

(IJ-11) The Leadership style of women leaders; How do women Lead Differently from Men?

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ABSTRACT

Women have been leaders within the households, especially when deciding to disburse household incomes, household education, healthcare, and day-to-day activities and living (Women deliver.org, 2018). However, in proper organizations, women lead differently from their male counterparts, and with development, women become more successful like men. Leadership can occur either in a formal or informal setting, informal settings within families, friends, colleagues, and communities, and formally in an organization with managerial or non-managerial responsibilities. However, leadership can emerge in an emergency or be active for a more extended period; thus, leading is a state of awareness and constantly adapting to changes (Keohane, 2016). A leader's style of leading is known for their personality, authority, guiding principle, acumen, and panache of leading (Barbara, 2008).

Studies have proven that women manage uniquely from men by helping transform individual self-interest to align with organizational goals. They accomplish this by embracing different styles of their employees to achieve their potential within the organizational context (Helgesen, 1990, Grant. 1988; Cafferella, Clark, and Ingram, 1997).

Introduction

All the various theories about gender diversity and representations led to different opinions and evaluations of the male and female roles in leadership: fuzzy and deceptive thinking of gender roles (Fine, C. 2010). All these various viewpoints and underlying beliefs are beneficial to men and detrimental to women in the corporate world. Accordingly, an assumption that men possess leadership qualities over women is overrated, manipulating the sex advantage to benefit the male class. Tomas Chamorro-Premuzic, in his book, stated that gender bias is the inability to distinguish between confidence and competence. At the same time, a display of faith in the male gender misconstrues competence and potential leadership attributes. Men are perceived as better leaders based on their charismatic, charming, and very confident nature, which is deemed fit for leadership compared to women.

This study analyzes the unique female leadership qualities and styles and their effectiveness in the current global climate. For example, the McKinsey Global Institute (2015) scenario study estimated an increase in global output if

women were more involved in economic life. In addition, evidence from past research on the impact of female leadership has produced a diverse outcome. For example, Research by Erhardt, Werbel, and Shrader (2003) and Carter et al. (2007) on big organizations reveals more significant stock gains and increased profitability in organizations with a gender balance at the top level. Similarly, (McKinsey, 2012b) research on US firms shows organizations with a diverse gender on the boards outperform all-male boards. Also, Fortune 500 firms with more women on the board performed better. Similarly, research shows that women's hedge fund organizations outperform men-only leadership in Latin America and Spain (Catalyst, 2011; McKinsey, 2013; Campbell & Mínguez-Vera, 2008; Rothstein Kass, 2012).

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to understand,

- How do women lead
- What are the Leadership styles of Leading women
- How do women Lead differently from Men
- How can women lead more successfully

Methodology

A qualitative methodology theoretical framework is appropriate over the quantitative methodology, because qualitative research gives an in-depth perspective. Also, offer diverse viewpoints and complements what has been previously researched (Horton, 1992). On the other hand, the qualitative methods seek to identify and understand the attributes, characteristics, and traits of objects of analysis, hence choosing the methodology for this research. Qualitative phenomenology with consent was obtained from 12 Leading women interviewed for the research. The Women interviewed work in various organizations ranging from education, manufacturing, engineering, health, and IT, and their Age bracket ranges between 30-65 years and roles from a manager and above. The interview using Zoom; the interview session was recorded using zoom and a live transcript, which was further analyzed.

Key Findings

The women participants in the study were asked what leadership competencies they use at the workplace and the traits that have helped them succeed and get to their leadership position. The women in the study's responses included emotional intelligence, communication skills, tenacity, self-confidence, continuous self-development, and growth. They also had grace under pressure and cultural intelligence because the work and leadership are global. Additionally, being authentic, technology savvy, flexible, empathetic, and caring about personal mental health. The need for aspiring women leaders to understand that leadership comes with various challenges and responsibilities and workplace conflict due to gender bias or stereotypes. Hence, women need to justify their leadership role through competency and results. Also, maintain a high commitment to work that is more remarkable than their male equals (Ely et al., 2011)., Finally, a woman leader should communicate effectively and make tough decisions or judgments.

Various women leaders' express leadership differently, but the findings from the study show how all use their maternal agentic style in the workplace. The twelve women interviewed shared how they encourage their subordinates to succeed by engaging and forming a deep relationship with their subordinates that transcends beyond work. The women in the study are also concerned about helping their followers balance work and family by motivating and nurturing them to shine and providing growth opportunities. These findings align with Chin et al. 2007 study on women and leadership, which surveyed a hundred feminist women leaders and found that women sought leadership roles to achieve social justice. Also, women leaders empower others and are ethical and transformational in their vision. They accomplish this by following institutional norms outlined by the male gender and negotiating their feminist principle and leadership style. However, when considering diversity, ethnicity, and the racial element in leadership, leading becomes complicated. Although, social stereotypes and beliefs mar the effectiveness and competence of female leaders. Works on gender and leadership show how diverse racial/ethnic minorities experience leadership.

Compelling evidence shows the inclination of women towards a democratic, collaborative, and transformational leadership style. In contrast, men are more autocratic, direct, and competitive in their management style. (Bass & Avolio, 1994; McGregor, 1985; Eagly & Johnson, 1990)). Although leadership is prejudiced toward women due to gender differences, the women's style of leading is purposefully effective (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

The women's responses to their leadership style varied on how they perceived how they led their teams. However, there were similar themes regarding women using their natural agentic womankind skills to lead in a diverse workplace. The women in the study described their leadership style as collaborative, inclusive, supportive, participative, transformational, authentic, and empathetic. Also, four women participants mentioned communicating effectively and ensuring clarity as part of their leadership style. Some of the women interviewed verbally described their leadership styles. For example, P110 says I think I am more Feminine in my leadership style. When I say more feminine, not by gender, but as a mother with two children who drives you mad, I expect the same immaturity sometimes from the start, the fact that they will bring their personal issues and conflicts to work. So, when I consider all those natural mothering skills and the workplace together, it is easy for me to care more for my chain. I always say their personal life comes before work.

Moreover, caring about their personal life makes it easier for them to commit themselves to work. P101 stated that her Leadership style is very cut and dry. I like to get personal with people. So, my leadership style is less directive and more engaging; I am very clear about expectations and when things need to be done. Nevertheless, I am not super directive about how they need to be done. I had never liked to be micromanaged.

P106, my leadership style is very inclusive. So, I would say I am hard on efficiency and being effective. So I do not waste much time. However, I am also very supportive of helping others grow. So, I give many opportunities to staff to take the leadership role and a chance to lead in meetings and on projects. P107 & 109 stated that their leadership style is personal, respectful, and caring. P107 says I care about my subordinates' professional development outside the

company, so her leadership style is participative and transformational. However, their view of the male leadership style compared to the female leadership style is that men are transactional, autocratic, and mostly have no care or empathy for subordinate personal or individual lives. However, references were made to individual men who led differently, mentors, and made an impact or contribution to the progression of their careers.

The leadership styles described by the participating women in the study are transformational, participative, and collaborative similar to other studies (Alston, Dastoor, & Sosa-Fey, 2010; Lindebaum & Cartwright, 2010).

Leadership styles of women leaders in the study	Leadership skills/competencies used by female leaders in the study	Success measurements for female Leaders
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative leadership style • Participative Leadership style • Servant leadership style • Transformational Leadership style • Situational Leadership • Personal and inclusive • Supportive, caring and helping others grow <p>Note: The respondents all Led using their agentic woman nurturing style of leadership as confirmed in the literature review (Alston, Dastoor, & Sosa-Fey, 2010; Lindenbaum & Cartwright, 2010).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emotional intelligence • Communication skills • Tenacity • Self-confidence • Continuous self-development and growth, • Grace under pressure, • Cultural intelligence because work and leadership is now global, • Technology sensitivity/understanding • Flexibility and empathy • Authenticity • Work life balance to take care of our mental health • Situational awareness. 	<p>A female leader’s success is measured by recognizable tangible results or output in comparison to the male leader</p> <p style="text-align: center;">VS</p> <p>Male leader’s efforts and the intent can get them a performance pass</p> <p>Women give better results on their leadership scale because they are more focused on achieving set goals with a high expectation from self and the team they lead.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">VS</p> <p>Men good results or success measure comes from their focus on strategic planning and overall vision of the organization</p> <p>Summary: Women are held to a higher level of performance</p>

Summary of Findings

The findings gathered from the conversations with women participants in the study, who occupies leadership roles in various organizations, provide an insight into the objective of this study. The women interviewed had risen to leadership roles through sheer determination, hard work, tenacity, and the resolve to succeed despite all the barriers and challenges encountered on their way to leadership. While evaluating their credentials and accomplishments, a critical common factor shared among the successful women interviewed, except for one, they all hold a post-graduate degree. They have all developed themselves through programs like the toasters, project management, and six sigma

and belong to various networks related to their professions. The stereotypes or biases encountered on their way to leadership only help them be more resolute in developing, sharpening their skills, and improving.

Responses from the participants suggest a selection of ideas to develop and increase the number of women in leadership roles. There has not been a tremendous shift in the number of women occupying senior management or C-suite positions in organizations. Women still need a higher educational qualification to be considered for leadership roles and are constantly under scrutiny because of gender bias. However, research has shown little difference in the capability of both genders to lead; the difference is only in the leadership style employed. As seen in the study, the experiences and responses of the women interviewed show that women are held to higher performance standards than men. Hence, the constant need to prove their legitimacy as leaders and command the respect they can significantly lead impacts their organizations. The demand to outperform with visible results will advance continuously. The methods or tools implemented to develop leaders in organizations have not changed much. However, women were encouraged to focus on their progression through continuous training, mentoring, and professional development to remain relevant and ahead. Research has also shown the need for women to invest and develop their leadership competencies by themselves and expose themselves to mentors that will guide, sponsor, and connect them (Bennett, 2009; Evans, 2011; Lopez-Zafra et al., 2012).

Limitation of the study

The sample size was limited to women in leadership roles who worked in the United States. So also is the number of women interviewed, Lack of anonymity, and researcher's interest and bias as a woman; however, the research objective was maintained. Finally, the inability to transfer the result is based on how the women experience the phenomenon.

Recommendation for future study

Although there are studies to establish the effectiveness and success of women's leadership styles, it would be interesting to know the percentage of menfolk employing the same leadership style as the women, how they are perceived and how successful. Furthermore lastly, how do diverse women experience the leadership journey? Research has shown that women from diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds have variable experiences in leadership development and opportunities (O'Neill et al., 2013; Sanchez-Hucles, 2010); Catalyst, 1998, 2004a, 2004b)

Conclusion

Women are team-orientated, inclusive, and collaborative. They bring different skills, qualities, and perspectives to leadership and, as studies show, lead differently from men. Increasingly, rather than expecting women to think and act like men, our gender difference should be recognized as a source of strength. The benefits of diversity and gender parity in leadership and decision-making should not be underestimated. In addition, women are ethical and civic-minded and champion diversity and equality issues.

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