

A Comparative Study Between Men And Women Managers' Management Style

RoZIAH Mohd Rasdi

Maimunah Ismail

Jegak Uli

Universiti Putra Malaysia

Abstract

Traditionally, men and women managers were characterized with different qualities. Men are always accorded with aggressiveness, competitiveness, and women are the opposite. Due to these attributes, men and women managers manage organizations differently. Studies on the differences between men and women managers in terms of their management style concluded that men managers are more inclined toward command-and-control style, whereas women managers are more inclined toward participative and relational style. However, the changing patterns of socialization and structural employment have given impact on the way men and women managers manage their organizations. Thus, this study aims to examine whether men and women managers are still inbound by their conventional management styles. Data were collected using Ministry Style Matrix of Berkley on a group of 124 men and 63 women managers of Malaysian public organizations.

Results indicate that men managers are most likely to practice commander style of management, followed by maintenance, shepherd and entrepreneur. On the other hand, women managers tend to portray the style of shepherd, entrepreneur, commander and maintenance, respectively. However, further analysis indicated that men managers are more heterogeneous in style, where most of them tend to practise commander management style. On the other hand, women managers are more homogenous in style, where the distribution of women managers who demonstrate commander, shepherd and entrepreneur managerial style are almost equal. Recommendations in relation to training and continuing education from a gender perspective are put forth.

Key words: *Men and women managers, gender, management style*

Introduction

Many researches show that men and women tend to manage differently according to their stereotype behaviour and conventional views of one's appropriate style. These researches indicated that men managers tended to command-and-control (Rosener, 1990), competitive and like to be seen as the decision-maker, often reluctant to discuss issues with their colleagues and staff (Flanders, 1994), directive and authoritative (Rigg and

Sparrow, 1994) and demonstrated task orientation (Park, 1996). On the other hand, women managers leaned toward transformational patterns using interpersonal skills (Rosener, 1990), actively instigate discussions with those involved in order to reach a consensus decision, and avoiding confrontation by the use of persuasion and compromise (Flanders, 1994), concern for and understanding of people (Johnson, 1995), seeking to develop them and adopting a participative approach (Rigg and Sparrow, 1994).

These researchers have pointed out that men and women managers are characterized with different qualities in managing organizations. However, ongoing debates have appeared in the management literature as to whether men and women managers really used different managerial styles. At the same time, (Ferrario, 1994; Wajcman, 1996; Vilkinas and Cartan, 1997; Vilkinas, 1998) concluded there are no differences in men and women managers' managerial styles. Their works have shaken the prior conclusion of gender differences in managerial style. Given the vast amount of researches concluding that gender differences do not exist, this study on gender differences was conducted using different sample and research instrument in order to validate the former argument.

Hence this study was primarily aimed to answer these two research questions: (i) Do men and women managers differ in their management style? (ii) If the differences do exist, what are the management styles of men and women managers? By comparing men and women in the same sample, this study avoids the polarizing male-female difference debate that is often associated with single sex studies. Theoretically, it will enhance knowledge regarding gender studies specifically in the field of management.

The Gendered Structure of Management

This section examines the underlying gender based norms that continue to pervade organizational life and management particularly. According to Maier (1999), the gendered management refers to embodied values, characteristics and qualities that more commonly associated with one sex than the other at a particular place and point of time. The distinction between socially constructed male and female, masculine and feminine, is not something people are, whether they are men or women, but it is the gender relations between men and women and something they do at work, and in this case in management. Therefore, gendered structure reflects and reinforces prevailing conceptions of masculinity and femininity. However, Acker (1992) suggested that gender may be deeply hidden in organizational processes and decisions that appear to have nothing to do with gender.

Historically, men have dominated the management positions in various sectors (Rigg and Sparrow, 1994; Powell, 1999: 1988; Davidson and Burke, 1994; Enomoto, 2000). Even recently, men sustain their dominance in the field and women remain underrepresented in management (Enomoto, 2000; Malaysia, 2001). Thus men define what it means to manage and lead organizations. Their assumptions, perceptions, beliefs and values have become the culture of managing organizations (Simons and Weissman, 1990; Flanders, 1994; Davidson and Burke, 1994, Enomoto, 2000). For instance, Stivers (1993) points out that the Weberian model of bureaucratic organization which excludes feeling and emphasizes instrumental rationality and official relations, does not match the culturally feminine characteristics.

The prevailing models of effective managers are premised on male notions and characteristics because masculine image has engenders the top hierarchy of management. According to Maier (1999), the perceptions of the successful manager fit the existing masculine stereotype. Accordingly, women qualities such as caring, participative, empathy, tend to approach conflict and problem solving in a more subjective manner become devalued under the gendered structure of management.

Maier (1999) and Stivers (1993) claimed that the gendered structure is further strengthened by gendered work environment, which provided by formal organizations. Organizations tend to expect employees to exhibit behaviour that is rational, autonomous, competitive, action oriented and hierarchical. As a result, women managers are faced with a dilemma, i.e. the fundamental dissonance between what is expected of them as women and what is expected of them as professional managers. It is not just that professional characteristics are culturally masculine but that in addition they give masculinity an advantage over femininity and depend on structural arrangements that make it difficult for women to meet professional expectations. As a result, women who become or aspire to become leaders in public agencies are faced with a complex task of self-definition. If they strive to display the expected characteristics, they risk being seen as masculine and may feel a certain amount of dissonance between their sense of themselves as women and what is expected of them as managers. On the other hand, if women attempt to embody and reflect a different image of leadership than the conventional one, they risk being viewed as unequal to the managerial role – as indecisive, soft and not assertive enough (Stivers, 1993).

However, recently, considerable attention has been paid to the possibility that women tend to approach management distinctively due to their different personal qualities and life experiences than men. These differences may benefit organizations and helping them achieve the greater flexibility required in an era of increasing complexity. From Stivers (1993) and Dobozy (2001) perspectives, the task is not to try and wipe out women's feminine qualities but to use them to enhance organizational effectiveness. Dobozy (2001) points out those common misconceptions are the stereotype belief that one's gender determines human traits and capabilities and the notion of superiority is due to one's gender. As women, they can never entirely break free from their own social construction. Therefore, in the post-modern perspective of women as 'empowered beings', Dobozy (2001) highlighted the differences that women offer have been regarded as women's strength.

Theorizing Men and Women Managers' Management Style

In order to elaborate about the differences between men and women managers, Davidson and Burke (1994) have proposed three primary perspectives, which are gender centered approach, organizational structure approach and gender-organization system.

The first perspective is known as the 'person-centered' or 'gender-centered' approach (Riger and Galligan, 1980; Davidson and Burke, 1994). This approach argues that biological roots or socialization influences determine most of one's preferences, abilities and skills, and these characteristics largely drive one's gender behaviours. Accordingly, one might expect men to think and act in certain prescribed ways and women to act in other prescribed ways. According to Heilman, Block, Martell and

Simon (1989), this perspective believed that women are less likely to possess the skills, abilities and attributes needed for management than are their male counterparts. Research evidences show that this perspective remains alive and well in the minds of male managers in today workplace.

In the competence world and global century, managers should possess important managerial skills. In line with this thinking, another variation of the gender-centered approach has been proposed. Davidson and Burke (1994) suggested that women have different and even better skills than men for managing the demands of the changing workplace. Nevertheless, the particular skills that women bring to organizations are associated with traditional sex-role expectations that women are more nurturing and caring (Rosener, 1990; Cherneskey, 1996).

Adler and Izraeli (1988) and Davidson and Burke (1994) present the third variation of gender-centered approach, which is known as the complementary contributions approach. Though this approach argues that differences are gender based, it suggests that men and women managers are better at certain managerial tasks and they do not inherit the managerial skills in order to be a better manager.

Next, the second perspective in explaining why men and women differ in managerial behaviour is the situation or organizational structure approach. This approach argues that the differences in how women manage at work may be due to features of the organization. Structural differences for gender differences generally reject the notion of a feminine style of leadership, or a masculine style of leadership, arguing instead for situational forms of leadership that adept to be the demands of the situation (Davidson and Burke, 1994).

In describing the gender diversity in management, Fagenson (1993) blends both first and second perspectives i.e. gender-centered approach and situational factor. She argues that situations may affect individual behaviour but that individuals also may differ from one another on the basis of gender. Thus, she believes that some women might differ from some men. According to Davidson and Burke (1994), this theory views the status of men and women in organizations simultaneous with the organizational and societal context from which those status differ. Thus, this theory provides a more systems-oriented view of organizations. As stated by Davidson and Burke (1994:19)

Rather than arguing that women are better than men or men are better than women, as is possible with the gender-centered approaches, or that organizations particularly need to change, which is a central argument for the situational approach, the gender-organization-system approach suggests that people, organizations, roles, and societies all change simultaneously in response to environmental shifts, albeit at different paces. The fact that there are these different paces might explain why progress toward managerial equity for women has differed around the world.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this study is based on Berkley's (1995) Ministry Style Matrix in which management style is categorized into four separate styles, namely, commander, shepherd, maintenance and entrepreneur. Comparison is made between Berkley's management styles with the two management theories of Managerial Grid and

Situational Leadership as mentioned earlier. First, the entrepreneur style is equivalent to impoverished and delegating of Managerial Grid Theory and Situational Leadership Theory respectively. In this style, the manager assumes workers are mature and have reached high levels of ability to accomplish a specific task. The manager provides minimal support and direction. Among characteristics that fit this style are change-oriented, innovative, visionary and experimental.

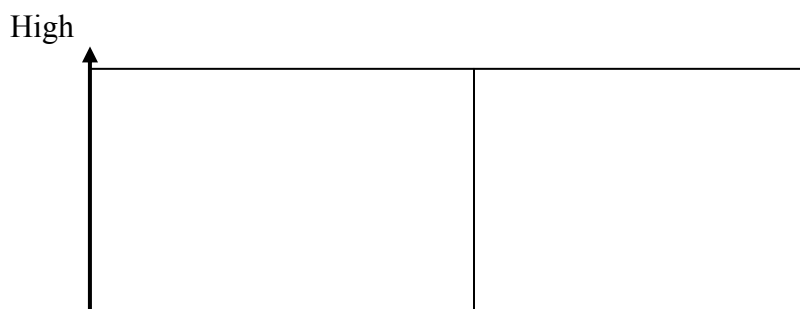
Next is the maintenance style of management which is comparable to authority compliance and telling of the other two models, respectively. The manager stresses more on production behaviour rather than relationship behaviour. The manager's characteristics of this style are organized, efficient, concern for routine, information-focused and detail-intensive.

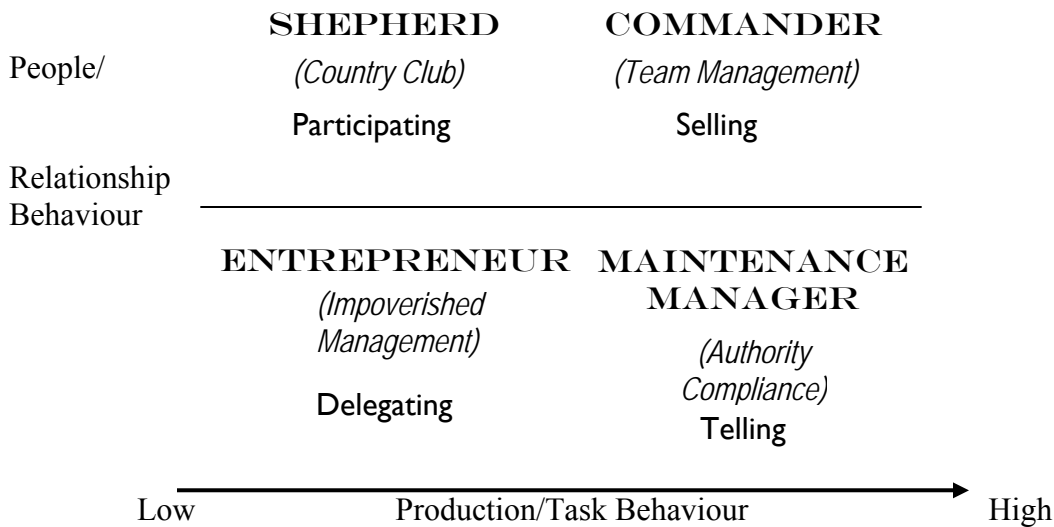
The third style is shepherd manager, which is similar to country club and participating of Managerial Grid and Situational Leadership theories, respectively. The manager of this style gives more priority on people relationship behaviour than production behaviour. This is shown through the facilitating role of a manager. Shepherd manager minimizes the use of directive style and legitimate power to achieve organizational vision. The traits that symbolize a shepherd manager are public pleasing, informality, sensitive, accommodating, procrastinating, emotional and contemplative.

Finally, the commander manager is equivalent to team management and selling of the other two managerial models. This type of manager is seen as high-task and high relationship individual. The manager prefers to use the directive interpersonal style to achieve the organization's target. This manager also has strong relationship orientation in order to gain the workers confidence. The characteristics that best describe the commander's style are decisive, controlling, competitive, demanding, perfectionist, confrontational, result-focused, power-conscious and dominating.

In this study, the attributes of commander manager are aligned with masculine characteristics, and the attributes of shepherd manager are closely related with feminine characteristics. In addition, commander manager also demonstrated some of the feminine characteristics. Thus, commander manager is best described as an androgynous manager. In management, the masculine characteristics are more valued compared to the feminine characteristics. However nowadays, when referring to women managers, they do possess some of the masculine characteristics such as independent, active, competitive and ambitious.

This study therefore, adopts the Berkley's (1995) conceptualization of management styles as its operational definition. It is depicted in Figure 1.





Legend to the management styles as indicated in the quadrants:

MINISTRY STYLE MATRIX

(Managerial Grid Theory)

Situational Leadership Theory

Figure 1: The Quadrants of Management Style showing the Integration of Ministry Style Matrix, Managerial Grid Theory and Situational Leadership Theory.

Sources: Berkley (1995); Management Learning (2001); Arnold et al. (1991)

Methodology

The respondents of this survey were 187 managers of whom 124 were men and 63 were women. They were sampled randomly from the training participants of leadership course series of National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) for the duration from March 2003 until June 2003. The group of participants consists of low, middle and top management levels of personnel from various public organizations in Malaysia. They were 17 training courses scheduled for the duration, and each course accommodated from 15 to 40 participants. The total population for this study was 319 managers. Overall, the representation of women managers in each training course is relatively low, at about 15% to 20% due to smaller number of women managers compared to men. An amount of 5 was used as the cut-off point for women managers in order to get an adequate number of them. The research has to include all women managers in each training course that having five or less. If the number was more than five, 80% of them were selected randomly. For men managers, about 50% to 60% of them in each training courses were randomly selected. Randomization in selecting the study sample was done using the Table of Random Numbers.

Data were collected in each training session using instrument based on Ministry Style Assessment by Berkley (1995). The instrument consists of 40 items describing the attributes of one's personal management style. Adjustment to the original version of the

instrument was done by adding some elaborations on the attributes that otherwise were stated conceptually. The instrument used both English and Malay versions.

A 10-point scale was used to measure the instrument and the items ranging from 1 means 'very uncharacteristic of me' and 10 means 'very characteristics of me'. In the analysis, the 40 attributes were regrouped into the four types of management styles, namely, commander, shepherd, maintenance and entrepreneur managers. In order to choose the dominant style and to make comparison possible, the composite score for the four styles was transformed into z-scores. The type with the highest score signals the dominant or preferred management style. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS. Simple statistics of Chi-square test for homogeneity was used to identify whether there is difference in men and women managers' management style.

Results and Discussion

Profile of Respondents

Generally, the majority of men managers are in the mid-forties (mean=47.4, s.d.=6.5), having 3.6 children of whom mostly in their school-going age (mean=2.7). On the other hand, the majority of women managers are in their early 40s with mean age of 43.3 (s.d.=8.8). Most of them prefer to have small family size with the mean value for number of children is 2.3. Majority of men managers (91.1%) as well as women managers (92.1%) achieved tertiary education. The above results may imply that women managers tend to have small family size, in order to carry out their managerial role.

Most men and women managers have undergone the promotion exercise, as indicated that men managers (41.9%) and women managers (46.0%) are categorized in the Grade M1 and M2*. (*In Malaysia remuneration system salary (Department of Public Services, 2002), Grade M1 is equivalent to M54 and M52; and Grade M2 is equivalent to M48 and M44. Grade M3 is equivalent to M44. These grading are used to categorize managers' managerial ranks in Malaysian public services.) However, there are slightly more men managers (15.3%) in the top managerial position compared to women managers (9.5%). These could explain the higher income level earned by men managers (26.6%), while only 6.3% of women managers received this amount of monthly income.

Men and Women Managers' Management Style

Table 1 indicates that the management style for men and women managers is different (heterogeneous). The result implies that more men managers tend to practise commander (37.9%) style of management, followed by maintenance (24.2%), shepherd (23.4%) and entrepreneur (14.5%). On the other hand, women managers are more likely to exhibit shepherd (36.5%) style of management, followed by entrepreneur (23.8%), commander (20.6%) and maintenance (19.1%). These findings are consistent with other studies abroad, which reported that men tend to display their commander managerial style and women tend to portray their shepherd managerial style (Park, 1996; Freeman and Varey, 1997; Rigg and Sparrow, 1994). Commander's style is associated with decisive, exhorter, controlling, competitive, demanding, perfectionist, confrontational, result-focused, power-conscious and dominating characteristics, and shepherd's style is

associated with people-pleasing, spontaneous, informal, sharing and participative, sensitive, accommodating, procrastinating, emotional, conflict-avoiding and contemplative attributes. In addition, commander managers combine the directive style with strong relationship orientation. The difference between management style of male and female managers could be explained by the fact that women managers seem to emphasize open and flexible atmosphere with their employees, flexible systems and the establishment of good interpersonal relationship. On the other hand, male managers perceived power over their subordinate using legitimate power and prefer to demonstrate the directive interpersonal style with strong relationship orientation. Based on this result, it concludes that men managers are also inclined to demonstrate relational behaviour.

Table 1: Chi-Square Test of Homogeneity for Gender by Categorizations of Management Style

Categorizations of Management Style	Gender		χ^2	df	p
	Men (n=124)	Women (n=63)			
Commander	37.9	20.6	9.006	3	.029
Shepherd	23.4	36.5			
Maintenance	24.2	19.1			
Entrepreneur	14.5	23.8			
	100.0	100.0			

When the styles of men and women in relation to management are reviewed in this study, it is found that more men managers demonstrate both concern for people and concern for production. These orientations are in line with commander's management style, which the distinct characteristics are directive and supportive. Over the past few years, men managers have embraced some of the quality in concern for people. This recourse is due to the mixture of experiences, educational level and the process of socialization. In another words, the feminine skills have been acknowledged to be practised in the management field. Thus, the commander manager is best described as the androgynous manager who blends the attributes of both masculine and feminine (McGregor and Tweed, 2001). An androgynous manager is the manager who adopts the best of the other sex's qualities to become more effective. This new wave of theorizing management style contradicts the Schein's (1973) syndrome that is to 'think manager – think male'. In relation to this, McGregor and Tweed (2001) stated,

The idea that managerial competence is individually situated is important in light of the gendered nature of management which has traditionally been predetermined on idealizations of masculinity.

Further analysis using Goodness-of-Fit Test was executed to test how good the distribution of men and women managers across the four management styles, fitted a given pattern (see Table 2). The test shows that the distribution of men managers practising different styles of management fitted the earlier finding ($\chi^2=13.871$, $p=0.003$).

Men managers are more inclined to demonstrate commander management style in comparison to the other three styles, namely shepherd, maintenance and entrepreneur. In contrast, the result indicates that the distribution of women managers demonstrating commander, shepherd, maintenance and entrepreneur does not fit the earlier result ($\chi^2=4.746$, $p=0.191$). This implies that women managers are manifesting commander, shepherd, maintenance and entrepreneur management styles evenly in their managerial conduct in order to adjust to situational context. Women managers are offering various management styles in performing their managerial roles. This may imply that women managers tend to adjust their management styles according to situation. Women managers analysed situations and made decision of the appropriate management style to be practised.

Table 2: Goodness-of-Fit Test for Gender's Management Style

Gender	Categorizations of Managers Management Style				χ^2	df	p
	Com	Shep	Maint	Entr			
Men (n=124)	37.9	23.4	24.2	14.5	13.871	3	0.003
Women (n=63)	20.6	36.5	19.1	23.8	4.746	3	0.191

* The results of the Chi-Square analysis with equal frequencies.

The difference in men's management style could be explained by the concept of patriarchal relations of male dominance and female subordination. According to Witz (1997), the domination of male and subordination of female in the workplace are due to male power. The basis of male power is men's control over women's labour within both the family and the labour market. The social power of men's control over women and female subordination to men are emphasised by gender relations in the workplace and at home. In turns, these behaviours were reflected in male managers' management style, in which they tend to demonstrate commander style.

While there are arguments suggesting that women managers are more likely to exhibit shepherd (concern for people) management style, this finding argues that women managers are exhibiting various style of management, and hence, not concentrating on shepherd style only. Grant (1988) concluded that there are apparently few, if any, personality or behavioural differences between men and women managers. She suggested that as women move up the corporate ladder, their identification with the male model of managerial success becomes evident. In fact, some of the women managers consequently reject the few managerial feminine traits that they endorsed earlier.

An explanation taken from the point of 'glass-ceiling' by Peters and Kabacoff (2002) reveals that there are fewer differences between the managerial behaviour of men and women in top positions than for individuals in lower management level. They suggested that there appear to be two differences between the average female manager and those women who have broken through the 'glass-ceiling'. They found that women

in executive roles tend to be oriented to strategic thinking and willing to take risks as men.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, the study shows that there is a slight difference between men and women managers' management styles. However, the results appear to be inconsistent with other studies suggesting that women are more focus to relationship orientation (shepherd). Indeed, women managers are more homogenous in management styles and are more likely to portray commander, shepherd, maintenance and entrepreneur styles equally, unlike the findings in other studies (Rosener, 1990; Cooper, 1992; Burke and Collins, 2001). Additionally, men managers are found to be androgynous manager, who adopted relational behaviour in their commander's management style.

This study provides a small contribution to the fields of adult and extension education in terms of variation in management styles among the men and women managers. This knowledge serves as one of inputs to the organizations in formulating training and human resource development programs by taking into consideration the managers' management styles.

With regards to training, particularly in managerial style, men managers should be given emphasis on the importance of having different styles other than commander in order to accommodate their style to situations. This is because some situations faced by managers are unpredictable and thus require certain style. Furthermore, commander style might not be effective to be applied in every situation. With organizations flattening, technology changing and competition increasing, management should give emphasis on its most effective style. Therefore, men managers should be made aware towards the importance of manifesting various management styles. As for women, the organization should realize that women are adaptable to whatever management style is being exercised, hence this could be an advantage to the organization.

For continuing education, the management should consider many factors in visualizing an effective and competence manager; one of which is the difference in management style according to gender. Traditionally, men are seen as more able and competence in order to manage organizations and women as the opposite. However, it is noted that the changing pattern of socialization and educational attainment has changed the perception of men alone as an effective manager. Though this study has found that men are high in relationship and task behaviours, as in commander style, however, this style is not effective to be used in every situation. Since women managers are more situational in management style, this may imply that women managers are more effective and competence in dealing with changes in organizational environments. Therefore, in labeling an effective manager, management of any organization should be gender sensitive.

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