

**THE PERCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT  
EMPLOYEES TOWARDS WOMEN  
LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS**

**DYNA TANTIANA @ CYTHRA BTE JULKIPLI**



**UMS**  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS  
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH  
2011**

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**DYNA TANTIANA @ CYTHRA BTE JULKIPLI**

**DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL  
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**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS  
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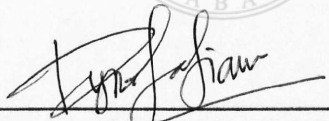
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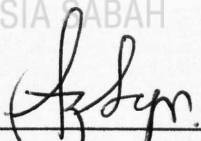
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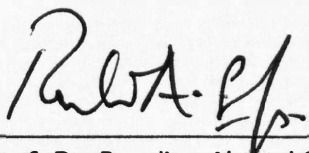
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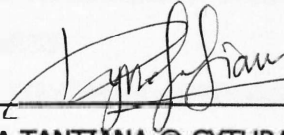
  
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this thesis is my own except for quotations, excerpts, equations, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

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First and foremost I would like to thank Allah SWT for granting me the blessing, strength and opportunity to complete this research study which the title is 'The Perception of Government Employee towards Women Leadership'.

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**18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2011**

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE PERCEPTION OF GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES TOWARDS WOMEN LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS**

This study aims to determine the women leadership roles that were perceived as effective amongst government employees at Kota Kinabalu. Nowadays, there are increasing numbers of women's participation in management. There are also many women that become a leader both in public and private sector. The objectives of this study were achieved by examining the relationship between leadership roles and leadership effectiveness. The data collected from 158 respondents were analyzed using multiple regression and t-test. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to examine the moderating effect of gender on leadership roles and leadership effectiveness. The analysis revealed that only Mentor-Facilitator roles produced an acceptable result in identifying the relationship between leadership roles and leadership effectiveness. Therefore, further research should be done in order to develop women leader to be more effective in management.



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## **ABSTRAK**

*Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti peranan-peranan yang dimainkan oleh ketua wanita yang dianggap berkesan di kalangan pekerja awam di Kota Kinabalu. Pada hari ini, jumlah penglibatan wanita dalam pengurusan semakin tinggi. Terdapat banyak wanita yang kini memegang jawatan sebagai ketua di sektor awam dan swasta. Objektif untuk kajian ini tercapai dengan mengenal pasti hubungan diantara peranan wanita dan keberkesanan sebagai ketua. Data-data yang diperolehi daripada 158 responden dianalisis dengan menggunakan 'multiple regression' dan 't-test'. Manakala 'hierarchical regression' pula digunakan bagi mengenal pasti samada 'moderator' untuk kajian ini iaitu jantina akan memberi impak atau kesan dalam hubungan peranan wanita dan keberkesanan ketua. Analisis dari kajian ini mendapati bahawa kebanyakan bos wanita memainkan peranan 'Mentor-Facilitator' dan mereka juga dianggap berkesan oleh pekerja-pekerja awam di Kota Kinabalu. Oleh yang demikian, diharap agar kajian tentang peranan dan keberkesanan wanita diteruskan pada masa hadapan bagi membina dan menyediakan wanita menjadi ketua yang lebih berkesan dalam pengurusan.*



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
<b>TITLE</b>	i
<b>DECLARATION</b>	ii
<b>CERTIFICATION</b>	iii
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b>	iv
<b>ABSTRACT</b>	v
<b>ABSTRAK</b>	vi
<b>LIST OF CONTENTS</b>	vii
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b>	xi
<b>LIST OF FIGURES</b>	xiii
<b>CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION</b>	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background of the study	1
1.1.1 Women leadership	3
1.2 Problem Statement	6
1.2.1 Perceptions towards women leadership	6
1.2.2 Stereotypes	7
1.2.3 Barriers for women leadership	9
1.3 Purpose of the study	13
1.4 Research questions	13
1.5 Research objectives	14
1.6 Scope of study	14
1.7 Significant of study	14
1.8 Definitions of key variables	15
1.8.1 Leadership	15
1.8.2 Leadership roles	16
1.8.3 Leadership effectiveness	16
1.9 Organizations of the study	16
1.10 Summary	17

<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW</b>	<b>18</b>
2.0 Introduction	18
2.1 Leadership	18
2.2 Overview of Competing Value Framework	20
2.3 Conceptual definitions of Dependent, Independent and Moderating Variable	24
2.3.1 Leadership Effectiveness	24
2.3.2 Leadership Roles	27
2.3.3 Gender	30
2.4 Relationship between variables	31
2.4.1 Female leaders with Innovator role and their effectiveness	31
2.4.2 Female leaders with Broker role and their effectiveness	31
2.4.3 Female leaders with Producer role and their effectiveness	32
2.4.4 Female leaders with Director role and their effectiveness	32
2.4.5 Female leaders with Coordinator role and their effectiveness	33
2.4.6 Female leaders with Monitor role and their effectiveness	33
2.4.7 Female leaders with Facilitator role and their effectiveness	34
2.4.8 Female leaders with Mentor role and their effectiveness	34
2.4.9 Different perception of Female and Male employees on Women leadership roles and women leadership Effectiveness	35
2.5 Summary	35
<b>CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY</b>	<b>37</b>
3.0 Introduction	37
3.1 Research Framework	37
3.2 Definitions of variables	38
3.2.1 Leadership Roles	38
3.2.2 Leadership Effectiveness	39
3.2.3 Gender	39
3.3 Research Hypothesis	39
3.4 Research Design	43

3.5	Sampling Design	43
3.6	Unit of Analysis	44
3.7	Instrument Design	44
3.8	Data Analysis	48
3.9	Data Collection	49
3.10	Summary	49

## **CHAPTER 4: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS** 51

4.0	Introduction	51
4.1	Profiles of Respondents	51
4.1.1	Gender	51
4.1.2	Age	52
4.1.3	Length of services	52
4.2	Factor Analysis	53
4.2.1	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and factor loading for Independent variables	54
4.2.2	Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and factor loading for Dependent variable	57
4.2.3	Revised Framework	58
4.2.4	Revised Hypotheses	59
4.3	Reliability Analysis	60
4.4	Descriptive Analysis for Variables	62
4.5	Correlation Analysis	63
4.6	Hypotheses Testing	64
4.6.1	Multiple Regression Analysis (Standard)	64
4.6.2	T-Test (Independent Sample Size)	68
4.6.3	Multiple Regression Analysis (Hierarchical)	70
4.7	Summary	72

## **CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION** 74

5.0	Introduction	74
5.1	Recapitulation of the study	74
5.2	Discussion	75

5.2.1	The relationship of leadership roles and leadership Effectiveness	75
5.2.2	The differences perception between male and female Employees towards women leadership roles and Leadership effectiveness	78
5.3	Implications of the study	79
5.4	Limitations of study	80
5.5	Suggestions for future research	81
5.6	Conclusion	82
<b>REFERENCES</b>		85
<b>APPENDICES</b>		96



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## LIST OF TABLES

	PAGE
Table 1.1 Women in Management, Professional, and Related Occupations from 2003 to 2009 (United States)	4
Table 2.1 Definitions of Leadership	19
Table 2.2 Description of the Eight (8) Leadership Roles	22
Table 3.1 Summary of instruments	46
Table 3.2 Questionnaire Items for Section A, B, and C	47
Table 3.3 Analysis for hypotheses testing	49
Table 4.1 Gender	51
Table 4.2 Age	52
Table 4.3 Length of services	53
Table 4.4 KMO and Barlett's Test for Independent Variables	54
Table 4.5 Results of the factor analysis for Independent Variables	55
Table 4.6 New label of factors for Independent Variables	57
Table 4.7 KMO and Barlett's Test for Dependent Variable	58
Table 4.8 Results of factor analysis for Dependent Variable	58
Table 4.9 Cronbach's Alpha for Variables	61
Table 4.10 Descriptive statistics of variables	62
Table 4.11 Correlation Results	63
Table 4.12 Model Summary (b)	65
Table 4.13 Anova (b)	65
Table 4.14 Coefficients	66
Table 4.15 Independent Sample Test for Leadership Roles	68
Table 4.16 Independent Sample Test for Leadership Effectiveness	69
Table 4.17 Result of Hierarchical Regression Test	71
Table 4.18 Summary of findings from Hypotheses Testing	72

**LIST OF FIGURES**

	PAGE
Figure 2.1      The Competing Values Framework	21
Figure 3.1      Research Framework	38
Figure 4.1      Revised Framework	59



## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter describes a brief background of the research study, explores the problem statements, discuss the purpose of the study, research questions, research objectives, the scope of study, and significant of the study. Definition of key variables used and also the organizations of this study will also be provided at the end of this chapter.

#### 1.1 Background of the study

In today's challenging world, an organization or a company demands a better leader than ever before. An organization needs a strong and good leadership, which require the leader to develop more qualities that could give a new way of working and thinking in order to survive today's challenging environment. The leaders must not only focus on overcoming the short-term challenges but also in the long-term challenges to gain competitive advantage. The leaders need to influence others, change others, achieve the desired goal and future outcome, and also taking more responsibility to make things happen and responsibility with his or her staffs.

According to Liu, C. H., Yu, Z. Y., and Tjosvold, D. (2002), a leader always involved in managing people and a leader can developed many different relationships with their employees or staffs. When they developed a high quality relationship, employees or staffs have been found to be more effective and productive. They were also more willing to involve in organization's useful activities (Liu, C. H. *et al.*, 2002). The study of Erkutlu, H. (2008) stated that there are no leaders if there are no followers. This shows how important a leader to an organization in order to have a good quality of relationship with the follower so that they can achieve the desired goal and outcome.



In this challenging and competitive environment, we are facing a rapid changes in environment and technology, and because of that, we need a leader that has the ability to think creatively, listen and communicate effectively, build commitment to the vision and mission, solve problem in a creative way and of course to deliver their role as a leader effectively. According to Earle (1996), recent organizational crisis have highlighted the need of leadership from the decision makers which become more critical in order to achieve the organizational success. It shows that leadership is an important matter to the organization which helps to increase the organization performance.

Oshagbemi, T. and Ocholi, S. A. (2006) said that the organizational leaders show a wide and varied variations in their styles and behavior. In another study by Erkutlu, H. (2008), he stated that a leader uses different leadership behavior in work settings. Therefore, leadership topic remains as one of the most important and relevant aspects in the organizational context to be discussed today.

Every person always wanted to be a leader in his or her country, in an organization, in a team, in a community, and so on. But being a leader is not so easy. There are some people that can lead others but there are also some people cannot. Leader that has high quality is an important requirement for organizations. All organizations are engaged in a global competitive environment and must do everything that possible to remain competitive. In order to remain and survive, they need the right leader.

According to Fiedler (1996), the organizational members who have certain skills, abilities, characteristics and visible in the organization are most likely to be perceived as a leader and will be selected as leader by their peers and also the organizational decision makers. In addition, according to Jogulu, D. U., and Wood, G. J. (2008), today's workforce is made up of employees from various ethnic and various racial groups which come all around the world. The various ethnic and different racial groups are creating higher degree of cultural diversity. Therefore, an organization need to choose the right leader that has the ability and skill to manage and also a leader that has a deeper understanding of cultural issues in order to expand and remain profitable in a longer term.



### **1.1.1 Women Leadership**

Nowadays, the entrance of women in management makes people open their eyes and their mind about the capabilities and the talent of women. Many women are now involved in community affairs, administration, entrepreneur, and so on. There are also more women that breaking free from the traditional and venturing into the higher position in management. This shows that time is changing where traditionally all the administration position or the higher position were dominated by men.

The topic of women leadership have been discussed in many studies and it continues to give issues, such as View of Women (Sheridan, A., 2001); Employment situation of women (Sadaquat, M. B., and Sheikh, Q. A., 2011); The stereotyping of Women (Crowford, A. L., 2000); Women's leadership styles (Valentine, S., and Godkin, L., 2000; Yaseen, Z., 2010; Stanford, J. H., Oates, B. R., and Flores, D., 1995); Advantages and Disadvantages (Eagly, A. H., 2007); Women Leadership (Zaharah Hassan and Abu Daud Silong, 2008); Experiences (Chow, I. H. S., 1995); Women's Leadership Effectiveness (Jogulu, U. D., and Wood, G. J., 2008; Chow, I. H. S., 2005); The presence of female executives (Brady, D., Isaacs, K., Reeves, M., Burroway, R., and Reynolds, M. 2011); and so on.

In this twenty first century, women have occupied high position in many organizations in the world. The number of women in the workforce had also increase and continuously rising. This has been supported by Chow, I.H.S. (1995), which in Hong Kong, the number of female participation rate in the labor force has increase from 36 percent in 1960s to about 50 percent in the 1990s.

Referring to Catalyst (2010), by 2009, the number of women in management, professional and related occupations in the United State (US) had grown to 51.4 percent. The data is show in Table 1.1.

**Table 1.1: Women in Management, Professional, and Related Occupations from 2003 to 2009 (United States)**

Official Dept. of Labor Category	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Management, professional, and related occupations	50.5	50.3	50.6	50.6	50.6	50.6	51.4

Source: Catalyst (2010)

In Malaysia, the number of female or women in labor force is also increasing. Malaysia's economy is a rapidly developed economy in Asia, which will demand more labor to participate and be a contributor to the economic development. According to The World Bank, the number of female in labor force in 2008 was 44.1 percent and the number was increased to 44.4 percent in 2009. The participation rate is the proportion of the population between the age of 15 and older that is economically active.

According to the study of Sadaquat, M. B. *et al.* (2011), the participation rate of women in Pakistan had also increased from 16.2 percent in the year of 1999-2000 up to 21.34 percent in the year 2007-2008. It has been perceived that the labor market is structurally gendered and women in managerial positions appear to enjoy the leadership role (Maimunah Ismail & Mariani Ibrahim, 2008). Even though there are only slightly changes in the number of women participation, but it shows that the number of women or female in the work force still increasing from day to day.

There are many issues that have been raised regarding to the women leadership. The questions or issues that always been discuss are why women are under-represented and under-utilized on the different levels of management, what type of contribution women can make, are women can be excellent or effective leaders and so on. It is more difficult for women than men to become a leader and to succeed in male-dominated leadership roles. This shows that, the leadership

roles have always been dominated by men and women will always be in the second place especially in managerial position.

This has been supported by the study of Sadaquat, M. B., *et al.* (2011), which the study found that the number of women in employment is still small. In the higher paying jobs, the employment of women or participation of women is very limited while Chow, I. H. S. (1995) stated in her study that, women in management are consciously or unconsciously discriminated against in several respects such as the achievements of women have been devalued, credibility has been undermined and their presence at the top had been resisted.

In the world today, there are many organizations that have hired and developed an excellent women talent. Those women are looking for ways to make a bigger contribution to the organization no matter in private sector, public sector and also in community development. According to the study by Zaharah Hassan and Abu Daud Silong (2008), there are several reasons why women become leaders in community development. The first one is to get a better quality of life which these women have the desire to serve and to ensure the establishment of harmonious community by building a friendly, safe, sound environment and comfortable neighborhood.

The second reason why women become leaders in community development is because of the religious calling which these leaders feel that as a servant of God, it is their duty and opportunity for them to be good to others.

Next, it is time to give back to others, for example, by conducting classes to the neighborhood children and teenagers, sponsoring weekly religious classes and continuously donate a large sum of money to various orphanages. The last reason is, helping to empower other women to do something that is important to them by providing platform and opportunity to others.

Referring to the Brady, D. *et al.* (2011), they found that women are more likely to be presented in retail trade sector and less likely to be in male-dominated

industries. This is happening because of the less opportunity and also barriers that women are facing.

Apart from the issue of women's barriers, which will be discussed more in the problem statement, the issue of whether women manage differently from men were also been discussed. According to a study by Valentine, S., and Godkin, L. (2000), the finding suggest that an individual with male supervisors views that their working situation as having a greater autonomy than working under female supervisors. The finding also indicate that an individual that worked under male supervisors will perceived greater variety in their job compared to those who worked under female supervisors. Therefore, the leadership style of the leaders is an important matter as it can influence and reflect on the employee's behavior.

## **1.2 Problem statements**

### **1.2.1 Perceptions**

As we realized, women's participation in the labor force has increased and become significant. Today, women dominate many fields, locally and globally. They have made an impressive and inspiring progress in their careers as a manager or as a leader. But it was not easy for all of these women to be in the higher position. They are many barriers and negative perceptions that these women leaderships have to face.

Many people have argued whether women can be a great leader. According to Stanford, J. H., Oates, B. R. and Flores, D. (1995), an argument has evolved over the last few decades which queries whether women manage or lead differently from the ways men do. Because women are having significant impact on the national economies, forecasts indicate that this trend will be continued upward well into the twenty-first century and the leadership-gender issues have become a significant one for today's.

According to Sadaquat, M. B., *et al.* (2011), the study found that the women in Pakistan show that they are suffering from market discrimination and putting them in a low-paid and low-status jobs. Majority of women are employed



in unorganized sectors which is having a low level of productivity, less income stability, and low security of employment.

As we discussed above, there are negative perceptions towards women leadership, but according Vilkinas, T., (2000), the result of his study indicated that the sampling unit or the population of the study do not have a different perception towards male and female managers. This shows that, although there are some people that cannot accept the participation of women in management, but there are still several people that can accept women in high position and management.

### **1.2.2 Stereotypes**

According to Crawford, A. L. (2000), the widespread attitudes people have about women in leadership positions are a perception. Perception with no objective basis, hence called stereotypes. There are many studies have also been done regarding to this gender stereotyping, such as Rigg, C. and Sparrow, J. (1994); Chow, I. H. S. (2005); Crawford, A. L. (2000) and so on. In the study by Rigg, C. and Sparrow, J. (1994), it is a clear evidence of gender diversity in the styles brought to jobs. In the study of Chow, I. H. S. (2005), gender stereotypes in presumed inherent differences in the personal qualities and characteristics will affect how people perceive leaders. Males were generally defined in terms of competency and strength, while females were categorized in terms of warmth and expressiveness.

Liu, J. and Wilson, D. (2001) stated that, the respondents were totally agreed that the gender was positively a key of constraint or limitations to their development and progression at workplace. The respondent also felt that it is difficult for men to perceive women in anything but a nurturing, child-rearing and also spousal support role. There were also predominant images of women as wives and mothers who spend their lives with washing, cleaning, and caring for their families. It shows that the stereotyping for men and women still exist. The study of Liu, J., and Wilson, D. (2001) also shows that women were paid less than their male counterparts for the same or similar types of work, which several respondents thought was a "travesty of justice".

Another limitation is by aging where the study of Liu, J., and Wilson, D. (2001) agreed that women, at the initial stage of the age cycle, were generally "single-minded, independent and more confident", so were less afraid to take risks. But at the age of 30 and above, most women admitted feeling "anxious about their future, their job, lasting relationships, and the need to settle down and raise a family", which they said was "also an ideal time to lay the foundation for a meaningful career". While the age becomes one of the restrictions for women working, the study also agreed that "spousal and sibling responsibilities were definitely a major restriction for working women. The study also found that women were treated indifferently by a male boss, who refused to speak to her when she became pregnant.

Referring to another study by Chow, I. H. S. (1995), people perceived that women's primary duty is at home and a man's is at work, which child-rearing, home-making and domestic organizing are a women's primary responsibilities at home. The married women may work but only to complement the male's breadwinner's income (Chow, I. H. S., 1995).

As we discussed earlier, the topic of women as a leader are not a new concept or new issue but it is still an issue to discuss and to argue until now. There are many challenges and difficulties that were faced by women leadership where they have to struggle in the competitive environment. They have also facing many perceptions from others, in positive and negative way, and also stereotypes. Women are also facing so many barriers to be leaders in today's time where they have to sacrifice on some other things.

Their life as a leader is going to be tiring, stressful, demanding and also facing challenges with being a good mother or good spouse. Therefore the topic of women and leadership has been getting a lot of attention because there are many question arise whether women can be really a successful leader if they have family and children, whether they can control their emotions, whether they can give full commitment to their teams by ignoring their family or vice versa, and so on.

### **1.2.3 Barriers for women leadership**

According to Smith, C. and Hutchinson, J.'s (1994) study, there have been numerous publications detailing the barriers that facing by women in pursuing their management career.

The example of studies that learning the barriers and obstacles of women leader faced are Chow, I. H. S. (2005); Liu, J. and Wilson, D. (2001); Maimunah Ismail and Mariani Ibrahim (2008) and so on. For women in workforce and management, the negative perceptions and lack of career opportunities is not only unfair but also contributes into low motivation, high stress and indirectly make these women give up to achieve what they want in their life. In the study by Alice H. Eagly (2007), more Americans prefer male than female bosses. Because of the prejudice barriers, women face challenges as leaders that men do not face.

Barriers of women in management occur everywhere in the worldwide. According to Maimunah Ismail and Mariani Ibrahim (2008), a barrier is defined as a factor, event or phenomenon that prevents, avoid or control access to individuals from making progress. In that study, they had identified three kinds of barrier that faced by women in Malaysia. Those are family- related barriers, societal barriers and organizational-related barriers.

For family-related barrier, most women in the study of Maimunah Ismail and Mariani Ibrahim (2008) rated their family commitment very high which is hard for them to balance in their work life. Therefore, these women have to reduce their time for their career in order to have more times with family.

For societal barrier, this study found that man was rated favorably during their evaluation resulting in higher rewards, although their performance was similar to woman. This indicates that the perception of lower status for women who are discriminated against and not receiving what they should be getting. For organizational-related barriers, the study of Maimunah Ismail and Mariani Ibrahim (2008) found that it is difficult to take time off and the company still expecting them to put work first. Women perceived that the organization's culture was discriminated. This study also found that it was difficult to practice the policy of

company due to work overload which sometimes required them to work on weekends.

Maimunah Ismail and Mariani Ibrahim (2008) also suggested that, even though women have their responsibilities in their life, significant revolution is needed in both family and organizational structures. The example of this significant revolution is the support of spouse in household activities. Apart from that, organization also must give support, understand and play as important role in order to promote the women's progression. The organization must create a working environment that suitable with women's career progression, such as through flexible time working and facilities for childcare.

According to Liu, J. and Wilson, D., (2001), they found that family responsibility is one of the barriers that faced by women. Spousal and sibling responsibilities were definitely one of restriction for working women. The study also provides several ways to remove the obstacles. One of it is proposing a training program in sex equality, which could be extended to schools and other educational institutions to be as part of the education curriculum.

Apart from that, to remove the obstacles, employers or organizations need to stop preaching or propagandizing and learn to practice equality in the work place. The organizations must also incorporate an appropriate policy or procedures so that it will help to avoid the gender discrimination at work. The organizations also need to introduce family-friendly policies which will help working women to give commitment while increasing productivity.

After discussing the perceptions, stereotypes and barriers that women were facing, now we know that women leadership has been an important topic to discuss. There are many studies and articles that have been written about the glass ceiling, the standard, the performance, ability, leadership style and barriers to women in management or corporation. In this modern age, there are still people thinking that a woman is incapable and cannot be a better leader than men. . Apart from that, they are also comparing the leadership styles of women and man, women can lead others or not and women is better than men or vice versa.