

# The Determinant of Women Self leadership among Generation X and Y

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## **Abstract**

Most organization suffers from the shortage of leadership personnel as retirement of baby-boomers are increasing the remaining are generation X and Y. However the women those are competent enough to be the candidate with their outstanding performance still faces a strong setback due to the unseen barriers and this may vary with generations. The overall purpose to carry out this research was to identify and propose a conceptual model for the determinants of women self leadership among generation X and Y. It is crucial to study on how the determinants will influence the women self leadership, as well as to the different generations. The different determinants focused on the Capabilities, Family Influence, Self-efficacy and Masculinity-Femininity. Base from the literature review this current study found a gap which is generations as a moderating effect between capabilities, family influence, self-efficacy and masculinity-femininity that influence women's self leadership.

**Key words:** Capabilities, Family Influence, Self-Efficacy, Masculinity-Femininity, Women, Self Leadership, Generation X, Generation Y

## **1.0 Introduction**

Based on the pyramid from Catalyst, only 4.8% women represent company as CEOs in Fortune 500 companies and overall 16.9% of them are in the seats on the board of directors (Catalyst, 2014). Even with an exceptional records with more than 50% number of women increases in working industry (Silverstein & Sayre, 2009), why there is no increases in number of women in the managerial position? Despite with the commitment and achievement such as improved company performance, women still remain behind in the leadership compared to men (Beeson & Valerio, 2012).

Narrowing down to Malaysia, according to Minister in the Prime Minister's Department and Chief Executive Officer of the Performance Management and Delivery Unit (Pemandu) Datuk Seri Idris Jala said the government wants to see the number of women in decision-making positions improve from 24% to 30% by 2016 (Bernama, 2014). Indirectly it still implicating the low number of women involvement in being a leader when there is more than 52.4% participation in workforce are women and he hope to increase the number of participation to 55%. So based on ratio analysis even though, government want to increase the participation of women leader to 30% but with the increase of participation of women in workforce to 55% also yields the similar result on lack of representation women in leadership position. Even in Malaysia Cabinet itself, there are only 12.9% women in ministries and deputy ministries positions, which is 8 out of 62 positions is seated by women (Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia, 2014).

Based on survey by McKinsey & Company (2012) on gender diversity in the workplace, Malaysia and other Asia countries has proven to fail to tap its huge pool of talented women – an oversight that could impact companies' growth aspirations given the acute talent shortage in the region (Figure 1 in appendix). It shows even though there is half a number of graduates, 57%, is female in Malaysia, the number becomes lower and representation of female in leadership is lower up to senior levels of corporations. Only a small number makes it to the middle management, let alone the top. Generally, the proportion of women decreases at each level of the hierarchy. The visibility of women decreases with the increases of the hierarchy in management as most decided to leave or because they have become stuck at a more junior level (Figure 2). This amounts to a considerable waste of talent since women is account for more than half of graduates (Ashari, 2012).

According to information that is provided from several IPTA's and IPTS' in Malaysia, Chancellor, as the top position of the universities and colleges is often being offered to men. Therefore in Figure 3, a summarized table from the information that is extract from 10 different universities and colleges in Malaysia to see whether does this implicate the educational institutions. The number of involvement is purely based on the number based on the organization chart of the education institutions that they provided in their universities' homepages. The summary shows that the average involvement of women in the leadership position in the universities is less than 25% whilst the highest percentage still remain less than half which is 40.91% from the overall number of position offered.

From the above information, women involvement is being question on what is actually the determinant of the women in leadership. Is it determinant by management depending on the women's self leadership skills or is it just purely select based on the objective to fulfil the invisible quota between number men and women that organization has already set? Even though, it has repeatedly concluded by researchers that despite having a good fundamental of skills and the right self leadership in women, women remain as stuck and hindered from the leadership position. Generation also play a huge determinant of the self-leadership in a person. The huge impact of the generation gap on determining a person's traits is being outline (United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, n.d). For example generation X is independent but they often view this world especially the authority with distrust. They are bought up as the shadow of the baby-boomers. Therefore even if they are more independent and has a stronger resilience, they are still obedient towards company and their job. Whereas for generation Y, they are portrayed as the next big generation which is powerful enough to make their own decision and has a strong self-confidence. They are more likely to be influence to win and empower others and greatly drawn to their family and its influence. Therefore with this difference, a gender gap will also help to determine the self-leadership in someone. Through this research gap that is still have an unfounded result, we can determine whether the generational gap will affect a woman's self leadership. If yes, we will be able to compare and contrast the result and determine which generation has higher self-leadership compared to the other generation.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Capabilities**

Capabilities are one of the most important factors that increase the degree of women's self leadership in an organization (Tikly & Barrett, 2011). Capabilities are explained as potential functioning that are endless. Capabilities involved a high simply skills in a narrow sense besides opportunity and freedom for a person to change anything she may have at her disposal such as resources into accomplishment of dissimilar kind. In order to accomplish some objectives or to satisfy some needs, an individual required a group. Basically it needs a certain administration level as well as persuasive capability to lead and manage a group to achieve a common goal. Therefore capabilities to gather and manage people around an objective are important for a leader. (Katkak, 2013)

Besides that, argument on women involvement in management field was raised (Shahtalebia, Yarmohammadian, & Ajamic, 2011). This is because women's has unique capabilities and poss. Leadership and needs of sensitivity are much accepted by the organization. In recent times, more and more women have emerged internationally as a successful leader. This development significantly shows a good representation for world leadership in which it can be interpreted as an enormous movement towards equal opportunities and the public abilities to overwhelm discrimination against women abilities to lead and rule an organization.

Leadership is not only about putting a position of authority over a group of people (Vries & Korotov, 2010). There are a few abilities and qualities that have identified women as a leader (Naqvi, 2011). These includes women's ability to network better among their working colleagues, ability to better recognize and perceive situations, ability to perform more than one

given task, ability to behave in a more gender-neutral behaviour, ability to request information's form others that leads to a greater degree of belief, self-image and esteem for ideas and possesses a stronger sense of commitment, dedication and also loyalty to their organizations. Not only that, they are capable in managing any critical situation that happens in the organizations.

Capabilities are significantly influence women's involvement in the leadership (Naqvi, 2011). They are capable to focus and organize in managing more than one task given in an organization. They are able to form a good communication among their colleague and also are able to understand and perceive situations. Therefore, it is believed that capabilities directly influence women's involvement in leadership.

There are a few classification of women leadership's performance (Prime, Carter, & Welbourne, 2009). Women are supportive in solving any issues that arise as they encourages, assist and provides resources for others. They are also capable of providing recognition, compliments and financial rewards at the right time and act as mentors by facilitating the skill enhancement and career development of their inferiors. Women's has a strong networking as they widen and maintains their relationship with others who may give information or even support resources. There is a significant relationship whereby capable women have significantly influence their self-leadership.

H1: There will be a significant relationship between capabilities and women self leadership

## **2.2 Influence of Family Members**

In various studies, women leaders that have been interviewed emphasized that their family support is important in making it to the top (Cheung & Halpen, 2010). The supportive husbands were reported to take on a substantial share in housework and also provided emotional support and encouragement to their wives. They are able to help those women to generate a sense of high self-leadership in themselves. A study from Kawahara, Esnil, and Hsu (2007) stated that from the interview of 12 Asian American women leaders who were considered to be high achievers, they have mentioned that the supports from family and partner were recognized as playing an important role in their achievement (Cheung & Halpen, 2010).

Family members playing an important role that influence a leader in forming their goals and values that associated with leadership (Arvey, Avolio, Zhang & Krueger, 2007). The individuals who have parents in leadership roles as well as a family environment will possess leadership potential and more conducive to develop their leadership acumen. Standford-Blair and Dickmann (2005) (Arvey, Avolio, Zhang & Krueger, 2007) summarized the interviews of 36 leaders nominated for their effectiveness. The research found that, parents and other family members as being very influential for their ascendance into leadership role which include their leadership styles and values. Popper and Maysless (2003) (Arvey, Avolio, Zhang & Krueger, 2007) encouraged that parents should take responsibility to turn their selves as a role models for their children to follow them in the same way that transformational leaders do with their

followers in an organization. Such parents should give the challenges and support to their children to build toward success, help them to develop their self efficacy for leading people and promote a higher set of beliefs and values.

An individual who lived in the higher parental support family or lower conflict with parents have high opportunities to become a leader in the workplace (Zhang, Ilies & Arvey, 2009). The parental supports direct influence the heritability of leadership emergence. The harmonious family environments with interpersonal conflicts may let individuals get nutrients for the realization of genetic differences in leadership capacities. From this experience, individuals have high ability in managing conflicts or crisis which is important for leadership. From the study, an individual will fully develop their genetic potential when they have the high parental support in adolescence. Individuals will be more efficiently capitalized on future leadership opportunities in life because the family environment will help to promote the skill development.

The leadership styles have a relationship with the family communication patterns which link to individual's personal development. According to Huang, (1999) (Prasitthipab, 2008), parental supportiveness of children's autonomy and the mutual enjoyment of free and open communication in the family rather than intellectual or conceptual discourse. Besides, according to Hackman & Johnson (2004) (Prasitthipab, 2008), the study conclude that family communication patterns also will influence the children's cognitive processes which serves as attributes that help to enhance the leadership potential. Parents have to try to listen to their children's opinions and expect them to be obedient.

More so, parents should try to explain to their children to let them follow the family's rules and believe in their parent's decisions. This study intended to emphasize that communication is a critical process in the family and in individual's development, and that it can predict a people leadership styles in the future. Individuals who are from conversation-oriented families tended to self-disclose, to have high self-esteem, to take leadership roles and to be more sociable. Therefore, a democratic leader who performs the interactive communication behaviours will be form (Prasitthipab, 2008). A high influence form family helps to generate a high sense of self-leadership in women.

H2: There is a significant relationship between family influence and women self – leadership

### **2.3 Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy refers to belief that individual has the personal capability and resources to produce a desired effect by individual action (Bandura, 1997). According to Maddux (2002), self-efficacy beliefs develop over time and it is also developed by experiences. For example, after negative stereotype activation, women who reported high leadership efficacy demonstrated heightened performance, greater domain identification, and increased well-being relative to those who reported low self-efficacy (Hoyt, Aguilar, Kaiser, Blascovich & Lee, 2006) . People with high self-efficacy are more likely to overcome difficulties through self-initiated change, more likely to be goal-directed and more persistent in the achievement of that goal (Maddux, 2002).

People with general self-efficacy tend to deal more effectively with difficulties and they may also be more confident in their fundamental abilities to cope, perform, and be successful (Cordery & Burr, 2005). Individuals with general self-efficacy attribute success to ability and failure to insufficient effort (DeRue and Morgeson, 2007). Ultimately, self-efficacy is important because it assesses the role of one's self-beliefs as it plays into the context of behaviour (Stage, 1996). Additionally, self-efficacy increased academic achievement. A person with strong self-efficacy, when faced with task failure and frustrations, is more likely to recover quickly and find a way to solve problem (Lent. Brown & Larking, 1984) . Various self-leadership studies identify specific task self-efficacy as a construct influential in the use of self-leadership strategies (Prussia, Anderson & Manz, 1998). It is concluded that leader self-efficacy, "may be one of the most active ingredients in successful leadership, and team performance" and that it "clearly contributes to leadership effectiveness" (Chemers, Watson & May, 2000).

Self-efficacy helps to explain the behaviours people will engage, how long they will persist, and how much effort they will expand to reach their goals (Satterfield & Davidson, 2000). In a study it has proposed that self-efficacy approach to increase understanding of women's career development (Hackett and Betz, 1981). According to the authors, "the lack of behaviours that would facilitate women's pursuit of and achievements in careers correspondent with their individual capabilities and talents is postulated to be due to the lack of strong expectations of personal efficacy in relation to career-related behaviours". This would indicate that self-efficacy level may have an indirect effect on women's career development.

Conceptually, general self-efficacy may influence self-leadership (Neck & Houghton, 2006). Since there are extensive researches results suggesting that the more confident the one has, the individual can perform an activity successfully and the more likely it is that one are willing to take part in the activity (Maurer, 2001). There is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and self-leadership.

H3: There will be a significant relationship between general self-efficacy and women self-leadership.

## **2.4 Masculinity-Femininity**

Masculinity is defined as the beliefs people have towards the extent to which they possess masculine traits that are associated with men in gender stereotypes (Eagly, Wood & Diekmann, 2000). As compared to women, men have masculine characteristics are dominant. Men act more as leader and have leadership abilities such as a high self-confident, independent and competitiveness (Fernandez & Coello, 2010). Therefore, a person that possess a high masculinity trait also possess a high leadership skills. Whilst femininity is defined as the beliefs people have towards the extent to which they possess feminine traits that are associated with women in gender stereotypes (Eagly et al., 2000). According to Bem Sex Role Inventory (BRSI), feminine characteristics consist of love children, warm, gentle, shy and others (Colley, Mulhern, Maltby & Wood, 2009).

Femininity and masculinity or one's gender identity refers to the degree persons see themselves as masculine or feminine given what it means to be a man or woman in a society. The gender stereotype of women as warm and caring and the corresponding stereotype of men as cold and competitive may have contributed to a popular perception that women are less effective than men in leadership positions, although in fact they are equally effective. Gender bias contributes to women's self-leadership development. Therefore, women tend to be more dominant and pursue higher positions and indirectly they build their masculinity level in themselves. In a study made by Gershenoff and Foti (2003), company believe that women unable to lead as their gender are not as leader-like as men since men are perceived to possess a high masculinity in them (Soh & Leonardalli, 2012)

A person may label herself female, but instead of seeing herself in a stereotypical female manner such as being expressive, warm, and submissive (Ashmore, Del Boca, & Wohlers 1986), she may view herself in a somewhat stereotypically masculine fashion such as being somewhat instrumental, rational, and dominant. Based on the research conducted, women especially in elite executive positions tend to show characteristics that are masculine (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). This occurs especially when female leaders work in a company where the majorities of people are men. With the masculinity that is build in them by the environment, helps them in garnering a high self-leadership as they are more self-reliant and ambitious in their career.

Hence, it is believed that masculinity-femininity is likely lead to involvement of women in leadership. There is a significant relationship between masculinity-femininity and women involvement in leadership. Thus, the following hypothesis is formed and tested with a set of questions to help us generate result based on the level of their masculinity and their level of self-leadership in them to see the relationship between these variables.

H4: There is a significant relationship between masculinity-femininity and women involvement in leadership.

## **2.5 Women Self Leadership among Generations**

Many researches have been done on women's leadership, Bullough, & de Luque, 2014; Latu, Mast, Lammers, & Bombari, 2013; Stead, & Elliott, 2013). However there is not much research done comparing the women's leadership among different generations especially generation X and Y. This current research argue that the leadership style of older people better than young people leadership viewed from the perspective of management. Because older people are more experienced than younger people, that experience is an important factor in leadership development, although not all experience can be a good leader. Therefore based form the research, the determinants of women self leadership in this research which are capabilities, family influence, self-efficacy, masculinity-femininity, below hypothesis has been developed.

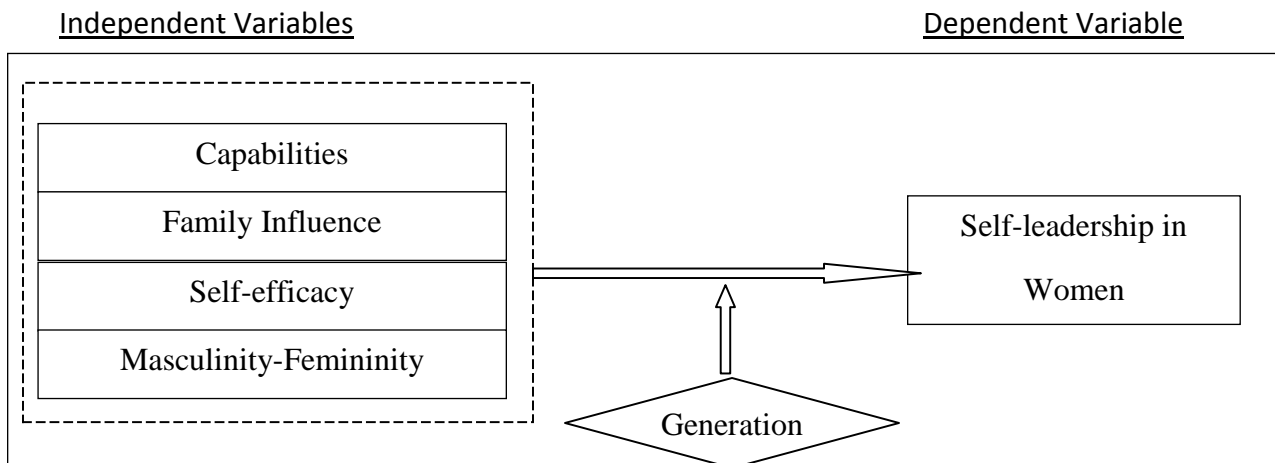
H5a: the positive relationship between capabilities would be stronger for generation X compared to Generation Y

H5b: the positive relationship between capabilities would be stronger for generation X compared to Generation Y

H5c: the positive relationship between capabilities would be stronger for generation X compared to Generation Y

H5d: the positive relationship between capabilities would be stronger for generation X compared to Generation Y

### 2.6 Proposed Framework



Source: Developed for research

### 3.0 Implication

This study discovered the theoretical intersection between capabilities, family influence, self-efficacy and masculinity-femininity that influence women’s leadership in a private university. It is hoped that this study may provide in a vision into the ways in which the determinant of women involvement in leadership based on their self-leadership. Therefore the importance of this study is to encourage and seek more women’s participation in higher position in an organization for instance CEO or managerial position. Women remain under-represented in top leadership position in work organization, in which reflects a variety of barriers that form a glass ceiling effect (Haslam & Ryan, 2008).

Besides that, the importance of this study is to involve and strengthen every woman in decision making process. This study its importance is to understand how women personality traits such as emotions, values and trends affect the leadership position. For an instance, women are capable to be a role model for the generation Y women or girls. There are a few role models and mentors for women to follow as there are good women leaders that are helps in company performance (Beeson & Valerio, 2012. This study enables to educate the others how to be as successful or even more by studying the determinants itself.



With the knowledge how different in generational difference, it directly helps the company to fully utilised and train the most suitable women candidate to become leader. For example, company can train and develop a higher self-leadership towards generation X if necessary. With this trait combining with the resilience and their independency, they may become a good leader. For generation Y, as mention above, a role model often plays a important part to influence them into becoming who they want in the future. Given a good women leader , they will tend to able to envision themselves as one and use their expertise as well as confidence to be a better leader.

It is important for the company and country to know that women able to contribute to the economy as well as men in terms of leadership. Talents and skills are all based on individual upbringing, educational as well as their own vision regardless of gender. For a company to discriminate or fail to recognize the talent, it is a waste for them as many women have repetitively contributed for the better change to organization as well as the world especially during severe shortage of senior managers in the country. Companies that fail to attract able women risk penalizing themselves by failing to attract the best talent possible. Ralph Norris, former CEO of Commonwealth Bank of Australia, has quoted that, "Women in leadership. It's just good business. There's no difference in leadership potential between women and men; making sure you can capture a better share of high-performing women is better for the organization." (Ashari, 2012).

Women in business claim that negative and misleading stereotypes about their ability persist and commonly result in evaluative bias and discrimination on their gender and prevent any economic opportunities (World Bank, 2010). Based on a study, women are being perceived as less hierarchical, more collaborative and cooperative and more focus in enrich others than man are therefore man are given more advantages in leadership position as it is more suits with their gender role to be competitive (Garcia-Retamaro & López-Zafra, 2006) . In addition female leader are more transformational than man. A good workplace must able to retain all this values in order to sustain and survive. A flexible and diverse mixture of leadership skills and styles that both women and men are able to bring forward can help the company in balancing any kind of ripples by the industry.

Lastly is to shape and strengthen women perception, expectation and experience of being a leader. Emergence for women as a leader is still constricted by the culture and remains as a barrier despite it is the 21st century (Soo & Leonardelli, 2012). Therefore this study will help to give a guideline for the undergraduate how to determine their own self leadership by developing their own strength through the determinants that is being researched as well as guide them into a better path in the future as the next leader that helps to lead economy in Malaysia despite of the culture here.

## **Conclusion**

Effective leadership is crucial for building up an effective workplace synergy and determines the overall development of the organization. Leaders are often the person that need to inspire and likewise with the employee. Therefore a position as a leader is crucial by determining the best

candidate possible. Unfortunately women are clearly seen in a very limited capacity by men nowadays. Therefore the importance of this study is to encourage and seek more women’s participation in higher position in an organization and also to identify the generation’s leadership’s strength. This current study found a gap which is generations as a moderating factor between capabilities, family influence, self-efficacy and masculinity-femininity that influence women’s self leadership for the proposed conceptual model.

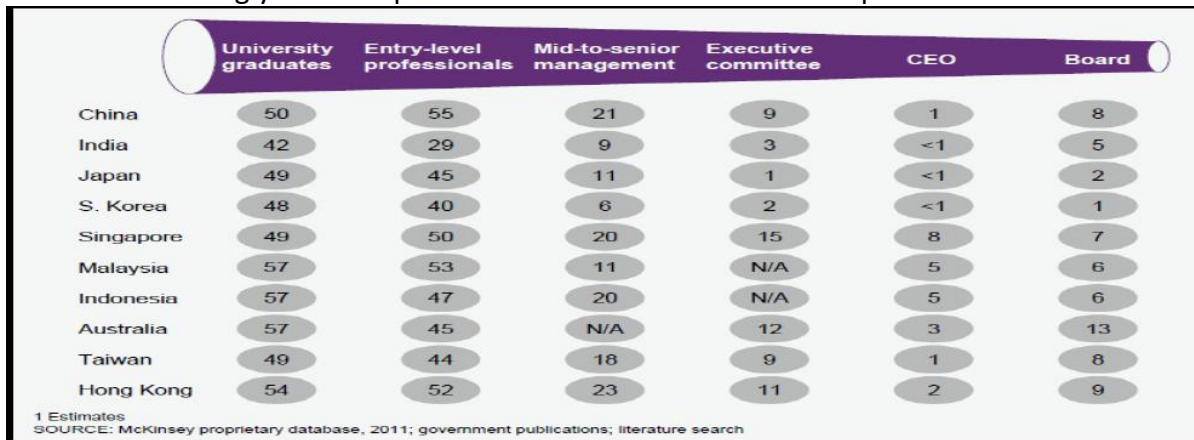
**Appendix**

Figure 1: Variations in the proportion of women in top positions across Asia 2011, Percent



Source: McKinsey’s Women Matter: An Asian Perspective, 2012

Figure 2 shows how women, even though they account for half of Malaysia’s graduate cohort, become increasingly under-represented at the senior levels of corporations



Source: McKinsey’s Women Matter: An Asian Perspective, 2012

Figure 3: Summary of participation of women in overall number if position involve in management

Name of institution	Number of top position offered	Number of women involve	Total percentage of women involvement
UKM	36	6	16.67%
UNIMAS	22	6	27.27%
USM	83	15	18.07%
UM	43	16	37.21%
UUM	75	18	24%
SEGI	22	9	40.91%
UTP	10	2	20%
UNITEN	33	8	24.24%
AIMST	8	0	NIL
Taylor	55	22	40%

Source: Developed for the research

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