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## Investigating the Employee Acceptance towards Women Leadership in Public Sector

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### Abstract

Most scholars had mentioned gaps that exist in the planning of women as leaders which result in women dropping out from advancing in an organization. The low number of female leaders in organisations has eroded employee trust in women's ability to lead an organisation. Women leaders are still struggling to obtain trust from employees to assume leadership positions in organizations. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the factors that contributed to the employee acceptance towards women leadership in the public sector. This study had applied quantitative approach and 198 questionnaires had been distributed to respondents who were attached with the Information Department of Malaysia (IDM), Hulu Selangor. The findings indicated that the main factors that contributed to employee acceptance among women leadership are perception, leadership style and glass ceiling with leadership style and perception being the most significant factor among all. The organization plays an important role in recognising women as leaders. There is a dearth of news that recognises and honours women leaders who devote their time and energy to help nations to develop. Hence, this study can increase public knowledge of how significance the role played by female leaders in improving the organization's performance.

**Keywords:** Employee Acceptance, Women Leaders, Public Sector, Perception, Glass Ceiling, Leadership Style.

### Introduction

Polemic women as leaders are a global issue. Although women are successful in higher education and hold at least a bachelor's degree from a university, there is a shortage in the number of women holding high positions in both the public and private sectors when they enter the workforce. According to Talent Corp (2017), despite the fact that the percentage of female graduates stands at about 60 percent, which is among the highest in Asia, women are still severely underrepresented in the top decision-making positions. Women leaders faced numerous challenges. For instance, they faced secular patriarchy, biases, and discrimination, which emerged from Muslim patriarchy due to Islamic laws, rulings, and ideology (Mokhtar,

2020). As such, Saidon et al (2019) found Malaysian women to strongly bond with the culture and customs of the East.

The cultural values and traditional restrictions favour men as leaders because it refers back to the society's identity, regardless of whether a woman holds a high position in an organization. This has raised concerns as to whether there is sufficient acceptance of women's leadership among people. This is because even the historical Malay studies such as Hikayat Seri Melayu Kelantan, Malay history, and genealogy have recorded and documented those men had a superior position to women in traditional Malay society. Basically, traditional cultures, religion, and patriarchal or male-dominated organisations have been barriers to women's leadership.

Additionally, it has been reported that there is a lack of public support for women's involvement in leadership (Saidon et al., 2019). The nature of the workforce, which values men more than women, has made women, especially leaders, come to realise that they have to fend for themselves to survive and advance their careers. This is since they generally have fewer opportunities in the first place to be involved in leadership in organizations. The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) (2021) has studied the gap between men and women across four sub-indices, namely, Political Empowerment; Health and Survival; Education Attainment; and Economic Participation and Opportunity in the Malaysia Gender Gap Index (MGGI). Based on Table 1, they found that although women dominate in Education Attainment, they lag behind men in other fields. In light of this matter, the government has introduced many programmes and policies related to women's empowerment to encourage women's contributions to the nation. However, the 30 percent quota policy for women in the labour force, introduced in both the public and private sectors, has been regarded as mentioned by Mokhtar (2020) as an "insult" to women. This is because the unbalanced ratio of 30:70 between women and men is a discrimination against gender.

Table 1

*The Score of the Malaysia Gender Gap Index (MGGI) between 2018 – 2020*

Sub-index	2018	2019	2020
Education Attainment	1.054	1.053	1.059
Health and Survival	0.958	0.958	0.956
Economic participation and opportunity	0.727	0.717	0.738
Political Empowerment	0.106	0.108	0.100
MGGI Score	0.711	0.709	0.714

### **Problem Statement**

In between female or male bosses, most of the gender still have a femininity leadership style because they are not just focusing on work but they are also pay attention and care on employees' life (Moreno et al., 2022). Female and male leaders are all human thus they are very sensitive with welfare of their employees. This finding was contrast with Burlacu (2013); Chow (2005) that between female and male leaders involved with emotional friction that give bad impact to the relationship of leader and follower as well as their working productivity. The level of employees' acceptance towards female and male bosses using femininity and masculinity perspective affected the leader to adjust their leadership style (Voicila et al., 2018). Appelbaum et al (2003) claimed that effective leadership is not exclusive domain to one gender but either female or male leader can learn from each other. Besides, female

approaches are not all likely lesser effective but female leader are more effective base on teamwork that is more relevant nowadays.

The scenario in the Information Department of Malaysia today out of sixteen top management in Putrajaya headquarter office there is only six female leaders. This shows that women leaders are struggle to break the monopoly of male leaders. Although the numbers achieved a target of 30 per cent of women in public sector but many challenges female leaders have to face. Szumanska and Rubin (2018) stated that negative inclination on female managers occurred in two situations; first; (a) remarking female managers as less appropriate for leadership position than male; and (b) negatively estimating female managers' behavior in possessing leadership role as contrary to the male managers' behavior in possessing the same leadership roles. According to Bass et. al (1971) mentioned that women in the organization are seeming as more emotional; less reliable; having less potential to be a leader; and lacking focus on their career. These reasons are in line with Baken (1966) stated that women are more concerned about others contrary with men who are perceived as more "agentic"; women are more emotional; and being extremely friendlier.

Gautam et.al (2021) stated that people's perception on women leadership are varies based on customs; economic status of the country; and culture. Brody et al (2014) reaffirmed that associated expectations and gender stereotyping are embedded in diverse cultures. Besides, people find that it is hard to accept as women are differ from gendered expectation in leadership roles. Women have to suffer a negative prejudice when they do things which are inconsistent with the female roles based on the role of congruity theory of prejudice (Eagly & Karau, 2002). All expectation challenges women have to face being a leader may discourage them to take part in leadership roles.

Thus, in the Information Department of Malaysia, women leaders are expecting to face challenges base on glass ceiling; leadership style; and perception. Employees may like or dislike women leaders' base on their observation. Employees' acceptance may differ from each other because they have different educational background; experiences; and opinion on women leaders. Therefore, this study intends to investigate the level of employee acceptance and factors that contributed to the employee acceptance towards women leadership in the public sector.

### **Literature Review**

The organization plays an important role in recognising women as leaders. There is a dearth of news that recognises and honours women leaders who devote their time and energy to help nations to develop. Therefore, this section will focus on the discussion that have been explored by various scholars related to the women leadership field.

### **Past Studies on Women Leadership in Malaysia**

Many previous studies offer solutions to the problem of women in leadership. Daim and Yunus (2021) mentioned that the Deputy Minister of Women, Family and Community Development, had told Dewan Rakyat that women in the government agencies in Malaysia holding at the decision-making positions at 38.2 per cent nowadays. Meanwhile, 25.8 per cent of women are represented as the board of directors (BOD) in the top of 100 public limited companies (PLC). About 15 per cent of 220 seats or 33 of women as members of parliament at the Dewan Rakyat with two seats still empty. Meanwhile, there are eight (8) women representatives out of 57 members, or 15 per cent of them in the Dewan Negara. In 2020, the Malaysian Gender Gap Index (MGGI) was released and according to the report stated that

there was a strong gap with a score of 0.108 out of the 1.0 for a full score in women's involvement in political empowerment. Mokhtar (2020), in his study had interviewed 31 women as participants from various ethnics in two sectors which is public and private sector. All participants exposed that joining a management career was not simply by chance. The preliminary point that opened up the opportunity for women to involve in the formal economy was the positive attitudes of their parents. Malaysian society accepted women's involvement in the public sphere because of the government's economic and social policies. In 2004, the Malaysian government announced a policy goal of 30% representation of women in public sector decision-making positions to empower women as leaders. Even in 2021 the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development has organized 178 programs, with 95,182 participants to realize its role in women's empowerment, especially in developing women as leaders. However, despite various initiatives and efforts, women in Malaysia still face challenges in terms of worklife balance, child care support, society perception and public stereotyping that constrain their progress to become leaders. In point of fact, previous study reported that women performed three times the amount of unpaid housework as men (Syafiqah, 2021).

Mokhtar (2020) also found that beliefs and values rooted in predominant culture were strongly influenced in the Malaysian situation of women entered in the workforce. The dominant culture is Malay-Islamic however due to political and historical factors; Malaysia is influenced by cultural patterns of multiplicity. During the British colonial era, the divide-and-rule policy had been introduced and it's resulted in the segregation of ethnic and economic in the society. The segregation made these three races live in different environments where Malay is mostly in rural agricultural areas; Chinese at urban areas; and Indian working and living in the rubber or palm-oil areas (Lewison, et al., 2016; Jomo, 2004). Each race with different cultural features to the upcoming employment and education of their daughters caused by the colonial legacy left in this country. It was found in other studies that educational achievements and childhood experiences were correspondingly critical in moulding women's career success (Basnet, 2022; Ismail et al., 2005). Women's early growing years of socialization have significant for the founding of ongoing attitudes that influenced their succeeding working experiences (Lawson et al., 2015; Krook and Norris, 2014).

Moorthy et al. (2022) found that Malay women strongly agreed that their career decisions were influenced by male dominance in the patriarchal Malaysian society. Malay women in this study had a good relationship with their parents who had strongly supportive of their careers. Their parents' support is influenced by both parents; a mother, or a father for many reasons and types of support. One of the Malay senior women who worked as a Chief Executive Officer at one of the GLC Companies mentioned that her mother was too strict however her mother gave spiritual strength, encouraged in her career development, and was proactive. Other women who worked in the public sector mentioned that her mother exemplified that having a career was significant to have a better future without being dependent on their spouse. Her mother's experiences of private patriarchy encouraged them to accomplish different experiences for their daughters. In contrast, Hirschman (2016) argued that Malaysian women were left burdened because they are controlled by men politically and socially. Malaysia as portrayed as one of the countries strongly familiarized with a patriarchal social system explained that a man as a leader is taking a role as the one who earns money to support their family. Consequently, it resulted in a few Malaysian women having a place in the workforce at those time. Thus, it gives stigma that women were dependent on their spouses financially for domestic expenses.

### ***Employee Acceptance Towards Women Leader***

Women as leaders are accepted when other employees and colleagues can provide support and do not expect these women leaders to meet standards, but instead see female leaders as part of the team and reward colleagues who meet the set goals. Litwin et al (2019) study the Attitudes towards Female Managers in Austrian and Macau Tourism Industry. By adopting the quantitative approach, the Women as Managers Survey (WAMS) has been distributed to 135 Austrian and 209 Macau hospitality employees. Findings reveal that employee acceptance towards female managers is more negative in Austria than in Macau, in terms of physical constraints, acceptance, ability, and leadership aspects. Litwin et al (2019) then mentioned several factors that could influence employee acceptance towards women leaders. For instance, the cultural dimension, national policies available to protect female workers, and the status of the hospitality industry are among the possible factors.

Next, the study by Moosa and Coetzee (2020) examined how women at a higher education institution in South Africa identify factors they perceive as affecting their advancement opportunities to leadership positions. The sample totaled 2000 female employees, consisting of those working in top management (1%), academic (44.1%), professional (15.4%), and administrative (39.5%) capacities. The sample has completed the Advancement Opportunities Questionnaire. The study revealed that women face obstacles to being accepted by their male counterparts. The obstacles include receiving a lack of recognition from male colleagues or managers, as well as facing cultural beliefs and gender stereotypes that generally deny women the approval they deserve. The persistence of negative stereotypes, discrimination, and the glass ceiling against women as managers is one of the widely examples that accepted explanation for the low number of female executives. Women who advance to managerial positions are subjected to further comparisons with their male counterparts in terms of leadership skills (Hejase et. al., 2013).

Additionally, Coetzee and Moosa (2020) study Leadership Contingencies in The Retention of Women in Higher Education. The qualitative approach was adopted, and a questionnaire was used to collect data. The sample consists of 2000 female employees from an academic institution in South Africa. Findings revealed that acceptance towards women strongly influences their preparedness to take up leadership roles. Besides, showing acceptance towards women leaders thus acknowledges their expertise and encourages them to grow, which has a direct impact on their retention.

### ***Glass Ceiling***

According to Krueger (2020), a glass ceiling is a phenomenon of an unbreakable barrier that few women can overcome. Although it is invisible, it appears to be real. Most studies have reported that there is a significant relationship between glass ceiling and the acceptance towards women leadership (Sever, 2016; Krueger, 2020; Adekoya, 2020). For instance, Sever (2016) reported that women, especially married women often suffer the effect of the glass ceiling syndrome more severe than men. Furthermore, Krueger (2020) through *The Glass Ceiling: Exploring the Leadership Journey of Men and Women in High-Tech* intends to gain insight into the factors that contributed to women being underrepresented in leadership roles and the ways some women have successfully challenged the glass ceiling. The sample consisted of ten executives, five of whom were men and five of whom were women. Findings show that women's paths to leadership, negative company cultures, and gender-based expectations have influenced the glass ceiling phenomenon. Therefore, it is essential for women to gain support from spouse and family in their ascension to leadership positions.

Next, the study by Adekoya (2020) investigates the opinions and attributes of Nigerian female librarians, breaking the glass ceiling that prevents them from reaching management positions in their respective libraries. The sample consists of 147 librarians from six federal university libraries in the south-west of Nigeria. The study found negative opinions on women librarians breaking the glass ceiling and occupying management positions in libraries. Although the extent of preparedness of women librarians for management positions is high, they are perceived to lack the necessary attributes and capabilities.

### ***Perception Against Women Leadership***

In general, studies have shown that there is a relationship between perception and employee acceptance towards women leaders. For instance, Hilal (2015) has reported that female employees and those who have female superior tend to have a more positive perception towards women leadership. Besides, McLaren et al (2019) in Indonesian Women in Public Service Leadership: A Rapid Review, has conducted a rapid assessment of 14 articles from nine studies. From the assessment, McLaren et al (2019) discovered that all nine studies agreed that women had fewer opportunities to advance to senior positions in academia, the corporate world, and public service than men, which then concluded that patriarchal organisational cultures were responsible. Additionally, they found that the perception of women as leaders in Indonesia can be concluded as lacking leadership capacity, being disliked when outspoken about gender inequality, and the presence of homo-sociability in senior management that broadly reinforced favouritism towards and a sense of comfort in having male leaders.

In contrast to McLaren et al.'s (2019) finding, Al-Salem and Speece (2017) in Women in Leadership in Kuwait: A Research Agenda, have found that it is relatively easy for women in Kuwait to move into managerial positions whenever the opportunities arise. However, Kuwait women did have to face social and cultural barriers, which have hindered their career advancement. Nevertheless, it has been acknowledged that Kuwait women and men possess the same levels of education and have equivalent ambitions and aspirations. Therefore, there should be no reason to say women cannot perform as well as men. Besides, as reported by Al-Salem and Speece (2017), once women achieve managerial positions, they have demonstrated that women, too, are effective and efficient managers, owing to their advanced education and strong sense of leadership.

Additionally, there are several studies conducted pertaining to Islam perception on women leadership (Bakri, 2020; Koburtay et al., 2022). The misunderstanding of women's leadership in Islam has become a barrier for women wanting to become leaders. However, there is actually nothing wrong with women's leadership in government as long as they have the capacity, knowledge, and skills. The issue of women's leadership is an issue of social function rather than religion. Religion does not control leadership issues technically, but only serves to provide morale and spirit. The hadith does not outright forbid a woman from wanting to lead the government, as demonstrated by the psycho-historical perspective used during the time of the Prophet Muhammad and the socio-cultural trends that were emerging at the time. Besides, Koburtay et al (2022) discovered that female leaders constantly make reference to what is permitted by religion, and as long as it didn't conflict with how they understood their faith, they wanted to be trusted and given authority in leadership roles. From these studies, it can be assumed that perception of employees towards women leaders does influence employee acceptance towards women leadership.

### Leadership Style

Basit et al (2017) has conducted a quantitative study through Impact of Leadership Style on Employee Performance: A Case Study on a Private Organization in Malaysia. By using the convenience sampling technique, questionnaire was given to 100 employees from one private organization in Selangor, Malaysia. Findings then revealed that there is a significant and positive impact of democratic and laissez-faire leadership styles on employee performance. While autocratic leadership discovered to have a negative significant impact on employee performance. A leader with democratic leadership styles often has the characteristic of being situation-centred, respecting, guiding, encouraging, good listeners, knowledgeable, helpful, and influential (Basit et al., 2017). Therefore, Malaysian leaders are encouraged to implement a democratic leadership style that encompasses team members in the decision-making process.

Next, the study by Mashele and Alagidede (2022) is done to explore appropriate leadership styles that women in senior leadership positions facing the glass cliff have at their disposal. The sample consists of 17 women in senior leadership positions, in corporate South Africa, selected using the purposive and snowball sampling. Findings revealed that participants preferred the transformational leadership style for its characteristics in which a transformational leaders could inspire followers to look beyond considerations of narrow self-interest and to work together for the interest of all. Additionally, this leadership style is preferred since it is the most effective approach in crises situations. However, instead of choosing only one style, women leaders believe that one can combine leadership style to achieve desired goals. Thus, they proposed women leaders to consolidate both the transformational and transactional leadership styles. To conclude, leadership style does influence the acceptance towards women leadership, with active leadership style (e.g., transformational, democratic and laissez-faire leadership style) is preferred more than passive leadership style.

### Conceptual Framework

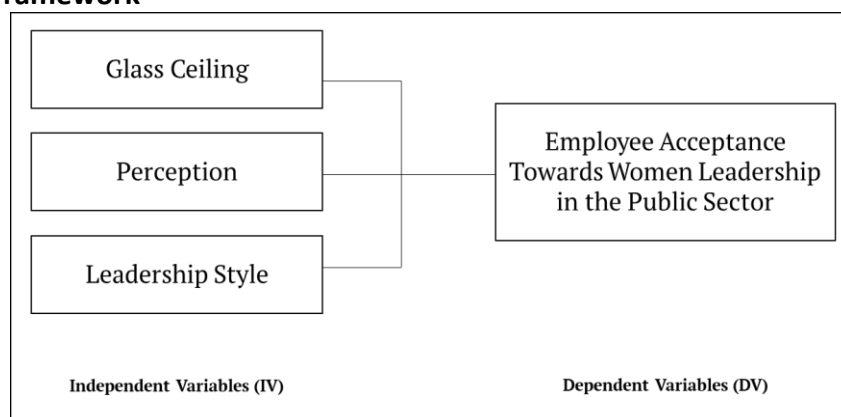


Figure 1: Research Conceptual Framework

Figure 1 above shows the conceptual framework that highlighted the independent variables that contributed to the employee acceptance towards women leadership in the public sector. The independent variables (IV) included in this study are glass ceiling, perception, and leadership style. While the dependent variable (DV), in this study is employee acceptance towards women leadership in the public sector. Those variables have been gathered through extensive literature particularly from Litwin et al (2019); Krueger (2020); McLaren et al (2019),



who have found that the variables have massive contribution towards women leadership in the organisation in their research settings.

### Method

This quantitative study is done to investigate the employee acceptance towards women leadership in the public sector. The unit of analysis in this study is employees who are working in the Information Department of Malaysia (IDM) in the Putrajaya office. The IDM has a 359 population. The questionnaires were distributed to the respondents through email and WhatsApp application. This study managed to have feedback from 198 out of 201 respondents.

The questionnaire consists of five parts. The first part which is Section A includes questions on demographic profile in particular, their gender, age, marital status, employment positions, working experience, level of education, and experience working with the female boss. While Section B has 7 items on glass ceiling (Bazazo, 2017). Followed by section C has 9 items on perception (Williams, 2019), section D has 7 items on leadership style (Ahmad Nahar et al., 2020), and lastly section E has 7 items on employee acceptance (Hejase, 2013). Those sections represented the variables that have been used in the study.

### Results and Discussion

#### Results

This section displays the interpretation of the data from the findings which have been obtained from 198 questionnaires that have been distributed to the respondents. Primarily, this study used Statistical Package Social Science (SPSS) computer programmed in order to analyse the data acquired from the questionnaires.

Table 2  
*Frequency Distribution*

Variable	Frequencies	Percentage
Gender		
Male	92	46.5
Female	106	53.5
Age		
21-30 years	13	6.6
31-40 years	110	55.6
41-50 years	52	26.3
51-60 years	23	11.6
Marital Status		
Single	30	15.2
Married	162	81.8
Divorced	6	3.0
Employment Status		
Management and Professional	88	44.4
Support Group 1	68	34.3
Support Group 2	42	21.2
Working Experience		
1-5 years	17	8.6

6-10 years	24	12.1
11-15 years	71	35.9
16-20 years	50	25.3
21-25 years	14	7.1
26 years and above	22	11.1
Level of Education		
SPM and equivalent	26	13.1
STPM and equivalent	22	11.1
Diploma	44	22.2
Bachelor Degree	71	35.9
Master Degree	33	16.7
PhD	2	1.0
Experience working with a female boss		
Yes	192	97.0
No	6	3.0

N= 198

Based on Table 2 above, it shows that there are 92 male respondents with 46.5% and 106 female respondents with 53.5% who participated in the study. It indicates that majority of the respondents are female. the frequency of respondent's age. Most of the respondents (n=110) are at the range of 31-40 years old, forming a percentage of 55.6%. Followed by 52 respondents from the range of 41-50 years old with a percentage of 26.3%. Additionally, there are 23 respondents from the age range of 51-60 years old with a percentage of 11.6%. Lastly, the age range of 21-30 years old, are at the lowest frequency with only 13 respondents, forming only 6.6%. These sums up to a total of 198 respondents.

Table 2 above also indicated that there are 162 married respondents with 81.8%. While there are 30 single respondents with 15.2% and 6 divorced respondents with a percentage of 3%. This shows that majority of the respondents are married. 88 respondents are in a management and professional position with 44.4%. While there are 68 respondents from the support group 1 position with 34.3% and 42 respondents from support group 2 position with a percentage of 21.2%. the majority of the respondents, i.e., n=71 (35.9%) had 11-15 years of working experiences, whilst the minority of the respondents, i.e., n=14 (7.1%) had 21-25 years of working experiences.

It has demonstrated that in Table 2, 50 respondents (25.3%) had 16-20 years of experience, followed by 24 respondents (12.1%) had 6-10 years of experience. 22 respondents, forming 11.1% had working experience of 26 years and above, while only 17 respondents (8.6%) had 1-5 years of working experiences. the frequency of education level. Most of the respondents (n=71) have a bachelor's degree, with a percentage of 35.9%. Followed by 44 respondents having diploma, with a percentage of 22.2%. Additionally, 33 respondents have master's degree (16.7%). While 26 respondents have SPM and equivalent (13.1%), followed by 22 respondents have STPM and equivalent (11.1%). Lastly, only 2 respondents or 1% of the sample have PhD. that there are 192 respondents with 97% who have worked with a female boss. While the other 6 respondents or 3% of the sample have not experience working with a female boss.

**Factor Analysis**

Table 3

*Factor Analysis*

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	
	Approximate Chi-Square	Sig
0.873	3431.831	0.000

Table 4 shows that the data is suitable to be run for further tests as the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity shows a significant level of 0.000, that is less than 0.05 and the KMO measure of sampling adequacy is 0.873 which had made a cut off above 0.50

**Reliability Analysis**

In this study, a reliability test has been conducted from 198 data collected to determine Cronbach's Alpha coefficient values for each variable tested. The results are shown in the table below

Table 4

*Reliability analysis*

Variable/construct	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Assumed
Glass Ceiling	11	0.625	Yes
Perception	9	0.933	Yes
Leadership Style	7	0.676	Yes
Employee Acceptance	7	0.787	Yes

Table 5 above shows the highest Cronbach's Alpha value is perception with 0.933 which indicates that it has a very good reliability and the data is considered reliable to the study. Meanwhile, the other Cronbach's Alpha value include employee acceptance with 0.787, leadership style with 0.676 and glass ceiling with 0.625. All of the variables mentioned indicate good reliability as according to Hair, et al (2016) range of Alpha Coefficient between 0.6 to 0.7 has a moderate strength of association and is acceptable. Therefore, all variables are considered reliable to the study.

**Testing for Normality**

Table 5

*Normality Test*

Variables	Skewness	Kurtosis
Glass Ceiling	0.643	1.804
Perception	-0.208	0.493
Leadership Style	-1.005	1.664
Employee Acceptance	-0.886	1.977

Table 6 shows the variables are normally distributed as the Skewness and Kurtosis are between -1 and 1. The dependent variable, i.e., employee acceptance, was normally distributed as its skewness value was -0.886 and its kurtosis value was 1.977. Three

independent variables show that they are normally distributed too. The glass ceiling variable has a skewness value of 0.643 and a kurtosis value of 0.804. Perception has a -0.208 value for skewness and a 0.493 value for kurtosis. Leadership style has a -1.005-skewness value and a 1.664 kurtosis value.

**Descriptive Analysis**

Table 6

*Level of employee acceptance towards women leadership*

	<b>Variable/construct</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>Level</b>
E1.	I can accept women leaders are independent and show more initiative than men in management.	4.04	0.796	High
E2.	I can accept women leaders who are selfish and not feminine.	2.40	1.208	Low
E3.	I can accept women leaders who are more hardworking, intelligent, and competent than men leaders.	4.31	0.707	Very high
E4.	I can accept women leaders have better managerial skills compared to men.	4.25	0.777	Very high
E5.	I can accept women leaders are more efficient and effective than men leaders.	4.08	0.889	High
E6.	I can accept women leaders who can balance between their home life and their work.	4.36	0.829	Very high
E7.	Women leaders have a longer concentration span than men leaders.	3.72	1.057	High
	<b>Total</b>	<b>3.8781</b>	<b>0.57799</b>	<b>High</b>

Table 8 above shows the total value towards the level of employee acceptance the mean is 3.8781 and a standard deviation is 0.57799. Therefore, the level of employee acceptance towards women leadership in the public sector is high. In fact, the other three statements show a very high level of employee acceptance which are: I can accept women leaders who are more hardworking, intelligent, and competent than men leaders; I can accept women leaders who have better managerial skills compared to men, and I can accept women leaders who can balance between their home life and their work. Meanwhile, there is one statement that shows a low level of acceptance. The statement is - I can accept women leaders who are selfish and not feminine. The rest of the statement shows a high level of employee acceptance.

Table 7

*Factors Contributed to Employee Acceptance towards Women Leadership*

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std deviation</b>
Glass ceiling (IV)	3.4288	0.47825
Perception (IV)	3.7374	0.53480
Leadership style (IV)	3.7374	0.77185

Table 7 above shows the independent variable, the glass ceiling had a mean value of 3.4288 and a standard deviation value is 0.47825 which is high for the glass ceiling. Perception had 3.7374 for mean value and 0.53480 for standard deviation. Thus, it means perception factor had a high contribution to the employee acceptance towards the women leadership in the organization. Meanwhile, the leadership style of women shows 3.7374 for mean and 0.77185 for standard deviation. Therefore, the findings indicated that the main factors that contributed to employee acceptance among women leadership are perception, leadership style and glass ceiling with leadership style and perception being the most significant factors among all.

### **Discussion**

As the study shown that the employee acceptance has a mean value of 3.8781 and the standard deviation is 0.57799 which reflected the high employee acceptance towards women leaders in the public sector. A statement of I can accept women leaders who are more hardworking, intelligent, and competent than men leaders resulted in the highest total value of agreeable which is 90.1%. It means employees acknowledge and can accept women leaders who are smart, capable, and more meticulous than men leaders. This situation can relate with the score of the Malaysia Gender Gap Index as mentioned in previous section that showed women are dominated in education attainment for three years consecutive. It means women are competent from schools until completed their studies at the tertiary education level. Moreover, women need to be hardworking and fit to achieve success in the university. Employee acceptance towards women leadership in the public sectors that focused on the aspects of the glass ceiling, perception, and leadership style could be applied to the organizations and to be considered by the policy-makers and leaders of non-governmental organizations. As such, there are several recommendations. Firstly, women leaders need to enhance their leadership skills. A leader should be one who is credible, dependable, inspiring, strategic, and so on. However, it is not easy to be a great leader. Therefore, this study suggests that every leader, especially female leaders, should polish their leadership skills. This is due to the belief that female leaders, in particular, are more susceptible to emotional control, which has shaped how society views female leaders. Therefore, in order to increase the credibility of women as leaders, leadership skills need to be learned, polished, and practiced by leaders. Attending training, seminars, dialogues, and reading good publications about leaders are among the ways that can be done to improve leadership skills and the ability to lead and manage others.

Furthermore, women leaders should be sensitive to employees' expectations. Employee expectations in organizations are always high. Employees demand that their welfare and security in the organization be taken care of by their leaders in the organizations. Thus, the relationship between employee and employer needs to be improved to meet both expectations, demands, and objectives of the organization. Thus, women leaders need to play important roles to be more sensitive and alert that employees' expectations are high. Both parties, women leaders, and employees, should cooperate to meet organizational requirements and work together in a better and more quality working environment. Women leaders are good as empathetic listeners; thus, they should apply or improved their communication skills to meet the expectations.

Moreover, organizations should reward potential women leaders. The organization whether it is a government or non-government organization plays an important role in recognizing

women as leaders. There is a dearth of news that recognizes and honours women leaders who devote their time and energy to help nations to develop. Thus, this study recommends that each organization have special awards to appreciate potential women leaders in their work in many disciplines or expertise. The impact of rewarding potential women leaders can make other women leaders proud and improve their morale. It is important to have mentors among women leaders so that other women leaders are inspired with recognition and appreciation.

Lastly, women leaders can become an aspiration for young women. We cannot deny that women leaders in any discipline or arena can be an aspiration for young women in higher learning institutions and schools. Datuk Pandelega Rinong in sports; Nurul Izzah Anwar as a politician; Datuk Siti Nurhaliza in the entertainment industry; Chef Anis Nabila in the culinary world; and Dr Amalina in the medical field are examples of well-known and well-known female leaders in their respective fields. Aspiration to young women can make these potential groups very passionate about achieving their future career goals. Thus, this study recommends that every successful woman leader speak her mind and provide aspiration and motivation to young women so that they have high ambitions to be successful and great leaders to the nation in the future.

### **Conclusions**

To sum up, employee acceptance towards women leadership in the public sector is highly accepted in the Information Department of Malaysia. At the same time, women leaders have a medium contribution on the glass ceiling situation because of more opportunities but high competition among other women leaders to be promoted at the top of organizations. However, women leaders are still respected and have chances to be promoted to senior management positions at the same rate as men. Employee acceptance towards women leadership in the public sector has a high perception from their employees. Trust issues, the need to work in a time change, and being seen to be bossy are bad perceptions among employees towards women leadership. However, the employee recognised that women leaders have high integrity towards their work. Employee in the organization has choose a factor of a leadership style and perception as a factors that contributed to their acceptance towards women leadership. Women who show appreciation towards team efforts are good listeners, participative, effective, and efficient in fulfilling the organization's requirements and promoting an atmosphere of teamwork, which are among the contributions made by women leaders in the organization.

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