor's degrees continued to drop due to the fact that the girls and women are attaining university more than men to get higher education (Feeney, 2015). The fifth irregularity is low belief strength of managers on the women workers due to the point that the managers are now considered female employees for leading position and difficult tasks (Lot, 2015).

4.2 Implications of the Study

The implications for management to practice these findings that answered each research gap by removing the lack of growth and development opportunities for the women, engaging introductory courses of female students to recruit high talents and skills, performing detailed outcome evaluations to ensure the effectiveness of women's performance in the workplace. These implications are very helpful for the management in the recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the organizations, even in the presence of gender discrimination. Moreover, the better understanding of the role and importance of female workers are possible to attain under these three practices of management.

4.3 Limitations and Direction for Future Research

The first limitation in current research on recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the workplace is the acquisition of limited data due to the presence of limited time duration for the completion of entire research. The second limitation is the qualitative approach interview

technique towards a certain number of organizations and data resources, as due to the budget limitation that was not enough to perform the broad analysis.

The future research directions on recruitment, promotion, and retention of women in the workplace are to make an analysis about the role of technology in the development of the position of women in the organizations (Huarng, et al., 2014). The further studies on the women in the workplace should examine the behavior of female leadership in the growth of female employees (Ribeiro, et al., 2016).

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