

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**EFFECTIVE-LEADERSHIP TRAITS
AND BEHAVIOURS OF WOMEN AT
THE MANAGEMENT LEVEL IN THE
PORT SECTOR IN MALAYSIA**

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia is a maritime nation with 90% of its international trade is through the seaports. In 2020, women formed 55.3% or 15.8 million of total population of 32.6 million in Malaysia. Women's achievement in the education attainment sub-index of 1.059 has surpassed the men score. Though more women in the labour force and better attainment of education than men, the representation at the port sector does not reflect the situation. Therefore, the aim of the study to investigate the factors pertaining to lower representation of women in the management level of the port sector from the perspective of effective leadership traits and behaviours of women in the management level of the port sector in Malaysia and the challenges women faced in management level of the port sector in Malaysia. A mixed method approach was adopted. The quantitative approach established the profile of women in the management level of the port sector, examine that gender, education level and years of service have significant relationship to management. The study further investigates the perceptions of men and women on effective leadership traits, and behaviours that women need to have to be at the management level of the port sector. This multidimensional leadership measures of traits and behaviours of effective leadership behavioural model of Yukl, Gordon & Taber (2002) was adopted in terms of change oriented, relational oriented and task-oriented behaviours and traits of men and women, using the SPSS version 23 to analyse using the mean analysis and factorial analysis. The findings illustrate that among 24 attributes measured of the three constructs of change orientation, relational orientation, and task orientation including traits that 88% of the attributes are perceived to be different by the male and female respondents. Men priority is on attributes such as being visionary and focus on goals and targets, while women display high commitment in achieving goals and targets as well as high level of integrity. The study further explored the challenges faced by the purposively selected women at senior management level representing the ports in an in-depth interview. Using thematic analysis, the study established the organisational culture practices of discrimination and inequality, and workplace environment created challenges to women in management of the port sector. It is gathered that women traits are more communal and relational compared to men who are more agentic and strategic. The informants' leadership style of transformational while men of transactional, command and control. The stereotyping gender bias and the old boys' network are present. These differences pose greater challenges to women in management level. However, the traits and behaviours as well as the strategies adopted by the women have not led them to have better representation. The study proposed that the ecosystem of the port sector need to improve, traits and behavioural changes through formal mentoring and role modelling programme, clear human capital policy on gender diversity and inclusion. The significance would also support the Government's effort in building leadership talent pipeline for the higher representation of women at the management level of the port sector and the country.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the background of the study that covers the perspective of women leadership at the management level of port sector of the maritime industry in Malaysia. The chapter includes the problem statements, research questions, research objectives, scope of study, significance of study, definition of terms, structure of the thesis.

1.2 Background of Study

Leaders regardless of gender are involved in the process of influencing people to achieve goals that sustain high performance over time in an organisation. This reflects a combination of several factors as the leaders have their own individual traits, skills and behaviours among genders. Organisations use different mechanisms to create alignment and enthusiasm and the contextual to ensure sustainable performance of the organisation. As such, the identification of these factors is helpful to create a leadership framework that can improve the port organisations to create pipeline of greater representation of women in management in the sector of the maritime industry.

1.2.1 Women in Leadership of Maritime Industry

Maritime industry includes matters related to the ocean, sea, ships, navigation of ships from point A to point B, seafarers, ship-owning and other associated activities. Shipping business is the act of carriage of cargo from point A to point B using the ships which fall under the maritime industry. Maritime industry also includes port management, financing, logistics, insurance, maritime laws, maritime administrators, and regulators.

Maritime industry has always been considered as traditional male dominated industry as women represent less than 2.0 % of the 1.89 million seafarers worldwide,