Leadership and Gender in the Public Sector: The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction

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Abstract

Topics on gender and leadership style have attracted many researchers from various field of study particularly in psychology and management discipline. Gender and leadership is one of the most controversial issues especially in the public sector organizations. Furthermore, research that focus on gender role is scarce in Malaysia particularly in an enforcement agency. Women are found to be struggling to exercise effective leadership style in an agency that is highly perceived as masculine position. The constructs of the study were adapted from Korabik and Ayman Multi-Perspective Model of Gender and Leadership (2007). The model consists of three (3) main variables namely intrapsychic process, social structural, and interpersonal interactions. The objectives of this paper are threefold: (1) to examine the level of employee acceptance towards male and female bosses; (2) to examine the effect of intrapsychic process, social structural, and interpersonal interactions against employee acceptance towards male and female bosses; and (3) To examine the mediating effect of job satisfaction between intrapsychic process, social structural, and interpersonal interactions on employee acceptance towards male and female bosses. Data were collected through structured questionnaire from 300 samples of employees in Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) Pahang Headquarter ranging from sub-inspector rank and below to represents the population for this study. Findings obtained in this study revealed that the level of employees' acceptance towards their bosses is at moderate level. It was also found that social structural is the most influential predictor of employee acceptance towards their leader. Further analysis also found that job satisfaction is a significant mediator.

Keywords: *Korabik and Ayman's gender and leadership model, intrapsychic process, social structural, interpersonal interactions, job satisfaction, leadership, gender, public sector*

INTRODUCTION

The statistics of women in senior level posts in Malaysia in 2016 was only 26 percent (%) which is significantly lower as compared to men (Grant Thornton Malaysia, 2016). In board level, 91.4% of the directors and members are men; with only 8.6% women are involved in filling the gap. Aside from that, women only make up the

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small 24% of top management posts. At a global context, a report published by OECD in 2014, depicts that women in EU hold less than 22% of managerial and strategic positions (OECD, 2014). The report also reveals that women only accounts for 16 out of 200 head of states and government and too few of women are being promoted to senior government posts which involves in critical decision making. This gender inequality pointing to a much bigger problem with regards to the exclusion of women from critical leadership roles in the public sector (UNDP, 2015). UNDP further concurs that, reliable and valid data on women's representation in top positions remains largely absent and scarce.

Furthermore, in a private sector context, a report by Talent Corp (2013) revealed that although women account for 60% of university enrolment and graduates, these numbers are not reflected at middle management and senior management levels, much less in the boardrooms. A report by EU Commission in 2013 indicates that women constituted only 13.7% of board seats. Even more dissatisfactory, women constitute only 3.4% of chairs and presidents within the European Union. Across other continents, the US (15.7%), Australia and Canada (10%) respectively, India (5%) Asia-Pacific region (6.5%) and in the Middle East and North-Africa continents (3.2%) (Patel & Buiting, 2013). As in 2016, women involvement as decision makers in top corporate entity in Malaysia accounts for 11.5%. In a most recent figure in 2017, it was reported that women accounted for nearly 15.2% in top positions in the corporate entity, far less than their male counterparts (Johan Merican & Shareen Ghani, 2017). This is further supported in a most recent study by Einarsdottir et al. (2018, p. 1) that the ratio of women in a top level position is still at a lower rate despite the barriers have long been identified and largely documented.

The scenario in the public sector on the other hand reveals that women involvement in top positions was slightly higher which accounts for 36% (Star Online, 2016). In Australia, female representation within government boards was 38.4% in 2012 (Patel & Buiting, 2013).Despite the interesting results; nonetheless, the figures signify that women are under-represented in decision making roles despite their significant participation and strong representation in the public sector. These numbers suggest that discrimination might arise and affect how employees react with different leadership styles adapted by female leaders.

It is also noted that leadership style in an organization is one of the main factors that might hinder or drive organizational performance. Nonetheless, the effectiveness of leadership styles practiced in the organization is also influenced by gender. Gender has become a subject of argument among employees which affects their level of acceptance towards an appointed leader (Ibrahim Tamby Chek, 2011). Besides culture, gender is, in

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fact one of the significant factors that influence leadership (Ayman &Korabik, 2010; Patel &Buiting, 2013; Mohamed, 2014). Ayman and Korabik further testify that gender affect leadership style, behaviour, and efficiency at the workplace. Leadership is thus, the direct function of gender.

There are vast studies conducted on leadership and gender in the Malaysian public sector context (Mohamed, 2014; Lim, 2017; Jayasingam & Cheng, 2009). In the context of enforcement agency in Malaysia, research that focus on gender role is very scarce. Study on leadership style is merely skewed towards task orientation in which leadership style is highly influenced by gender and power. Most studies reported that democratic leadership style (Lim, 2017; Patel & Buiting, 2013), participative leadership style (Jayasingam & Cheng, 2009; Nicholson-Crotty, 2006; Patel & Buiting, 2013) and transformational leadership style (Mangan, 2016; Appelbaum et al., 2003; Patel & Buiting, 2013) are highly practiced by women. On the other hand, a study by Kotur & Anbazhagan (2014) found that democratic leadership style is highly practiced by men.

Interestingly, large amount of studies imply that women are found to be struggling to exercise effective leadership style in an enforcement agency that is highly perceived as masculine position. Einarsdottir et al. (2018) and Baumgartner and Schneider (2010) discover that to be accepted as an effective leader at the workplace, women are expected to speak up, firm, make demands, and be more like men. As a result, women tend to possess more masculine characteristics or have made a conscious decision to adapt their behaviour to the masculine stereotype (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010). Studies by Rosado Diaz (2015) and Patel & Buiting (2013) reveal that in an enforcement agency, men tend to exercise authoritarian leadership style in their daily work life. Nicholson-Crotty (2006, p.18) in her study found that in a leading male dominated organization such as police enforcement, female managers 'employ more feminine styles of leadership characterized by more inclusive and participatory policies and approaches. However, the leadership style is become indistinguishable from male leaders if the proportion of female workforce increases.

Another interesting discovery is large amount of literature pointed out that regardless of the gender, a good leader should behave rationally according to the current situation in order to ensure their employee's satisfaction because this will optimize the process in achieving the organization goal hence benefitting the organization as a whole (Parveen & Tariq, 2014). Vast amount of literature indicates that job satisfaction acts as an important mediator in various studies with various variables. A study by Susanj & Jakopec (2012) for instance discovers that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment.

Hence, the objectives of this paper are threefold: (1) to examine the level of employee acceptance towards male and female bosses; (2) to examine the effect of intrapsychic, social structural, and interpersonal interactions against employee acceptance towards male and female bosses; and (3) To examine the mediating effect of job satisfaction between intrapsychic process, social structural, and interpersonal interactions on employee acceptance towards male and female bosses.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

To understand the phenomenon being studied, both theories of Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) and the Multi-Perspective Model of Gender and Leadership by Korabik and Ayman's were used as the basic building block. The LMX theory focuses on the relationship between both leader and follower or employee (Lunenburg, 2010); which explains a process in which individuals with different rank relates to each other (Pearson, 2013). Krishnan (2005), maintains that the quality of a relationship between a leader and his/her employee is different from one employee to the other.

With respect to the relationship between leader and follower, large amount of literatures points out to gender as one of the most influential factor. However, it is noted that other factors also do influence this relationship. As argued by Korabik and Ayman (2007), the psychological value of being man or woman is extremely wide and it affects all aspects of an individual's life (Korabik, & Ayman, 2007). They further suggest that along the discussion between leader and leadership, there are three (3) factors that believed are important namely intrapsychic process, social structural, and interpersonal interactions. Korabik and Ayman (2007) termed these constructs in a model known as Multi-Perspective Model of Gender and Leadership. To the best knowledge of the researcher, there is limited study in Malaysia that employed this model. Furthermore, study of leadership and gender in an enforcement agency in Malaysia particularly in the field of study is also limited. This motivates the research to be conducted.

Intrapsychic Process

Intrapsychic process can be defined as a process of representing the psychological dynamics that occur inside the mind of an individual without reference to the person's interactions with other people or events (Bolognini, 2004). Intrapsychic process considers the desire, thought, and emotions of individual. From the intrapsychic leadership perspective, the leader's gender-role orientation will affect the leader's behaviour towards their employees. This perspective predicts that individuals whose personalities are dominated by masculinity will act as a task-oriented person, whereas those who have primarily feminine personality traits will appear as a relationship-

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oriented person (Korabik & Ayman, 2007). Hence, intrapsychic process has been analyzed to be one of the significant factors that affect the employees' perception and acceptance (Budd, 1994). It was assumed in some studies that male and female leaders hold a different perception on working alliance based on the distinct way they form a relationship among the employees and it will affect the level of employee acceptance (Budd, 1994). Appelbaum et al. (2003, p.44), on the other hand referred this as biology and sex premise in which leadership is biologically determined, innate for men and therefore unattainable for women. Thus, H1 is developed as follows:

H1: It is hypothesized that intrapsychic process affects the acceptance of employees towards man and women bosses

Social Structural Element

Social structural element can be defined as a social exchange or a relationship between an individual from time to time. The imbalance of the social structural element has readily changed the perception of employees towards bosses with different gender in their organizations. From the social structural leadership perspective, the most important aspect of gender is the sex of the leader which acts as a motivation for others perceptions, observations and evaluations (Korabik, &Ayman, 2007). Spreitzer (1996) defines social structural element as fit requirements of work roles and individual belief, values and also behaviour. There are six characteristics created to measure the social structural element in the context of empowerment in gender leadership such as role ambiguity, access to information and resources, span of control, and also socio-political support. Appelbaum et al (2003, p.45) on the other hand termed this element as gender role which characterized by encouraging participation, sharing power and information, enhancing self-worth of others, and finally, energizing others. Thus, the following H2 is developed:

H2: It is hypothesized that social structural element affects the acceptance of employees towards man and women bosses

Interpersonal Interactions

Interpersonal interactions can be defined as a communication process that comprises the exchange of information, feelings and meaning by using verbal and non-verbal messages, between two or more persons (Ismail, 2014). By practicing a good communication, a leader will be able to ensure that they are more outstanding compared to others, either they are men or women (Korabik & Ayman, 2007). According to the interpersonal interaction leadership perspective, male and female bosses will have

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different types of social interactions with their men and women supervisors and subordinates based on their gender and these will influence the outcomes experienced by each party (Korabik & Ayman, 2007). Appelbaum et al. (2003) termed this as attitudinal driver which also emphasized on communication skills. As such, H3 is developed as follows:

H3: It is hypothesized that interpersonal interactions affects the acceptance of employees towards man and women bosses

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a combination of how the employees feel and believe about their current job. Several reasons have been identified which affect job satisfaction such as the kind of job that they need to do, their colleague, supervisor, team leader, and also the benefits they receive (Aziri, 2011). Ullah & Kashif-ur-Rehman (2015) stated that job satisfaction is one of the motivations which are related to leadership behaviour. However, the most crucial part is a good leader, regardless their gender, should behave rationally according to the current situation in order to ensure their employee's satisfaction because this will optimize the process of achieving the organization goal hence benefitting the organization as a whole (Parveen & Tariq, 2014).

Furthermore, vast amount of literature also concurs that job satisfaction acts as an important mediator in various studies with various variables. Darwish A. Yousef (2002) found that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between role stressors components and organizational commitment. A study by Crede et al. (2010) confirms that job satisfaction functions as a mediator of the relationship between various antecedent variables and volitional workplace behaviours. Susanj & Jakopec (2012) also reaffirm that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment. As this study intends to examine the effect of job satisfaction between the above constructs and acceptance towards male or female bosses, the following hypotheses (H4-H6) were developed:

H4: It is hypothesized that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between intrapsychic process and the acceptance of employees towards man and women bosses

H5: It is hypothesized that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between social structural element and the acceptance of employees towards man and women bosses

H6: *It is hypothesized that job satisfaction mediates the relationship between interpersonal interactions and the acceptance of employees towards man and women bosses*

Acceptance of Employee towards Male and Female Bosses

The different leadership style of different gender leaders might attract negative perceptions especially towards female leaders because the way they lead the organization is influenced by self-perception and external perception (Chow, 2005). Besides that, acceptance level of employee towards their bosses of different gender is also based on what sector they are working in (Press Trust of India, 2015). In a study among blue-collar workers, Burlacu (2013) found that gender difference at the work place can increase the level of emotional conflicts hence, decreasing the level of productivity and decreasing the employee's confidence in the organization. Burlacu further states that gender differences will not only affect the employer-employee relationship, but it will also reduce their performance and affect their attitude at work.

Besides gender differences, mental characteristic, social status, and leader interactions with employees may affect the acceptance level of employees towards them. According to Korabik and Ayman's (2007), the model of intrapsychic processes, social structural and interpersonal interaction provides convincing evidence that leadership is a function in which employees are able to evaluate leader's behavior and a leader is able to change the employee's perception on the leader-employee relationship.

Proposed Research Model

Based on the previous literature, this study has developed six (6) hypotheses to be tested. The proposed model of the study was constructed based on Korabik and Ayman's Multi-Perspective Gender and Leadership Model as depicted in Figure 1 below. There are three (3) independent variables (IVs) identified namely intra-psychic process, social structural, and interpersonal interactions. The dependent variable (DV) of the proposed model is Employee Acceptance towards Male and Female Bosses. These IVs are hypothesized (H1, H2, H3) as having significant effects on DV. Furthermore, another important variable to be tested in the proposed research model is Job Satisfaction. This construct was hypothesized (H4, H5, H6) as having a mediating effect between IVs and DV.
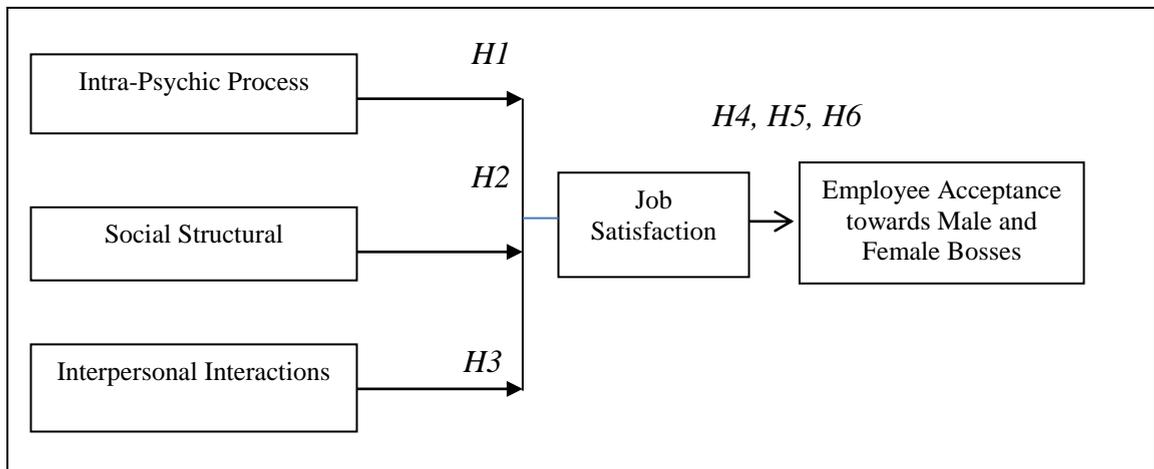
Figure 1: Proposed research model.
Source: Adapted from Korabik and Ayman (2007).

METHODOLOGY

To test the proposed research model, this study employs quantitative approach via survey to ascertain the above hypotheses. Data of the research was collected from nine (9) departments in Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) Pahang Headquarters ranging from sub-inspector rank and below to represents the population for this study using structured questionnaire.

Based on the official record, the total population that has been identified in this organization is 816. Referring to Krejcie& Morgan (1970), to reach the minimum sample size, 265 samples or larger are needed to represent the whole population. To reach the minimum sample size, this study employs stratified sampling technique in which the samples represent these nine (9) departments respectively. The stratified sampling technique is typically employed in organization and societal studies where structure is present (Abdullah, 2010).

All independent and dependent variables were measured using interval scale. The 10 Likert-scales was used in this study to gauge the respondent's feedback ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 10= strongly agree. Paspuhati et al. (2013) affirm that the increasing number of scale point will give an option to people and increased the number of the scale reliability.

Measures of items were adapted from several studies. Items for intra-psychic were adapted from Budd (1994), social structural (Spreitzer, 1996), interpersonal

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interactions constructs (Campbell & Akdemir, 2015), job satisfaction (Spector (1985) and lastly employee acceptance towards male or female bosses (Hofstede, 2001). Table 1 below depicts the structure of the questionnaire.

Table 1: *Structure of questionnaire*

Section	Variables	No. of Items	Reference
A	Demographic Profile	5	-
B	Intrapsychic Process	12	Sharon L. Budd (1994)
C	Social Structural Element	6	Gretchen M. Spreitzer (1996)
D	Interpersonal Interaction	9	Campbell & Akdemir (2015)
E	Job Satisfaction	9	Paul E. Spector (1985)
F	Employee Acceptance towards Male or Female Bosses	12	Hofstede (2001)

Data of the study was analyzed using SPSS for testing of mean value, correlation and regression. Meanwhile for mediation testing, HAYES process was performed. Data was also thoroughly inspected for goodness of measures. Cronbach Alpha was performed to test for its reliability issue. All constructs were above the cut-off point of 0.7 (Field, 2006). The summary of reliability analysis is depicted in Table 2 below.

Table 2: *Summary of reliability analysis*

Variable	No. of Item	Cronbach Alpha
Intrapsychic Process	12	0.966
Social Structural Element	6	0.928
Interpersonal Interaction	9	0.965
Job Satisfaction	9	0.904
Employee Acceptance towards Male or Female Bosses	12	0.858

Data was collected from Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) Office from Pahang Headquarters. A total of 320 questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. A total of 300 questionnaires were returned for further analysis. The response rate for the returned questionnaire was 94%. 20 questionnaires were discarded from analysis due to various reasons such as incomplete and outlier cases. Analysis of respondents' profile is summarized as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: *Analysis of demographic of respondent*

Variable	Indicator	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	196	65.3
	Female	104	34.7
Age	21-30 years	61	20.3
	31-40 years	106	35.3
	41-50 years	63	21.0
	Above 50 years	70	23.3
Monthly Income	RM1000-RM2000	40	13.3
	RM2001-RM3000	78	26
	RM3001-RM4000	91	30.3
	RM4001-RM5000	68	22.7
	RM5000 and above	23	7.7
Job Experience	1-2 years	29	9.7
	3-4 years	23	7.7
	5-7 years	29	9.7
	8-10 years	39	1.3
	Above 10 years	180	60.0
Gender of Bosses	Male	230	76.7
	Female	70	23.3

Based on the Table 3 above, 300 feedbacks were collected in which male and female respondents' accounts for 65.3% (196) and 34.7% (104) respectively. Majority of the respondents' age are from 31 to 40 (35.3%, 106). About 30.0% (91) of the respondent received an income between RM3001 to RM 4000. Majority of the respondents (60%, 180) had more than 10 years of job experience. About 76.7% indicates that their immediate bosses were male. Furthermore, 70 respondents (23.3%) indicate that they are working under a female boss.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study are discussed based on the objectives of the paper. There are three (3) highlighted objectives as below.

The Level of Employee Acceptance towards Male and Female Bosses

Objective 1 of this paper is to examine the level of employee acceptance towards male or female bosses. Table 4 depicts the mean value for each item as well as the total mean for the construct.

Table 4: *Mean and standard deviation result for employee acceptance towards male or female bosses construct*

Items	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
E1) Has a high ego	300	1.00	10.00	5.1833	2.62667
E2) Very particular about work	300	1.00	10.00	5.7200	2.50783
E3) Concerns on the quality of life and value people around him/her	300	1.00	10.00	6.7633	2.10605
E4) Solved a conflict through force	300	1.00	10.00	4.8300	2.56835
E5) Prefers on getting higher pay	300	1.00	10.00	5.0933	2.52174
E6) Prefer on working fewer hours	300	1.00	10.00	5.3067	2.48997
E7) Consider that failing is disaster	300	1.00	10.00	5.5067	2.48405
E8) Loves to be in power	300	1.00	10.00	5.1833	2.73887
E9) Loves to receive recognition for his/her work	300	1.00	10.00	5.4867	2.67838
E10) Have a close relationship with his/her subordinates	300	1.00	10.00	7.0733	2.14709
E11) Wants his/her subordinates to keep work life separate from private life	300	1.00	10.00	7.1167	1.98398
E12) Very receptive to others opinion	300	1.00	10.00	6.7100	2.15128
TOTAL	**300**	**1.00**	**10.00**	5.8311	**1.51632**

The mean values for DV are between 4.8300 and 7.1167. The average mean is 5.8311 which are moderate. It was found that the respondents moderately accepting both masculinity and femininity from the perspective of their bosses' gender. Further analysis also revealed that four (4) questions which indicate femininity receive a higher amount of mean compared to other questions that indicate masculinity. The femininity questions such as 'does the leader want them to keep their life separated from work?', and 'does the leader build a close relationship with the employees?' have a higher value of means which are 7.1167 and 7.0733 respectively. This proves that most of the leaders, regardless of their gender, still have a femininity leadership style because they care and pay attention on employees' life rather than just focusing on work.

This finding was inconsistent with what have been found by Burlacu (2013) and Chow (2005) that gender differences poses some emotional conflict, negatively affect the productivity as well as affecting the leader-follower relationship. The finding of the

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study also concurs with earlier finding by Appelbaum et al. (2003) that claim effective leadership is not an exclusive domain of either gender and both can learn from the other. Appelbaum et al. further reaffirm their claim that women's styles are not at all likely to be less effective; in fact, they are more effective within the context of team-based, which is more prevalent in today's world.

The Effect of Intrapsychic Processes, Social Structural, Interpersonal Interactions and Employee Acceptance towards Male and Female Bosses

The second objective of this paper is to examine the effect of intrapsychic processes, social structural and interpersonal interactions on the employee acceptance towards male and female bosses. Multiple regression analysis was conducted to inspect the effect as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: *Multiple regressions results*

Construct	Standard Coefficient (Beta)	T	Sig. (p)
Intrapsychic Process	0.120	0.994	0.321
Social Structural	0.300	2.797	0.005
Interpersonal Interaction	-0.241	-1.828	0.069
Anova Sig.	0.002		
F	5.030		
R	0.220		
R^2	0.049		

It was found that social structural construct (β=0.300; t-value=2.797; $p<0.05$) is the only significant predictor of employee acceptance towards male and female bosses. All the six characteristics under social structural construct namely role of ambiguity, span of control, sociopolitical support, access to information and resources, and also participative climate contributed to a higher value compared to the other variables.

The finding of the study also supported by Spreitzer (1996) in which leaders who tend to have more social structural element received more power and highly accepted by their followers regardless of their gender. Interestingly, a study by Nicholson-Crotty (2006, p.18) which found that in a leading male dominated organization such as police enforcement, female managers' exercise more feminine styles of leadership. They are characterized by more inclusive and participatory policies and approaches of which concur with the findings derived from the study.

It was also found that the other two variables namely interpersonal interactions (β =-0.241; t-value=0.069; $p>0.05$) and intrapsychic process (β=0.120; t-value 0.994;

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p>0.05) were not the predictors of employee acceptance towards male and female bosses. Both predictors were insignificance. The R^2 of the prediction model was 0.049 or 4.9%. The effect size of the model was relatively small. This finding was inconsistent with the past studies by Ismail (2014) and Korabik & Ayman (2007). Based on the findings derived from the study; therefore, only H2 was accepted while H1 and H3 were rejected.

The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction between Intrapsychic Processes, Social Structural, Interpersonal Interactions, and Employee Acceptance towards Male and Female Bosses

The last objective of this paper is to examine the mediating effect of job satisfaction between intrapsychic processes, social structural, interpersonal interactions and employee acceptance towards male and female bosses. As depicted in Table 6 below, it was found that job satisfaction has mediated effect between all IVs and DV.

Table 6: *Mediation effect (Hayes's Process)*

Independent Variable	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	*p*(sig.)	Remarks
Intrapsychic Process	0.0670	0.2014	0.0000	Mediation Effect
Social Structural	0.0864	0.2362	0.0001	Mediation Effect
Interpersonal Interaction	0.1260	0.2728	0.0000	Mediation Effect

Job satisfaction mediated the tested variables. The mediating effect can influence the independent variable and also the dependent variable. Thus, based on the study above, for intrapsychic process, the true b values for indirect effect fall between 0.0670 and 0.2014. It does not include '0' because when b=0 there is no mediation effect. Hence, in this case, when CI has not contained a value of "0", there is indirect mediation effect exists. For social structural also have a mediating effect because b values for indirect effect fall between 0.0864 and 0.2362. It does not include '0' and same goes to interpersonal interaction that b value falls between 0.1260 and 0.2728. The job satisfaction acts as mediating effect that able to influence all three independent and also dependent variables of this study. These particular findings concur with past researches conducted by Yousef (2002), Crede et al. (2010), Susanj and Jakopec (2012), Parveeen and Tariq (2014), and Ullah and Kashif-ur-Rehman (2015).

Furthermore, even though the leader has applied all three aspects, without job satisfaction they still cannot have high acceptance from their employees. Regardless of

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types of gender of the leader as well as leadership perspective applies as control mechanism in managing employees, this will be meaningless without employee's job satisfaction. Ullah & Kashif-ur-Rehman (2015) stated that job satisfaction is one of the influences for employees who are related to the leadership behavior and employees' acceptance towards the leadership style. In the public sector organizations, the chain of command is very hierarchical and usually leaders maintain their status quo. In other words, leaders legitimate power influence employee acceptance. Susanj & Jakopec (2012) also believed that employee's job satisfaction derived from how well leader exercise their leadership style. Therefore, based on the findings of the study, hypotheses H4-H6 are accepted.

CONCLUSION

Female and male leader must be valued equally for their unique contributions. Both should not be seen not as competitors, but rather as complementary to the success of the workplace or organization. In order for a leader to be widely accepted by their employees, building a good relationship helps to create a sense of respect to each other. Employees are human who need to be respected by others hence, being treated with respect, fair, and justice and equally perhaps are far more important to employees than recognition and appreciation provided by organization. Although a leader has high position or ranking in the organization, treating them nicely, and respect they equally will create more comfortable working ambience. Even the leader is of a different gender, leader is expected to build a sense of respect to each other in order to promote a peaceful and harmonious working environment.

Employees should accept whatever style the leaders have because every individual is unique with different gender, personalities, and styles. Three components which are intrapsychic process, social structural, and interpersonal interaction may influence strategies between male and female bosses to tackle the employee's heart, mind and soul. It also allows the leader to adjust their leadership style to suit them and this can affect the acceptance level of employees towards male and female bosses using masculinity and femininity perspective. Furthermore, some employees may in favour their leader due to gender and leadership style differences. Thus, it becomes the responsibility of the organization to promote gender equality so that they are well aware and educated about gender pattern in a work place. This can only be done through organizational awareness and the cultural changes in the work place. This will help to reduce or eliminate gender discrimination in the workplace.

The findings of this study also show that the social structural element is the most contributing factor that needs to be focused on by the leaders to gain employees

acceptance. In order to eliminate gender stereotyping, biasness, and employees' misconception, the organization must proactively engage in initiatives that help the wide acceptance of both male and female leaders. Many activities and program can be organized to strengthen the relationship and improve employee acceptance towards bosses regardless of their gender. The programs can be both formal and informal. Formal program such as trainings and talks can be done by the organization to strengthen the relationship between boss and the employees. Informal activities such as family day, pot-luck gathering, lunch box seminar also helps to strengthen this relationship. By having these programs and activities, two-ways communication can be nurtured between both employees and their leaders, and eventually changing their perception towards the opposite gender.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Based on the findings in which the R^2 was relatively lower and insignificance, thus future research might want to improve or to expand the research model by integrating with other variables found in various literatures. The independent variables of this study are limited to three variables as proposed by Korabik and Ayman (2007). However, it is believed that there are other variables that might influence employee acceptance towards male or female bosses.

Furthermore, future research could consider investigating other factors that contribute towards acceptance of male and female bosses by conducting qualitative research. This is particularly important to probe the real factors that lead towards acceptance of male and female bosses. Lastly, the model of the study can be extended to larger samples involving several states in Malaysia. As current study only focusing on RMP of Pahang Headquarter, future research might extend this study to several more states to further confirm or reject the proposed research model highlighted in this study. The findings might be different and yield more intriguing results.

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