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Perception of women as a leader in the technical and vocational education field

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ABSTRACT

Leadership is perceived as being masculine and as a result women are less likely to be seen as leaders regardless of their capability. The purpose of this research is to identify the perception of the respondent about the domain of women as a leader in the field of technical and vocational based on the six domain of leadership and the level of six domain of leadership. A total of 18 female students from section 3 were chosen as respondents. A set of questionnaire was used as an instrument. It consists of two parts. Part A is about the demography of the respondent and part B is about the items to measure respondent's perception of women as leaders in technical and vocational fields. The question in this study is based on the six domain of leadership. Data collected was processed using Statistics Package for Social Science (SPSS version 16.0) and were analyzed based on descriptive such as mean score, frequency and percentage. The outcome of this research shows that perception of respondent if women want to be or be a leader, they need have domain ethical in the leadership and the level of six domain show the high level result but only the domain inspirational have the moderate level.

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Introduction

Good leadership in the life long learning of technical and vocational education exists when the leaders are able to perform either one or combination of transformational leadership characteristics, even though, less emphasis on these characteristic can affect job satisfaction of his or her subordinates (Hashim *et.al* 2010). Leadership is perceived as being masculine and as a result women are less likely to be seen as leaders regardless of their capability or effectiveness. Effective leadership is therefore associated with communication and decision-making styles linked to men directive, authoritative and expedient rather than the communal and inclusive styles attributed to women. Gender stereotypes affect the perception and acceptance of women as managers and leaders. Internal factors found to be positively linked to managerial aspiration and advancement includes instrumentality, adaptive coping strategies, self promotion and entrepreneurship (Eagly & Carli 2007).

A country definitely will go through an industrial process and rapid urbanization and the effect of this process has changed the tradition character of women's. Previously, a family model show that men will be as a sustenance seekers and women as housewives and only depends entirely to husband, but it's already not suitable to adopted for this time. In the field that was dominated by men such as technical field, women also compete to involve in this field. Nowadays, most of women students also take technical courses in the high educational institutions and this situation was opened the eyes of various parties about the ability of women to venture into this field (Mahpol, 2005).

This research is to know the perception of the respondent about the domain of women as a leader in the field of technical and vocational based on the six domain of leadership and the level of six domain of leadership.

Objective

This research is to identify:

- i) The perception of women as a leader in the field of technical and vocational.
- ii) The level of six domain of leadership.

Literature review

According to Ministry of Women, Family and Community (2006), participation of women in various job categories is not weird to society nowadays. The faster the development of a country and the role of women have changed. They are now is more multi-functional due to their role variety. Their role as a daughter, wife, mother, sister and at the same time also act as a woman who has to compete with male that most dominated this world. Women also considered playing an important role as an agent of economic engine nation in this new century. Mahpol (2005) said that, in a variety of roles, women have to face obstacles to improve the quality of work patiently, and there will have competition with men. Since the independence, the government has opened education to all the society

Women were given the same opportunities as men to enter into the school and higher education institutions. By leveraging the education and acquired knowledge, women are be more self-confident and have potential in many areas whether in economic, political or social. Women also can start to show their ability because they need to do the several responsibility (Jones, 2012). Women are no longer considered as permanent resident in the kitchen, but women have been one of the strengths in developing countries. Their credibility is doing it is not underestimate again because the ability of women can make them stand at the same level with men. The role played by women workers especially, whether on the lower level such as labour until to the leader at the top level is very meaningful to a country that need workforce is not only expert but able to take on tasks entrusted (Firdaus, 2012). A Little bit difference has been found between women's and men's ambition, however the path to senior roles for women is often more challenging. Women want to advance, are equally as ambitious as men and

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opportunities for learning, development, promotion and progression are a high priority (EOWA 2008).

For more than 30 years women have been moving into organizations in increasing numbers. They have gradually populated at the offices and the middle levels of the hierarchies. Women now make up 50% of managerial and specialized professional positions in organizations in the United States. Yet, even with these positive trends, the dearth of women in top leadership roles is striking (Joyce, 2003). Blake (2004) said that women are even more sparsely represented in top leadership positions in companies of the new economy. While the percentage of women in leadership positions has certainly increased over the years. Catalyst predicts that, at the current rate of change, the percentage of women in top leadership positions in the largest companies will not exceed 25% until 2020.

TVET for women is widely considered as indispensable towards the creation of jobs and the diversification of economies, certain barriers appear difficult to overcome. In several countries, males have traditionally had better access to education, and whilst this situation has improved for girls and women during the last few decades particularly in primary education, and in several countries even at college and university level (Mahpol, 2005)

The Six Domains of Leadership

According to Lind & Sitkin (2006), there are six domains of leadership. The six domains are personal, relational, contextual, inspirational, supportive and ethical. The six domains provide a framework to talk about and teach leadership. They address the full range of skills that are needed to exercise leadership. These skills include knowing how to build a leadership persona from your own personality and values (Personal Leadership), how to forge sound relationships with those you lead (Relational Leadership), how to provide coherence and team identity (Contextual Leadership), how to motivate exceptional effort (Inspirational Leadership) while protecting your people (Supportive Leadership), and how to make sure your leadership works for balance and ethical conduct (Ethical Leadership). Now let's turn to a description of each of the domains in turn.

Personal Leadership

The leader needs to be mindful, to have thought consciously about the options and issues facing the team. Most people go through life on autopilot, but leader do not have this luxury. They must be questioning assumptions and thinking ahead of events to be ready to give guidance whatever situation arises. When a leader is effective in projecting his or her persona, we hear in our mind's ear the leader's tone of voice, verbal expressions, or favourite expressions. The leader has to think in new ways about old problems. Like most of leadership, the innovative approach to old challenges called for here is not an in-born skill, it can be learned. All of us can be creative if we spend more time reflecting on how things work in our team and in its line of work, and if we work hard on a critical, mindful analysis of whether standard operating procedure is in fact optimal operating procedure. A final aspect of personal leadership involves dedication to the team. We are more willing to accept leaders when we believe that we are being lead somewhere that is good for the team rather than somewhere good only for the leader (Stoller, (2008), Blandino, (2011), & Rath & Conchie (2008)).

Relational Leadership

Relational leadership emphasizes the importance of forging strong ties with others in the team or organization. Relational

leadership establishes this when the leader shows concern for others, gives respect regardless of position in the hierarchy. Respect is very important in relational leadership because most people have a healthy fear of the hierarchical nature of traditional supervisor-subordinate relationships. Leader also seeks to understand the needs and capabilities of others. Taking the time to achieve a good understanding of each member of the team is another key aspect of building good leader-follower relationships and makes sure that everyone feels he or she has and will receive fair treatment at the hands of the leader. When relational leadership is strong, leaders reap what is perhaps the most important of all of the effects of good leadership. Trust is the natural reciprocation of concern, respect, understanding and fairness. The trust that is built through good relational leadership will help to sustain confidence in the leader and continued efforts to accomplish the goals he or she has set, especially when adversity arises. A leader, however well intentioned, who does not understand his or her followers, can be dangerous because he or she might, out of ignorance, ask followers to do things that are beyond their ability or in opposition to their preferences. The conversations necessary to achieve understanding also enhance followers belief that the leader respects them and is concerned about them (Cascadia Center for Leadership (2011), Duke Human Resource (2013), & Kharbanda, (2007)).

Contextual Leadership

The third foundational domain of leadership involves two related types of leadership action. One part of contextual leadership is building team identity by providing meaning and a sense of uniqueness and importance to the team, organization, or institution that is being led. The other part of contextual leadership involves the leader as architect, translator and implementer of new ways of accomplishing the task at hand. This part of contextual leadership involves bringing coherence to the team, simplifying and clarifying complex tasks and environments, and designing team process in a way that assures fair procedures. In all of these actions, the overall goal is to construct a context for leadership that fits your and the team's values and that facilitates your goals as a leader. Good contextual leaders build their teams not only by giving the team's work meaning, they also build their team's effectiveness and success by providing coherence to the task and the environment. In short, many people lack a coherent sense of the organizational world in which they live and they need leaders to help infuse the organization and its members with a shared sense of coherence. To accomplish this, leaders need to work to see the "big picture" and to help the team come together with a clear, coherent view of the complex issues with which it must deal (NHS Leadership Academy (2011), Hatfield (1997), & Tamer (2013)).

Inspirational Leadership

Inspirational leadership involves building a desire for greatness or excellence by raising expectations and encouraging the team or organization to accept challenges, leaders need to foster enthusiasm and optimism for the team and its task. There is something contagious about raw excitement, if the leader is excited about what the team is and does, then team members will be enthusiastic as well. In addition, each team member who is enthusiastic is another source of enthusiasm for others. It is important to recognize, however, with any leadership domain actions will speak louder than words. Exhortation to be enthusiastic or frequent use of enthusiastic slogans will have little effect, while genuine, heartfelt enthusiasm that is put into

every leadership action and decision, even if never spoken, will have much greater effect. In addition, your people will take the risk of pursuing audacious goals only if they see your concern, respect, and fairness. They will trust you to inspire them only when it is for the greater good and merits the investment of self and team or in other words, only if you have been successful in building trust through attention to your relational leadership. When inspirational leadership works, those you lead will start to expect more from themselves and to look for opportunities to accomplish exceptional things. These high aspirations will result as followers step up to challenges on the basis of your standards and confidence, and as they learn they can do more than they had ever thought they could. The dynamic of confronting challenges and succeeding will build additional confidence, so that people will be taking on (and succeeding at) things they never dared attempt before (McNamara, (2013), Linden, (2010), & Kopp, (2005)).

Supportive Leadership

Supportive leadership includes efficacy, security, and blame control. Together these three elements of supportive leadership give the team the protection it needs to accomplish its tasks. Protections help team members to get on with their work with assurance that the leader will take care of them. It is often the leader's job to secure external support such as the resources and time needed to complete the task and to provide internal support such as encouragement and moral support during times of personal difficulties. Followers look to the leader to be their representative to the wider organization and to the outside world, and they expect the leader to provide protection from political distraction that can interfere with work. Few things undermine the work of a high-performance, creative team faster than team members fear that they will be blamed if something goes wrong. If an atmosphere of blaming is allowed to develop, then team members will turn on each other at the first sign of problem, looking for a scapegoat and spending most of their efforts not on fixing the problem but instead on pointing fingers at each other over its origin. Perhaps the most pernicious form of blaming arises when people see the leader him or herself take credit for successes and blame followers for failures. When relational leadership is strong, leaders have the trust that gives team members confidence the leader will protect them. When contextual leadership is strong, then the established team identity, coordination, and coherence make it easier for people to believe in the efficacy they and their colleagues can bring to the task at hand. Good supportive leadership leads to followers who become better and better at exhibiting appropriate initiative (Kouzes & Posner (2007), Leboeuf, (2005), Lievens *et.al.*, (2003)).

Ethical Leadership

The multifaceted nature of organizational life and leadership makes it important for leaders to play the role of chief integrator and balancer, ensuring that the multiple elements of leadership described here are drawn together and effectively balanced for a particular situation. Thus, for organizations to achieve work and life balance, or to appropriately balance the community's interests and the firm's, it is essential that the leader take responsibility for making this happen. Every team, however small, has to contend with competing demands and interests. Indeed, even within a single individual tensions exist between competing demands at work and at home or between different aspects of the person's job. It is the leader's job, and the hallmark of a good ethical leader, to balance these demands for the individual follower and for the organization in a way that

work for all involved. Whether the balance in question involves work and life balance, balancing competing demands within the team, balancing demands between the team and other parts of the organization or community, or balancing long-term and short-term interests, it is the leader's job to make the decisions that achieve balance and bring synergy among competing needs and interests. Few followers will feel free to stop work and attend to family issues if their leader is a workaholic, and few team members will understand the need to consider the interests of other parts of the firm if the leader regularly disregards or derogates such considerations or forces followers to defend their fiefdom. Being a good ethical leader means thinking about what is right, encouraging followers to talk about ethical issues and ethical behavior, and modeling behavioral adherence to sound ethical values. Teams go bad, and leaders ultimately fail in their promise, if ethical considerations are pushed aside in the interest of immediate gain. Leaders need to behave in ways that enact the team's values and bring credit to the individual leader and to the team and organization. In doing so, leaders have the opportunity to raise important issues and make leadership have an impact not only within the immediate team, but also more broadly (Ulrich & Smallwood, (2007), Golemen *et al.*, (2004), Chandler (2013)).

Methodology

In this research, researcher had been using a case study design and descriptive method. Researcher the analyze data using *Statistical Package For the Social Science (SPSS) for Windows, Version 16.0* to get the mean score, frequency and percentage. In this case study, the researchers focused on a group of students that graduate students of Technical and Vocational Education from section 3 at UTHM as the sample. According to Mohamad (2003), the selection of all the population as the sample is a case study. In this study, researcher used all of the population from section 3 students as a sample. A total of 18 female students were chosen as respondents for this study.

The instrument of this research is a questionnaire designed by the researcher based on the six domains of leadership by Lind & Sitkin (2006). The questionnaire has two parts which is part A, the contents about the respondent's background and part B contents about the items to measure respondent's perception of women as leaders in technical and vocational fields. In part B, the contents about six items based on the six domains of leadership and each of six items have five sub items. Likert scale from 1 to 5 had been used to measure the respondent's responses to each item at the part B. Likert scale detail is shown in Table 1 dan the measure of mean score is shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Likert scale

Scale	Interpretation
1	Strongly Disagree
2	Disagree
3	Not Sure
4	Agree
5	Strongly Agree

(Adaptation from Goodvin, 2005)

Table 2: Score mean

Mean score	Level
1.00 – 2.33	low
2.34 – 3.67	moderate
3.68 – 5.00	High

(Adaptation from Landell ,1997)

Analysis and findings

Research analysis is based on the main objective which is about the perception of women as a leader in the field of technical and vocational. By using the descriptive method, analysis for the background of respondent or Part A shown in the Table 3, 4 and 5. The overall mean score for item Part B in the questionnaire shown in the Table 6 below.

Table 3: Age of respondent

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	19-23	1	5.6
	24-28	15	83.3
	29>	2	11.1
	Total	18	100.0

According to the Table 3, from the total of 18 respondents, 15 of the respondents were aged between 24 until 28 years old (83.3%). Two of the respondent were aged 29 years old and above (11.1%) but only one of the respondent aged between 19-24 years old (5.6%).

Table 4: Respondent course

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Civil	1	5.6
	management	7	38.9
	electric and electronic	4	22.2
	art and design	1	5.6
	multimedia	1	5.6
	town planning	1	5.6
	science and technology	3	16.7
	Total	18	100.0

Based on analysis in Table 4, seven of the respondents have taken management course (38.9%), 4 of the respondents have taken electric and electronic course (22.2%), and 3 of the respondents have take science and technology course (16.7%). For another course, only one respondent have take civil, art and design, multimedia and town planning (5.6%).

Table 5: Experience

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Never	5	27.8
	Committee leader	8	44.4
	Block leader	2	11.1
	Group leader	3	16.7
	Total	18	100.0

Table 5 shows that most of the respondents have experienced as the Committee Leader with 8 respondent (44.4%). Followed by 5 of the respondent never be the leader (27.8%). Next, 2 respondent had been the block leader (11.1%) and 3 respondents as be the group leader (16.7%).

Based on the average mean score for all the domain of leadership at Part B, there is not much difference perception. Most of the domain have the high score and item ethical had shown the highest average mean score that is 4.03. Followed by item relational with average mean score 4.01. Next, the third highest average score shown by item supportive with score 3.99. Item personal and contextual showed the same average mean score with mean 3.91. For the lower average mean score show by inspirational with mean score 3.67. Level for each domain show the high level with mean around 3.68 until 5.00 except the item inspirational have a moderate level because the level only 3.67.

Table 6: Analysis score mean (Part B)

BIL	ITEM	MEAN	LEVEL
A	Personal		
	Dedication	4.00	High
	Practical	4.06	High
	Interest	3.83	High
	Patient	3.94	High
	Flexible	3.72	High
	Average mean	3.91	High
B	Relational		
	Respect other people	4.17	High
	Honest to work	4.22	High
	Excellence net working	3.94	High
	Know to get power	3.78	High
	Understand environment	3.94	High
	Average mean	4.01	High
C	Contextual		
	Build team identity	3.94	High
	Clarifying Mission	4.00	High
	Clarifying roles	3.94	High
	Clarifying practices	4.00	High
	Build coherence in a complex world	3.67	High
	Average mean	3.91	High
	D	Inspirational	
Cultivate excellence		3.67	Moderate
Innovation		3.83	High
Be a source of optimism		3.72	High
Be a source of enthusiasm		3.56	Moderate
Encourage savvy risk-taking		3.61	Moderate
Average mean		3.67	Moderate
E	Supportive		
	Protect people	3.94	High
	Not blame	3.67	Moderate
	Give feedback	4.11	High
	Fight for resources	4.06	High
	Give an idea	4.17	High
	Average mean	3.99	High
F	Ethical		
	Take responsibility	4.39	High
	Model ethical action	3.83	High
	Strive for balance	3.89	High
	Punctual	4.17	High
	Not discrimination	3.89	High
	Average mean	4.03	High

This shows that most of the respondent had given their positive perception and their perception more to the ethical domain. It's mean, women need have good ethical to be as a leader. The elements found in the domain of ethical are leader must take responsibility (4.39), punctual (4.17), strive for balance (3.89), be a model ethical action (3.83), and not discrimination (3.89).

For the level, most of the domain have a high level of mean but only one of the domain has a moderate level that is item inspirational at level 3.67.

Discussion and conclusion

The data presented is clear that respondent had given their positive perception about the domain

That woman need have if want to be a leader. The most high domain goes to the ethical. As we know, ethical is very important to be a good leader. This finding was supported by Riggio (2013). He stated that women are more sensitive to ethical issues than men. Women also more likely to believe that corporate ethical codes would make a positive difference. A first step for ethical leader behavior is being sensitive to ethical issues and dilemmas. Women do seem to have an advantage, but it is likely that women learn and develop this sensitivity. The

hope is that all leaders, men and women, can learn to be more sensitive to and alert for possible ethical violations. Organizational codes of ethics can help and fostering an ethical organizational climate.

Sullivan (2013) said that diversity executives can help leaders to create an ethical workplace culture with encourage the leaders to surround themselves with men and women who are committed to supporting ethical actions. Berkowitz (2013) said, ethical leadership requires from the leader a coherent ethical framework that will guide her decisions and actions all the time, not only in specific situations. Among the most important of the characteristics that define an ethical leader are openness and honesty, the willingness to make the discussion of ethical issues and decisions a regular part of the organizational or group conversation and culture. Berkowitz (2013) said again that an ethical leader never stops reexamining his own ethical assumptions and what it means to be an ethical leader. Like so many other important tasks, maintaining ethical leadership is ongoing like only a few others, it can last a lifetime.

According this finding, it can be concluded that, perception of respondent if women want to be or be a leader, they need have domain ethical in leadership. Ethical is very important to a leader because they need to guide their follower with good ethical. Woman as a leader also need have all the six domains that create by Lind & Sitkin (2006) and the level of six domains show the high level result.

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