

Effects of Gender on Leadership
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Introduction

Gender plays a significant role in defining leadership roles and determining the quality of services in organizations. Gender refers to social traits of men and women that range from norms and relationships to roles. Studies reveal that people's perceptions towards gender vary from one society to another and are subject to bound over time. The society instills behavior and norms, such as relationships between people from opposite sex or workmates, to people. The gender structures, relations, and social roles influence people's activities and approaches to handle challenges as well as leadership responsibilities. Essentially, leadership decisions and gender have a significant connection that should be evaluated to facilitate smooth operations in organization. Leadership refers to practical skills incorporating the ability of an individual to guide others towards attaining a common objective.

Basically, leadership involves inspiring, guiding, communicating with the subordinates to execute the assignment at hand appropriately. Organizations have the responsibility to develop effective strategies for prosperous leadership. The progress of an organization depends on the leaders' ability to motivate the subordinates through promotions and other mechanisms. Essentially, the management bodies of different organizations review the performance of subordinates regularly to make informed decisions on promotions and retrenchment. The promotion process involves a series of analysis to determine the appropriate candidate to occupy a vacant position. Thus, both men and women focus on building relevant traits to be considered for promotion into top leadership positions. Research shows that gender balance and equality in leadership revolve around decisiveness, intelligence, and honesty. The paper seeks to discuss the theoretical approach of gender and leadership, gender differences in decision making, gender and time management well as the factors undermining the effectiveness of women in leadership.

Theoretical Approach of Gender and Leadership

Some of the recent studies reveal that leadership approaches differ from men to women due to the distinctive biological characteristics. The social setup and cultural projections present women as a weak sex that battles inferiority complex. Thus, women have been perceived as lesser beings than men in organizational or political leadership. The phenomenon can be understood properly by analyzing factors such as attitudinal drivers, gender roles, decision-making, and time management. Also, different theories are used to back up the contributing factors of gender impacts on leadership.

Attitudinal Drivers

Feminine values are evident in business and government institutions. The traits defy the authoritative as well as competitive approach to handling leadership responsibility. However, women abilities are linked to the traditional leadership view of masculinity. The difference between men and women arise due to consensual relations that emanate from feminine values. The varied aspects inspire distinct management issues such as communication, control, and negotiations. Importantly, the feminine values need to be balanced to ensure success in

leadership. Various factors that explain leadership differences between men and women are as shown in the table below.

Men	Women
Transactional	Transformational
Autocratic	Participative
Business-oriented	People-oriented
Instruction-giving	Self-expressive

Essentially, contemporary thinking portrays male leadership as different from that of females. Some scholars argue that particular traits give women an advantage over men in leadership; such characteristics include advanced intermediary skills-especially in conflict resolution, effective communication skill, and distinguished interpersonal skills. Further research unveils that women are more empathetic than men in demonstrating concern for people's needs and forming supportive links with others. Moreover, women prove to be better than men on matters such as the ability to develop and maintain efficient relationship subordinates.

Gender role

Some previous studies reveal that gender influence effectiveness in leadership. Presently, gender can be grouped into three variables; male, female and androgynous. Social stereotypes present males as more salient than women in leadership. The stereotypes are misleading since both men and women show effective leadership traits when provided with the appropriate infrastructure and necessary resources. According to Appelbaum, Audet, & Miller (2013), women have limited chances to assume coveted leadership posts compared to men. Essentially, the concept of gender role helps to define the responsibilities of women in governance and provide guidance on areas that either gender should focus on to promote efficiency.

Decision-Making

Decision-making is among the components that determine the effectiveness of a leader. The analysis of gender in leadership reveals that men and women exhibit various differences in decision-making. Some of the disparities include nature of decisions, tasks in question, and building work relationships. Studies reveal that women focus on developing and maintaining strong work relations with both the junior and senior employees to streamline operation. On the contrary, men rarely focus on work relationships as they concentrate on results. Actually, a woman leader debates an idea with the subordinate making a decision. Usually, men portray calm and self-contemplation of issues before concluding on the concrete course of action. Importantly, decision-making involves ethics and moral responsibilities. The approach of male leaders to tasks is based on personal rights, justice as well as fairness; while women handle ethics with sensitivity, empathy and compassion.

Time Management

The ability to manage time is a vital leadership responsibility. Essentially, proper utility of time enhances quality performance and appropriate use of resources. Moreover, executing the assigned tasks promptly facilitates systematic achievement of personal or organizational goals. Apparently, accomplishment of duties with the set deadline averts tension, work stress, and warrants smooth operations. Both men and women leaders as exhibit quality planning, organizational as well as administration skills which constitutes some of the crucial factors that propel organizational progress in the desired direction. Leadership is directly related to time

management since all activities run under a specific schedule. Thus, the ability to observe time results in little or no confusion at workplace and ensures job satisfaction as well as impressive outcomes.

Factors Undermining the Effectiveness of Women Leadership

Women in America play an inevitable role in political and organizational leadership. The achievements of female leaders in the past years shows that women have the capacity to make substantive developmental decisions that influence national as well as international progress (Pew Research Center 2015). In spite of outstanding leadership characteristics, women occupy few positions both in government offices and business. Factors such as attitude, self-confidence, and the workplace environment have contributed to low number of women in leadership.

Attitude

The submissive nature of women towards leadership reflects some levels of incompetence that influence the ability to lead. Attitude affects an individual's perception towards guiding other and offering solution to complex challenges. According to the gender role theory, women learn feminine duties at young age, which influences their mental attitude and future careers. Appelbaum, Audet, & Miller (2013) states attitude provokes the view of preserving certain individuals as better leaders than others in the society. Women's negative view of leadership contributes to the inefficiencies and incompetent results in some positions. In addition, attitude is closely linked to motivation and; therefore, low morale exhibited by women leaders creates a dull atmosphere and sluggish pace of working by juniors in an institution.

Self-confidence

Quality leadership requires strong character engrossed by self-certainty and trust for successful achievements. Pew Research Center (2015) indicates that women tend to internalize a second-class attitude that negatively affects their self-confidence. In essence, lack of confidence reflects unworthiness in top positions hence poor leadership image. The relative deprivation theory stipulates that women express satisfaction with little achievements as compared to men. For instance, a woman would be contented to work in the same rank as a man but with a lower income levels than the male colleague. The character of women to accept less than men signifies low self-confidence and facilitates poor reward system in appreciation of excellent leadership skills. Notably, use of composure and leader emergence regression model helps in improving the leadership predictive abilities of an individual to fill a vacant position.

The Corporate Environment

The working environment for women has indirect relationship with both self-confidence and attitude. For instance, feminine leaders operate in hostile environments characterized by unhealthy competition, dynamic demands, and un-matching expectations. Such environments create result in denial and self-domineering cultures that torment the efforts to enhance equality in leadership. The status quo that views women from an incompetent angle does not show possible indications of change since organizations have evolved to reward as well as protect masculine efforts. An observation on gender-based stereotypes reveals that the position of women in the society promotes stagnation in both social and developmental changes as far as leadership is concerned.

Conclusion

Leadership differences between men and women play a significant role in running the affairs of an organization. The society perceives men as better leaders than women in various aspects despite the notable similarities in the execution of assigned duties. Essentially, both men and women have the capacity to implement change as well as lead the subordinates in organization to achieve the established goals and objectives. The existing gender disparities have insignificant contribution to leadership and cannot be used to weigh the ability of an individual to deliver the desired outcomes in an enterprise. The underrepresentation of women population in leadership is not as a result of low confidence or inability of women to lead; but is due to the stereotypical attachments that women cannot produce effective leaders. Notably, to achieve a balanced gender leadership, people should change overall perception of women in leadership and treat both genders equally.

References

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