PERCEPTION TOWARDS WOMEN LEADERSHIP IN BANGLADESH: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR

Tanjela Hossain ✉

Lecturer, Dept. of Business Administration Central Women's University, Bangladesh

tanjela.hossain@gmail.com

Md. Asad Noor

Lecturer, Green Business School, Green University of Bangladesh, Bangladesh

asadronnie@gmail.com

Abstract

This study was undertaken in order to investigate the difference in perception of male and female employees working in different public and private organization towards women leadership. It is a comparative study. 100 employees holding mid and top level position were chosen purposively from 25 organizations (10 public & 15 Private) located in Dhaka city. They were individually requested to fill the demographic data sheet, a structured questionnaire followed by perception toward Women as leader Scale. A two way response is collected from the (1) female employees of leading position, (2) the employees with experience to work with the female manager. The questionnaire given to the female leaders is qualitative. The findings of the study project various indications about the concerned issue .The responses of the other employees have been collected in quantitative terms to produce comparable statistics. Employees under the female managers have weak positive view about "women leadership" in both private and public organizations. The responses of public organizations are more scattered in comparison to the private organization. For statistical analysis mean and Standard Deviation and T-test were calculated, which indicates that there is no significant difference between public and private organizations in their perceptions towards women leaders in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Perception, leadership, women leadership, challenge, strategies, leadership style

INTRODUCTION

Women's educational and professional life and their status in society are at present more on increase due to efficient and dedicated role played by them in different organizations. From junior staff up to managerial position which is not limited to educational management, they not only handle particular department but also as a political leaders they can represent their entire nation. Some women have now become more powerful, knowledgeable and function intelligently in crises situations, in the world of management. Nowadays they are ready to take challenges of the practical life and do not limit them to the domestic domain only. We can count number of woman playing significant role in our society. We can see how media highlights the contribution of women in different fields. Due to their extraordinary performance in various professions, now perception towards women has changed in various countries. Particularly in job situation perceptions towards woman as leader has now becoming positive in many countries because they are now showing their efficiency in many male related management positions. *Herbert and Yost (1978),* writing indicates that a number of people believe that women can disqualify for taking responsible position in masculine jobs. With this impression in mind in past years varieties of researches have been conducted throughout the world focusing on various psychosocial issues related to women. With rapid increase of women leaving and staying away from home for higher education and bread earning, raises questions in the mind of employers that —whether women can be hired for administrative post, other than educational managementǁ. With hiring of women on merit, equal opportunity, their gradual promotions in public and private organizations and non-availability of males for appointment as head for particular fields made human resource management to look into possible appointment of highly qualified females to management posts. In spite of efficient performance and increase in finance, production and marketing of female owned /managed organization there remain a question in the mind of many employers that how women manager can overcome particular traits necessary and important condition for particular job, is there any difference between public and private organization.

Objectives of the Study

Broadly, the objective of the study is to critically analyze the current perception toward women leadership of our country. The specific objectives are given below:

- To investigate the social mindset about women leadership in organization.
- To explore the experience of women in leadership position of different public and private organization.

- To have an idea about how employees working with women leaders perceive women leadership.

- To explore women leaders perception regarding the situation.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Now we can find in literature lots of researches related to attitude towards women in general as well as in job and at managerial position, of male and female students, professionals, colleagues etc. The results were both positive as well as negative.

In the writing of Guney, Gohar, Akinci, and Akinci (2006) we come across the work of Dubno (1985) and Papalexandris and Bourantas (1991), who found that male MBA students had more negative attitude towards women managers than female students over the period 1975-1983 and there was no major change in their views in these eight years. Similarly Willemsen (2002) found that Netherland management students related more male traits as compared to female traits with successful manager

As mentioned in Welle and Heilma (n.d) that Heilman (2001) attribute gender discrimination in work setting to the ―lack of fit modell. Further Bielby and Baron (1986) consider that in certain institutions there is high percentage of one particular sex. Similarly Lips (2003), documents that one can observe more female nurses and male engineers as compared to male nurses and female engineers respectively. Hence there are certain jobs which require masculine traits, therefore dominated by males while those require female characteristics are dominated by females (Cejka &Eagly, 1999).

Earlier it was also revealed through research of Heilman, Martell and Simon, (1988) that even when females are well qualified and are fit for certain management post still males are considered as fit for the same and it is believed that they would be able to execute that task more successfully than females. Welle and Heilma also communicate that Davison and Burke (2000) consider that in selection procedure of certain male type jobs, males are more in the favorable position than females. Moreover several women on senior position believe that ―social exclusionll is one of the hindrances in promotion of females (Catalyst, 2004).

Although a lot of apparent and non-observable negative attitude towards women as a manager prevails still the numbers of women in managerial positions are increasing day by day and women are able to set themselves whether it is their own business or a hired managerial position. Women are functioning at these senior positions successfully. The overall context shows that women in the organization are not getting equal privilege as men working in the public and different private organization according to the previous researches.

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of study, a descriptive research design is adopted. This study is based on the information collected from both primary and secondary sources.

Population and Sampling Design

The targeted population of the study was 15 private and 10 public organizations which comprised of mid-level and top level employees and managers of both male and female. A convenience sampling techniques was used to collect responses against questionnaire. A total enumeration sampling technique was used to select 100 personnel who could provide response to a structured questionnaire design to solicit their views about the perception towards women leadership in Bangladesh. 50 employees from selected 10 public organizations and 50 from selected 15 private organizations were contacted.

40 female employees of leading position, and 30 employees including male and female having work experiences with the female leader were targeted sample. However, following table shows how sample were selected:

Table 1. Sampling Profile

Respondents	Public Org.	Private Org.	Total
Female employees hold leading position	20	20	40
Employees (Male+ Female) with experiences to work with the female leader	30	30	60
Total =			100

Data Collection Tool

The response choice scoring weights were strongly agree-5 points, Agree-4 points, Neutral-3, Disagree-2 points and strongly disagree-1 point. Quantitative and qualitative information related to perception towards women leadership was developed through the analytical scanning effort. Secondary data have been collected from various research papers, books, company job evaluation book, company job analysis sheet, yearly performance appraisal & Internet browsing.

Analytical Approach

For statistical analysis mean and Standard Deviation along with T-test were calculated and used to compare the range of perception between public and private organization through the employment of statistical tools i.e. MS Excel sheet and SPSS.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The objective of this research is to project the perception of the population about women leadership in different public and private organizations. This study extracts a dynamic scenario of the social contest of women leaders between public and private organization.

Firstly, the perception of the female employees hold leading position about the contemporary social belief about women leadership is discussed with relevant factorial causation. Then the perception of superiors and the subordinates are presented respectively in the next two following chapters. Here, mean of the responses indicated the concentration of the responses. Mean indicates the tendency of the population response. Standard deviation explains the inconsistency of the responses and here it describes the strength of the tendency projected in the mean of the responses. Percentage helps to project the range of perception.

Perception of Female employees hold leading position

Here the selected 40 female employees who hold a leading position of different public and private organizations have been interviewed in details to have a closer look in their social experience and their belief about the women Leadership. Here, findings are given from their mentionable point they gave to explain their feelings.

Table 2. Perception of Female employees hold leading position

No.	Public	Private
1	Perception about male workers acceptance of women as leaders is not yet positive always	Women believe that tendency of Women leaders to face challenges than men in the workplace is significant now.
2	Family cannot be the hinder for being in a leading position now	Women leaders are more practical regarding decision making than being emotional.
3	Women are in the top position because of capabilities to be in the managerial position.	Acceptance of women in key managerial position is increasing.
4	Male superiors are not always cooperative to the female managers	Women are competent and strategic to accomplish organizational goals and creating recognized example now.
5	Still some women feel safe to work with female rather male colleague.	Women leaders are now highly to adapt with new technology
6	Mind Set of society is changing reading women leaders	Male employees are now more cooperative to women leader than ever before

The female respondents have more positive views about women leadership. Overall existing attitude towards women leadership in Public and private organization in Bangladesh is positive.

But, the view is not consistent. So, it can be asserted from the interpretation of the data that the population lack experience of example of good women leadership or the extent of contribution in this sector is not yet recognized in full exposure.

Perception of the Employees (Male+ Female) to the female leader and comparison between Public and Private organization Regarding Women Leadership

The employees with experience of working with female leaders have expressed their views in response to the close ended 20 questions. Here the selected 30 employees of different public organizations and 30 employees of different private organizations were given questionnaire. On the basis of the descriptive of the data interpretation of the responses have been presented. For statistical analysis t test is applied, which indicates that there is no significant difference between public and private organizations in their perceptions towards women leaders in Bangladesh.

Table 3. Descriptive and Inferential Statistics of Employees (Male+ Female) to the female leader

no	Statements	Org	Mean	S.D.	t-statistic (for Equality of Means)	df	S.E.D.	P-value	Comment
1	Women leaders are less likely to face challenges than men in the workplace.	Public	3	7.80	0.0524	58	1.909	0.9584	Insignificant
		Private	2.9	6.96					
2	Women leaders are more emotional regarding decision making.	Public	3.13	8.05	0.0478	58	2.090	0.9620	Insignificant
		Private	3.03	8.14					
3	Women are less empowered than men in decision making.	Public	3.3	8.84	0.3233	58	1.949	0.7476	Insignificant
		Private	2.67	5.98					
4	Acceptance of women in key managerial position is increasing.	Public	3.2	8.65	0.1799	58	2.780	0.8579	Insignificant
		Private	3.7	12.53					
5	Leadership by women is being highly recognized in the society.	Public	2.87	6.45	0.1646	58	1.823	0.8698	Insignificant
		Private	3.17	7.62					
6	Women are no longer sacrificing their femininity to be a leader.	Public	3.03	7.50	0.0858	58	1.982	0.9319	Insignificant
		Private	3.2	7.85					
7	Women leaders are more concerned about maintaining rules and regulation in the organization.	Public	3.3	8.65	0.0585	58	2.222	0.9535	Insignificant
		Private	3.17	8.56					

					S.E.D				
8	Women leaders are more influential to make a job done by others.	Public	3.07	7.80	0.0000	58	1.931	1.0000	Insignificant
		Private	3.07	7.14					
9	Women leadership ensures friendlier employer employee relationship.	Public	3	7.35	1.8475	58	2.355	0.0698	Significant
		Private	3.27	10.27					
10	Women leaders are more likely to practice democratic leadership style	Public	2.97	7.39	0.1142	58	2.014	0.9095	Insignificant
		Private	3.2	8.19					
11	Women leaders are well-known by their public speaking ability.	Public	3.33	9.77	0.0419	58	2.385	0.9667	Insignificant
		Private	3.23	8.67					
12	Women have the required capabilities to be in the managerial position.	Public	2.94	8.19	0.1431	58	2.307	0.8867	Insignificant
		Private	3.27	9.62					
13	Women are less competent to accomplish organizational goals.	Public	2.63	6.57	0.0361	58	1.662	0.9713	Insignificant
		Private	2.57	6.30					
14	Women leaders face more conflicting issues while planning for the career and family.	Public	3.9	11.62	0.0787	58	3.431	0.9375	Insignificant
		Private	4.17	14.77					
15	Women have less controlling power over their subordinates than men.	Public	2.9	6.95	0.1210	58	1.901	0.9041	Insignificant
		Private	3.13	7.75					
16	Under women supervision discriminatory treatment are less common.	Public	3.23	8.18	0.1040	58	2.211	0.9175	Insignificant
		Private	3	8.93					
17	Women are more inclined to maintain professional network	Public	3.18	7.71	0.0244	58	2.048	0.9806	Insignificant
		Private	3.13	8.15					
18	Women leaders are more compassionate towards their employees.	Public	3	7.29	0.0482	58	2.075	0.9617	Insignificant
		Private	2.9	8.72					
19	The sense of motivation among employees under women supervision is greater.	Public	3	8.39	0.0316	58	2.212	0.9749	Insignificant
		Private	2.93	8.74					
20	Women leaders are less likely to adapt with technology.	Public	3.2	9.21	0.1709	58	2.165	0.8649	Insignificant
		Private	2.83	7.47					

*S.D=Standard Deviation, S.E.D=Standard Error Differences

In the table 3, It is obvious from mean differences that there is an insignificant difference of perception towards women as leaders between public and private employees. However, significant difference was noted in the perception of ensuring a friendlier employer- employee relationship in the work place. In present study attitude towards women managers is neither positive nor negative.

As mentioned earlier, objective of the study was to determine gender difference in perception towards women as leaders in the public and private organizations where women were the managers or administrators. Our formulated hypothesis was that —Perception towards women in managerial position would be different of public and private organization's employees. Results of the study clearly indicate that our hypothesis was not proved. It is clear from the above Table that both public and private organization's employees do not differ in their perception towards women as leaders.

CONCLUSIONS

There is shift in the status of women in Bangladesh in last two decades. Existing female leaders in public and private organizations in Bangladesh believe that acceptability as leader mostly is determined by the qualification, not gender. In Bangladesh women role is now taking different form and they are now becoming active in male dominant professions. In rural areas too they are working alongside with males. The purpose of the research was to determine difference of Public and Private Organization in perception towards women as leader in Bangladesh. From results we can conclude that in Bangladesh women enjoy respectable position and both Public and Private organization has neutral perception towards women in leading position.

REFERENCES

B. Welle and M. E. Heilman, (2001) —Formal and informal discrimination against women at work: the role of gender stereotypes, working paper, Center for Public Leadership, pp. 23-40.

H. K. Davison and M. J. Burke, (2000) —Sex discrimination in simulated employment contexts: A Meta-analytic investigation, Journal of Vocational Behavior, vol. 56, pp. 225-248.

H. M. Lips, (2003) —The gender pay gap: concrete indicator of women's progress toward equality, Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 87-109.

M. A. Cejka and A. H. Eagly, (1999) —Gender-stereotypic images of occupations correspond to the sex-segregation of employment, Sex Roles, vol. 25, pp. 413-423.

M. E. Heilman, (2001) —Description and prescription: How gender stereotypes prevent women's ascent up the organizational Ladder, Journal of Social Issues, vol. 57, pp. 657-674.

M. E. Heilman, R. F. Martell, and M. C. Simon, (1988) —The Vagaries of sex bias: Conditions regulating the undervaluation, equivaluation, and overvaluation of female job applicants, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, vol. 41, pp. 98-110.

N. Papalexandris and D. Bourantas, (1991) —Attitudes toward women as managers: the case of Greece, International Journal of Human Resource Management, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 133-148.

P. Dubno, (1985) —Attitudes toward women executives: a longitudinal approach, Academy of Management Journal, vol. 28 no. 1, pp. 235-239

P. R. Gerkovich, (2004) Women and Men in U.S. Corporate Leadership: Same Workplace Different Realities? New York: Catalyst.

S. Güney, R. Gohar, S. K. Akıncı, and M. M. Akıncı, (November 2006) —Attitudes toward women managers in Turkey and Pakistan, Journal of International Women's Studies, vol. 8, no. 1, pp. 194-211.

T. T. Herbert and E. B. Yost, (Spring 1978.) —Women as effective managers a strategic model for overcoming the barriers, Human Resource Management, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 18–25.

T. M. Willemsen,(June 2002) —Gender Typing of the successful manager—A stereotype reconsidered, Sex Roles, vol. 46, no. 11/12.

Uzma Ali, (June 2013) Attitudes toward Women in Managerial Position: A Comparative Study, International Journal of Information and Education Technology, Vol. 3, No. 3.

W. T. Bielby and J. N. Baron, (1986) —Men and women at work: Sex segregation and statistical discrimination, American Journal of Sociology, vol. 91, pp. 739-799.

APPENDIX: QUESTIONNAIRE

Perception towards Women Leadership in Bangladesh: A Comparative Study between Public and Private Sector

Designation:

Organization: Public / Private

Period of service under female leader:

Tenure of service act in leader scale:

No.	Particulars	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neutral (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1.	Women leaders are less likely to face challenges than men in the workplace.					
2.	Women leaders are more emotional regarding decision making.					
3.	Women are less empowered than men in decision making.					
4.	Acceptance of women in key managerial position is increasing.					
5.	Leadership by women is being highly recognized in the society.					

6.	Women are no longer sacrificing their femininity to be a leader.				
7.	Women leaders are more concerned about maintaining rules and regulation in the organization.				
8.	Women leaders are more influential to make a job done by others.				
9.	Women leadership ensures friendlier employer employee relationship.				
10.	Women leaders are more likely to practice democratic leadership style.				
11.	Women leaders are well-known by their public speaking ability.				
12.	Women have the required capabilities to be in the managerial position.				
13.	Women are less competent to accomplish organizational goals.				
14	Women leaders face more conflicting issues while planning for the career and family.				
15.	Women have less controlling power over their subordinates than men.				
16.	Under women supervision discriminatory treatment are less common.				
17.	Women are more inclined to maintain professional network.				
18.	Women leaders are more compassionate towards their employees.				
19.	The sense of motivation among employees under women supervision is greater.				
20.	Women leaders are less likely to adapt with technology.				