

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LEADERSHIP: BALANCING ACADEMIC PERFORMANCES IN THE PURSUIT OF BEING A VICTORIOUS LEADER

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Abstract

Gender differences have always been debated in a lot of platforms including in universities. In universities, both female and male leaders are being proactive with their advocacies in their own leadership pursuits in which at the same time they have to focus on their academic performances as well. Some questions may arise: how do they handle both of these pursuits at the same time? Will they portray any differences in balancing of these pursuits? Research has proven that gender differences do exist between male and female leaders especially in the aspect of leadership, academic performances and the ability of them to do multi-tasking and interestingly, this particular research has been in the favour of female leaders. In this research paper, gender differences will be determined between male leaders of Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Kolej Delima and female leaders of Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Kolej Melati, in which both of these organisations are recognized as the most victorious organisations of all residential colleges in UiTM Shah Alam. A quantitative method has been applied in the commission of this research whereby it requires 34 respondents from both organisations to answer a questionnaire. From this research, it has been found that even though prior research made by the previous researchers was in the favour of female leaders, but, male leaders of Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Kolej Delima tend to show that they could create equilibrium in both of the pursuits that they have involved in, compared to female leaders of Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Kolej Melati. A qualitative method in the form of interview also has been conducted in order to obtain thorough insights of what have been transpired by all of them in pursuing both of the pursuits. Albeit of the disparities, all of the respondents share the same attributes in which they are persevere, brave, courageous and strong to find equilibrium between both of the pursuit as their interpretation of being a victorious leader is being a survivor, not a quitter. All in all, both female and male leaders of respondents are in the pursuit of being a victorious leader as the definition of 'victorious leader' for them are being a survivor in facing all of the ruthless and dreadful challenges of being a leader.

Keywords: *leadership, academic performances, multi-tasking, Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Kole*

INTRODUCTION

In today's millennial era, female leaders are considered to be as equal as man; in terms of chances and opportunities in leading their respective organizations. The world has seen the position of woman in leadership pursuit as they nowadays even have the opportunity to run their country by holding high-profile portfolios; be it Prime Minister or President. Some of these iron ladies are still incumbent in the running of holding the crowns of their respective countries: Mia Mottley (Prime Minister of Barbados), Paula-Mae Weekes (President of Trinidad and Tobago), Viorica Dâncilă (Prime Minister of Romania), Katrin Jakobsdóttir (Prime Minister of Iceland), Jacinda Ardern (Prime Minister of New Zealand), Mercedes Aráoz (Prime Minister of Peru), Halimah Yacob (President of Singapore) and Ana Brnabi (Prime Minister of Serbia). In Malaysia, after 61 years of the independence, Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail has been announced to be the first female Deputy Prime Minister, in which it has shown that Malaysia women are spreading their wings in their leadership pursuit.

Female university students are also showing their potential and capabilities in the leadership pursuit available in their respective universities. Both female and male leaders are having the same mission to accomplish after being involved in this arena which is to be the best version of themselves as a leader. They are given equal chance and opportunities to be involved in their leadership pursuit, however, it might be challenging for them as at the same time, they need to focus on their academic performance as well. Thus, in order to analyse the presence of this dilemma among the leaders, two research questions that will be the guideline for this research are a) does gender differences affect the leaders' academic performance in the pursuit of their leadership ?and b) what are the indicators that have been used by the leaders to survive in both pursuits simultaneously?

The objective of this research is to answer both of these particular questions as the differences between male and female leaders will be discovered from three different aspects which are: gender differences in leadership, gender

differences in academic performance and the ability of the leaders in multi-tasking. This research will specifically involve 34 respondents of Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Kolej Kediaman Delima and Melati of UiTM Shah Alam.

DISCUSSION

Gender Differences in Leadership

In leadership styles, vast differences could be seen in man and woman in the aspect their nature of their communication style and value workplace relationship as female leaders may cultivate closer bonds with their followers than male leaders (Moran, 1992). In contrast, a more controlling authoritative leadership approach has been suggested to be practiced by men's status and power-oriented communication style. This is due to the fact that female leaders have also been described as taking a more "take care" leadership approach compared to the males' "take charge" approach, hence, it has encouraged the female leaders to appear as more transformational leaders rather the male leaders who tend to use a transactional leadership approach (Moran, 1992). These differences have also been affirmed by any other researchers as well.

According to Merchant (2012), it could be concluded that men are task-oriented leaders meanwhile women are relationship-oriented leaders. As a task-oriented leader, male leaders tend to be very goal-oriented in order to preserve their independence, dominance and maintain their and status in hierarchical social order. Thus, if only being autocratic, direct and controlling will be the only options they have in order to achieve their goal, then they will have the tendency to be so. In the oppositeness of the task-oriented leader, women who tend to be relationship-oriented leaders are focused on maintaining interpersonal relationships on the job including "showing concern for employees' well-being and involving them in decision-making processes. This will foster the pursuit to maintain interaction with the other person and to seek control and understanding in order to create a more interpersonal leadership style (Radmila, Dragana, & Bojana, 2011).

In conjunction with the studies above, it could be adduced that women have more pressure and burden to deal with their leadership style compared to men. Since female leader tend to encourage participation, share power and information in order to strengthen self-evaluation of followers, it would be challenging for the women to patronize participation from their followers due to the variance of their attitudes. Some of the followers will listen to their female leaders as they believe that the subtle approach that has been taken by their leaders is commendable to be followed, meanwhile some of their followers tend to take it for granted mainly due to their undeveloped misconception about submissive female leaders. In contrast, it will create less pressure on male leaders as they tend to use their dominance, control and power they have in governing their organizations as they will only allow lower percentage of their follower's participation. Male leaders tend to be affirmative in their decision-making process, thus, followers' participation in that particular process tend to be ignored.

Gender Differences in Academic Performance

Being a top-notch undergraduate students especially in their academic performance had have always been part of their dreams ever since. According to Khwaileh, Faisal and Zaza (2011), female have been perceived to be more competent, positive and also efficient in possessing better study skills. They further added that female tend to possess all of the attributes due to the fact they have to guard themselves up by invoking all the positive attributes in order to survive in male-dominated world. Hence, they tend to believe that good grades will be an insurance policy for their success in order to compete with men in the cut-throat world.

In an Islamic country of Jordan, women have been seen to survive well in typical male-dominated courses (Medicine and Architecture) instead of being in typical female-dominated courses (i.e. Education, Psychology and English) (Khwaileh, Faisal and Zaza, 2011). This evolution seems to be happened due to the fact that the women in Jordan tend to abscond from their family and society due to the stereotypical belief that have to be endured by them; some of the

examples are woman should be staying at home taking care of their household. Here, as survivors in male-dominated courses, they need to put extra pressure on their shoulder in order to keeping up with their “opponents” due to encourage the sustainability of the evolution of the typical stereotypical belief against them.

Thus, it could be adduced that the largest differential favoring women was in classification where almost all of the difference was attributable to differentials in coefficient treatment rather than endowments (or characteristics).

The Ability of Multi-Tasking between Men and Women

According to the experiment conducted by Easthope and Killeen (2017), women are less distracted by any intervention when carrying out certain tasks than men as their hormones are playing part in this disparity. They discovered that the prefrontal cortex of the women’s brain have a lot of estrogen receptors compared to man. The presence of the estrogen at that region can reshape the neural networks in their brain and improve function in the prefrontal cortex, thus give advantages to women especially under 60 years old to perform multi-tasking.

Another experiment of multi-tasking have been conducted by Morgan (2013) in which a group of women and men were needed to complete a series of tasks; locating restaurants on a map, doing simple math problems, answering a phone call, and deciding how they would search for a lost key in the field, and they were given only eight minutes to complete them all. From the result, it could be adduced that women portrayed an excellent performance advantage over men. It was found that women tend to excel because they were more organized under pressure as they will spend more time thinking at the beginning meanwhile men had a slight impulsiveness to jump into making their decisions quickly. It has been suggested that women are more able to give a moment for themselves to think in the aforesaid stressed and complex situation. This experiment has concluded that women have an advantage over man in multi-tasking, at least in certain situations.

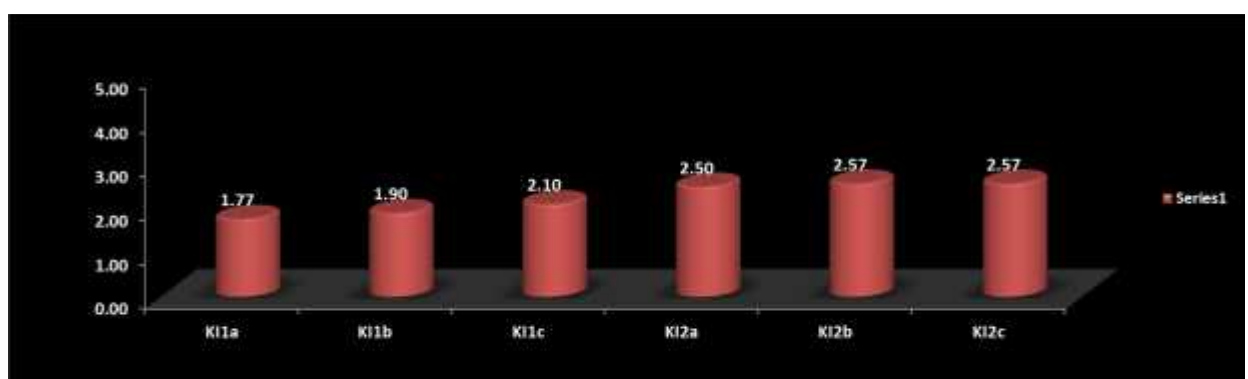
Therefore, based on the scientific evidence and experiment that has been conducted by previous researchers, the ability of multi-tasking could be adduced

to be in the favor of women. At certain extent, they have biologically and socially constructed to have the aforesaid capability.

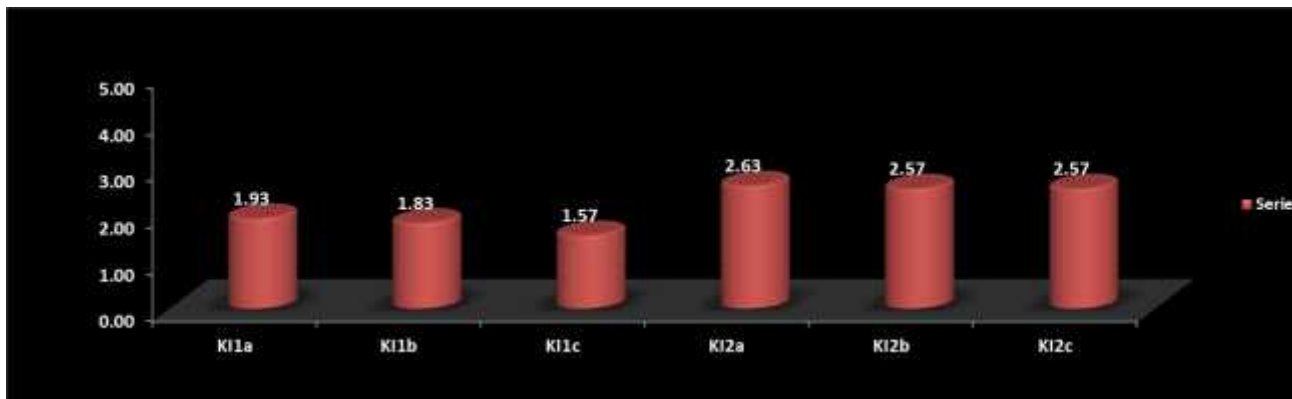
DATA ANALYSIS

This research paper has involved 34 respondents which comprises of the leaders of Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Kolej Kediaman (JPK) Delima and Melati for the 2018/2019 session. JPK Delima and JPK Melati are the representatives for the Kolej Delima and Kolej Melati; both represent male and female residential colleges in UiTM Shah Alam respectively. Both of these residential colleges have been chosen as the respondents of this research paper is because both of them have been acknowledged to be the most successful residential colleges for male and female residential colleges respectively based on Anugerah Kolej Cemerlang 2017.

For the purpose of this research, they have been provided with a set of questionnaire that need to honestly and prudently answer by them. The aforesaid set of questionnaire comprises two different sections that need to be answered which are i) PART I: Time Division In Balancing Their Academic Performance While In The Pursuit Of Leadership and ii) PART II: The Leaders' Secret Weapon to Face all the Hurdles After Being Involved In Both Academic Performance And Leadership Pursuits Simultaneously.



Graph 1: Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Kolej Kediaman Melati



Graph 2: **Jawatankuasa Perwakilan Kolej Kediaman Delima**

The graphs above show the outcome from the questionnaires that have been distributed to them. The entire outcome from the sections of the questionnaire has been tabulated as shown below:

Part I: Time Division In Balancing Their Academic Performance While In The Pursuit Of Leadership

Table 1: The meaning of the abbreviations in the graph.

Abbreviations	Elements
KI1a	Capability of Multi-tasking
KI1b	Dilemma in balancing both of the pursuits
KI1c	Feeling of being a quitter

Table 2: The comparison of aspects between JPK Delima and JPK Melati in the form of mean.

Aspects	JPK Delima	JPK Melati
Capability of multi-tasking	1.93	1.77
Dilemma in balancing both of the pursuits	1.83	1.90
Feeling of being a quitter	1.57	2.10

Based on the comparison that could be derived from the table above, JPK Delima tend to be good at showing their capabilities of multi-tasking compared to JPK Melati. Also, JPK Delima tend to show that they are not always in a dilemma in order for them to balance both of the pursuits compared to JPK Melati. Big

disparities could be seen from the aspect of having a feeling of being a quitter as JPK Melati always have a feeling of quitting compared to JPK Delima.

Part II: The Leaders' Secret Weapon to Face all the Hurdles After Being Involved In Both Academic Performance And Leadership Pursuits Simultaneously.

Table 3: The meaning of the abbreviations in the graph.

Abbreviations	Elements
KI2a	Bravery and courage in order to balance both of the pursuits
KI2b	Perseverance to face all of the challenges being a leader
KI2c	Physical and mental power to work in both pursuits simultaneously

Table 4: The comparison of aspects between JPK Delima and JPK Melati in the form of mean.

Aspects	JPK Delima	JPK Melati
Bravery and courage in order to balance both of the pursuits	2.63	2.50
Perseverance to face all of the challenges being a leader	2.57	2.57
Physical and mental power to work in both pursuits simultaneously	2.57	2.57

Based on the comparison above, JPK Delima tend to be more brave and courageous in order to balance both of the pursuits compared to JPK Melati. However, their weapon of being persevere and to strengthening their physical and mental power in order for them to work in both pursuits simultaneously seem to be equally possessed by both JPK Delima and JPK Melati.

Reaction and Reason for the Outcome of the Research from the Questionnaire

In order to discover the outcome of the research from the questionnaire, this research paper has included interview as a method for qualitative research. Interview has been conducted due to the fact that the objective of this research

paper is to investigate thoroughly what have been transpired from the leaders in both of their pursuits of being a student and a leader at the same time.

First and foremost, all of the respondents have been asked about their stereotypical belief about male and female leaders in which they have been required to answer it based on their opposite gender; be it positive or negative belief. As for JPK Melati, they believe that male leaders tend to be positive and rational in making their decision for the benefits of the organization as male leaders tend to be straightforward in making up their mind. However, as of the negative sides of male leaders, JPK Melati believe that male leaders albeit of rationality in making their decisions, sometimes the result of the decision tend to be horrendous as male leaders tend to take everything for granted as they believe their rationality has brought them to be in their comfort zone. As for JPK Delima, they believe that female leaders tend to be finicky when they to derive a conclusive decision for the benefits of their organization. This is due to the fact that female leaders tend to be a perfectionist and meticulous in every single details in order to procure a perfect resolution. However, due to their meticulousness, they tend to proclaim that flaws will not be acceptable to exist in the pursuit of the execution of the resolution that they have reached before. If there are flaws, then, the female leaders tend to be snappish due to their flexible and inconsistent ego-boundaries.

The second part of the interview is to peruse their reaction towards the graph (can be referred from '**Data Analysis**' section) that have been derived from the questionnaire answered by them. As of JPK Melati's reaction, they are not surprised with the outcome of the research as they humbly admit that they are quite incapable in multi-tasking as they have been exerted with a massive pressure due to the fact that they are holding such a mountainous yet painful responsibility to perpetuate the victory of Kolej Melati in Anugerah Kolej Cemerlang for three consecutive years. They further added that they always in a dilemma to maintain their academic performance in their leadership pursuits as they are quite confused on what pursuits need to be prioritized first. They have a lot of commitments that they need to think about particularly on their studies, organizations and also their

social life. Based on the aforesaid reasons, it could be adduced that majority of them could not handle the pressure and stress that have been haunting them, thus, they have the feeling of quitting from their organization.

As of JPK Delima's reaction, they believe that the reason why they are better multi-tasking is because they try to follow their schedule that they have made accordingly, even though they might know that they may not be able to adhere to it due to unprecedented circumstances. They can handle their pressure well as they believe that they have done their best to follow their schedule and they are willing to face the consequences of their failure to adhere to their schedule with an open heart. They also further added that competition like Anugerah Kolej Cemerlang has not exerted such a massive pressure on them as they believe that they have come out with triumphant plans to follow, thus they just have to show their strict adherence to it without even have to be critical about it. Unlike most of the JPK Melati, they admit that sometimes they cannot handle the pressure well as they really take into account of all of the consequences of their failure to adhere to their schedule as they aim to excel in both of the pursuits. If they were to be out of the track, they will be overwhelmed and tend to more stressful to get back into their track.

Albeit of the disparities in terms of dealing with the pressure, both JPK Delima and JPK Melati never consider that all of the unprecedented state of affairs and circumstantial hindrances that they are facing as a reason for them to not be fearless leaders. In order to be fearless leaders, they know that they should be brave and courageous in order to balance both of the pursuits simultaneously. They also know that in order to survive in both of the pursuits, they have to be persevere to face all of the challenges of being a leader and also to have physical and mental power to work in both pursuits simultaneously. They believe that in order to be a survivor in both of these pursuits, the aforesaid weapons are being used by them to shield themselves from being a quitter.

CONCLUSION

All in all, the definition of being a victorious leader for JPK Delima and JPK Melati is to be able to be a survivor in order for them to balance their academic performance in their leadership pursuit simultaneously. In spite of the fact that they may handle the pressure differently, however, as long as they believe that they will achieve their wildest dreams by employing all the aforesaid weapons subtly, then they are paving their ways of being victorious leader.

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