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## **GENDER ASPECT IN LEADERSHIP: WHO IS BETTER IN LEADING POSITIONS**

### **Abstract**

This article is devoted to the relevant gender aspects of leadership: who is better in leading positions. The attitude to the term “leader” often stereotypically brings about an image of a dominating man in most people’s mind, even today. However, with changing times gender and leadership efficiency remain rather a debatable topic. Nevertheless, decreasing gender gaps globally raise important questions from managerial, economic and psychological perspectives. Are women’s leadership styles different from men? Can women be effective leaders as men in managing an organization? The purpose of this research is to analyze the gender aspect of leadership and identify characteristics of both male and female leaders in an organization. Even many studies show that there are only differences in leadership, when it comes to gender, several studies show that differences in perception, behavior and strategies may eventually change the functionality of an organization. The given study is based on the comparative analysis of various leadership styles by S. Reinemund and I. Nooyi from the PepsiCo. The findings have shown that women leaders use a more nurturing and participative method of leading an organization by giving more emphasis on communication and developing personal relationships with employees. Whereas, men tend to be more focused on tasks and hierarchy. However, there are no very significant or special effects found on leadership based merely on gender.

Key words: management, leadership, gender issues, organization, business, management style, efficiency.

With ever increasing number of women entering leadership roles today, the question of how their leadership style differs from that of men and if they are more effective leaders in comparison with men are common debate topics. Today, as more young women enter the workforce, they strive towards achieving leadership and work their way to being effective leaders that guide an organization to reach its goals and long-term objectives. The paper will compare and analyze the difference in leadership styles of the former (male) and current (female) CEO’s of PepsiCo in order to rectify if there is a significant effect of gender in effective leadership.

Literature review. Definition of leadership. The concept of leadership has been evolving with time. In the past, leadership was based on the “great man” theory which referred to leaders as a heroic, male character with great charisma and intelligence [1]. Today, leadership is viewed as the ability to adapt to change and guide fellow members of the group to go through change in order to reach goals and objectives. There are various determinants of traits and characteristics that make an effective leader such as, honesty, assertiveness, education, intelligence, skills and knowledge [2].

Gender. Gender is a sociological aspect that is defined as the role a man or a woman chooses to play in their community which can change over time, place and stages of life [1, p. 583]. The concept of gender can change depending on social class, political status, ethnic background, mental and physical state and age. Studying gender and related issues is crucial since the results can reveal how are men and women different in terms of society and how this impact their decision making.

Differences in characteristics of male and female leaders. Recently the world has witnessed a remarkable increase in the number of women joining a workforce which led to an increased curiosity if gender really has a great impact on leadership style and outcome. Nevertheless, at higher levels of an organization, women yet remain inadequately represented [3]. A summary of a number of studies acknowledges key differences in characteristics of male and female leaders, as follows (Figure 1, p. 120).

Male Leadership Style	Female Leadership Style
<input type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Considerate
<input type="checkbox"/> Transactional	<input type="checkbox"/> Transformational
<input type="checkbox"/> Autocratic	<input type="checkbox"/> Participative
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefers giving instructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Socially expressive
<input type="checkbox"/> Business-oriented	<input type="checkbox"/> People-oriented

Figure 1 – Key differences in male and female leadership styles

Note – Source: Compiled on the base of [1, 4].

However, considering the fact that today the world focuses more on participative business environment, various researchers have revealed that possessing a more feminine style of leadership is useful. Characteristics such as being socio-expressive, people-oriented and high communication skills are highly looked upon and such leaders, are considered to be effective.

Theories on gender and leadership styles. There are few links that can be made between gender and leadership effectiveness. Various task oriented behaviors are usually associated with masculine stereotypes whereas, common feminine stereotypes exhibit more interpersonal behaviors like showing empathy and concern. Democratic, autocratic, laissez-faire, situational and transformational are some styles of leadership known [3, p. 96–98]. While the autocratic, a leadership style in which the leader makes all the decisions, way requires more masculine characteristics since it places a high emphasis on dominance, the democratic and situational leadership style requires on to possess more feminine characteristics such as patience. Today, as global environment becomes highly competitive, transformational leadership style is seen as a favorable way to be effective. This style of leadership is more congruent with feminine stereotype. It is associated with nurturance and agreeableness and places a negative view on aggression. Nevertheless, task-orientation is more associated and high-performance require more masculine traits. All in all, the leadership theories neither endorse completely masculine not feminine characteristics altogether.

While there are several studies that show that leadership is purely based on biological characteristics (sex), based on the idea that man are innate leaders due to presence of masculinity derived from hormones and that leadership in women is unattainable. Due to this, incongruence amongst female leaders is common and unfavorable. This leads to poor perceptions of the female leader in an organization [4]. The role congruity theory suggests that female leaders commonly become targets of prejudice when they behave in manners that are not congruent with masculinity. However, additional research needs to be carried out if this theory is completely true in today’s generation [5].

On the other hand, research demonstrates that gender plays a crucial role and that biological presentation has an insignificant effect on determining a leader. With increasing dimensions to gender, the research shows that people who possess masculinity and exhibited more assertive behaviors were looked upon as leaders than those who portrayed rather feminine behaviors.

The research problem, goals and objectives. The research problem is the question of how are male and female leadership style different from one another and if not, then which characteristics of a gender can bring about effective leadership?

The main goal of the research is to identify the key differences in gender and leadership style and to determine the characteristics of each one that are useful to make an effective leader.

To achieve the research goal, the following objectives has been identified: 1) to study the differences in leadership from a gender perspective; 2) to analyze which characteristics are useful to bring about effective leadership.

As an object of the research it has been found ‘PepsiCo’ as one of the largest food and beverage producing multinational in the world. Its headquarter is in the United States. Owing brands like Frito-lay snacks, Pepsi, Tropicana juices, Quaker Oats and Gatorade Sports drink, PepsiCo’s profit rose by nearly 30% in the fourth quarter of 2017 across the globe, according to Forbes in 2017. Steven S. Reinemund, the former CEO of PepsiCo, retired in 2006 and was replaced by Indra Nooyi, current CEO.

The key research findings. PepsiCo's former CEO, Steven S. Reinemund, the former CEO of PepsiCo, is now the dean of School of Business, Wake Forest University. The American origin man lead PepsiCo from 2001 to 2006 and eventually, retired from his position in 2007. According to Reinemund, his leadership style evolved with the context of the situation and the work that needed to be done. During his lead, PepsiCo went through a shift from focus on unhealthy beverages and food to a healthier product range that the company then offered its consumers. Under his lead, revenue of the multinational grew by nearly \$10 billion and net income of employees rose by a net of 70%. This rectifies the fact that effective leadership and dynamics resulted to overall growth the business in spite of the presence of enormous competitors such as Coca-Cola in the same industry. According to sources and interviews, it has been admitted by Reinemund that his leadership style differed from when he was a division head versus when he was given the stand of CEO. He claimed that being in the position of a division head, one can play with using different tactics but as a CEO, one needs to become a coach for others in the team. As per sources, Reinemund's secret to success and business growth was being aware of the personal aspirations of the team workers. During that time, while Coca-Cola had spent a large financial amount into raising revenues, PepsiCo had massively focused on raising efficiency by organizational linkagee to obtain competitive advantage [6]. A merger with Frito-Lay was a crucial turning point as a CEO for Reinemund, it meant more responsibilities and more decision making. Frito-Lay now accounts for nearly 50% of PepsiCo's sales. Reinemund was a man with strict discipline and standards since he had been associated with the navy in the past. He preferred his staff to be dressed formally and follow clear standards. Another key decision he came up was the introduction of nutritious foods in order to satisfy market demand. With the introduction of Quaker oats and Tropicana, Reinemund had decided to make more nutritious products and also cut down on trans-fats used in their snack products. Being a male, Steven S. Reinemund's leadership style was based more on hierarchy than participation.

PepsiCo's current CEO, Indra Nooyi. The largest food and beverage producing company, PepsiCo's CEO is Indra Nooyi, an Indian origin perfectionist who guides the team of PepsiCo towards constant improvement. Today, Nooyi ranks as one of the most influential women in the world. Her role in PepsiCo is rather heroic due to her excellent leadership style. Her entrance as a CFO marked a major turning point for PepsiCo. Since 2006, the annual revenue of PepsiCo has doubled to \$63 billion. Her primary initiative was to shift the focus towards health and hence, she broke tie ups with major fast food chains such as KFC and rather focused on acquiring Quaker Oats, Tropicana and Gatorade. After being promoted to being the CEO, she investigated heavily on consumer behavior patterns and knew that performance with purpose was the key to out beat their competitors. For this, she personally walked into stores to observe consumers and then created a team to change the phase of Pepsi. She manages a multinational with over 300,000 employees, globally. As a leader, she is known to be extremely nurturing towards her employees and provides perks such as family leaves for employees [6, p. 43–47].

Finalizing the results, the purpose of the paper is to analyze the key differences in leadership styles of male and female leaders as well as to provide a judgement of whether these differences have any significant impact on effectiveness of leadership. PepsiCo's former and current CEO's were analyzed in the study. While the former CEO was a male, the current CEO is a female who has been running PepsiCo for more than a decade. Several differences were observed amongst the leadership strategies used by both CEO's. It is evident that Reinemund's, former CEO, portrays masculine characteristics such as paying attention to task-orientation, formal dressing codes and following set standards. His leadership was based more on hierarchy than participation. Whereas, the current CEO, Nooyi's leadership style is clearly more democratic. She focuses more on communication with her employees and taking decisions to a personal level. Moreover, her immense concern is a reflection of the fact that women care more about health of the people they are surrounded by than men usually do. The fact that she provides family leaves proves her nurturing personality at the same time, her powerful decision making skills. All in all, it is seen that where Reinmund is more of an autocratic leader, Nooyi portrays herself as a democratic leader.

The results of the study depict that there are various differences in the style of male and female leadership. Certain distinctions like men usually prefer formality at work while women tend to be more personal and open to informality. Also, men tend to focus majorly on work while women tend

to consider the personal well-being of their employees and understand family needs more clearly. The results of this study are not based on a large group of men and women but rather, on two leaders, one male and one female, of whom the comparison has been carried out. Therefore, it may not be a hundred percent accurate. Moreover, from the time of Reinmund to Nooyi, there has been major social, technological, economical and commercial changes which impacted on how consumers behave as well as their change of preferences. For example, the shift towards healthy foods is a result of increased health awareness amongst consumers which is why Nooyi decided to promote PepsiCo as a health friendly brand [3, p. 108]. Moreover, today employees prefer a friendly working environment rather than working in a business that only aims on profit.

The main issues of this research is the limitation of data that clearly differentiates the style of both Reinmund's and Nooyi's leadership. Next, the usage of news articles and interviews may set a more biased outlook towards either of them which to an extent, makes it difficult to understand each leadership styles clearly. In today's time, leadership is more context based than before. Now, transformational leadership style, flexibility and task-orientation are more sought after while searching for a leader in most organization, especially when it effects a large number of people.

Therefore, the results show that there no significant effects of gender types on effective leadership. A field study carried out in the Netherlands investigated whether behaviors of male and female leaders actually influenced sales in department stores. The results demonstrated that, most managers were task-oriented, people-oriented and transformational and that, no significant differences are there between male and female managing styles [1, p. 592].

However, some studies prove that various characteristics possessed by either male or female leaders are proven to be effective. Another study carried out in 2001 showed that female leaders tend to portray transformational leadership style which is a leadership style based on charisma, intellectual stimulation of employees, inspiring employees and individualized consideration. Transformational leadership is seen as beneficial for ease in adaptation to the changing working environment today. Nevertheless, regardless of gender, today majority of the leader adapt the transformational leadership style [2, p. 283].

The major limitation of this study was the lack of statistical data to clearly outline the differences between the impact of Reinmund's and Nooyi's leadership. Also, since both CEO's come from varying cultural backgrounds, this may have added to differences in perception and decision-making.

The scope of this research is that the analysis can be used to further study and rectify differences between male and female leadership. The usefulness of this research is that characteristics that are considered useful for effective leadership can be adapted by leaders in order to guide the organization to reach its goals and objectives. For example, cooperation and participation seen in woman leaders can be used by male leaders to adapt to rapidly changing work environments.

The impact of gender on leadership has been a widely discussed issue in the social world mainly, due to the emergence of female leaders who yet face issues of neglecting despite their effective leadership styles. The comparative analysis done between Reinmund and Nooyi, former and current CEO's of PepsiCo, respectively, showed that certain characteristics such as task orientation, cooperation, communication and transformational ways of leading tend to show positive results on an organization's balance sheet. However, there are certain factors that needed to be considered to further rectify the results of the study. Some recommendations for improvisation and much accuracy of results can be studying patterns of leadership style of a wider group of leaders working in macro-level firms. Also, the sources of information can be improved if they were based on interviews and if a behavioral analysis was carried out.

To sum up, being of a certain gender has no significant effect on how good or bad they are as a leader. Nevertheless, some characteristics and styles such as task-orientation, mostly seen in men, and participation seen in women can make an effective leader. The comparative analysis between the former (Reinmund) and current (Nooyi) CEO's of PepsiCo was done in the study. In the rapidly changing work environments today, the gap between male and females in the cooperate world has narrowed which is why it becomes important to observe and understand the differences and diversity that gender can bring about to an organization not only to promote gender equality but also to promote education for the underprivileged girls living in conservative societies.



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**Аңдатпа**

Бұл мақала көшбасшылық позицияларда өзін жақсы танытатындардың өзекті гендерлік көшбасшылық мәселелеріне арналған. «Көшбасшы» терминіне деген көзқарас көбіне стереотипті және адамдардың көпшілігінің санасында үстем адам бейнесін қалыптастырады. Дегенмен, уақыт өте келе басшылықтың жынысы мен тиімділігі барынша даулы және талқыланатын тақырып болып қалуда. Бүкіл дүниежүзінде гендерлік алшақтықтың қысқаруы басқарушылық, экономикалық және психологиялық көзқарастар тұрғысынан маңызды мәселелерді көтереді. Әйелдердің көшбасшылық стилі ерлерден ерекшелене ме? Әйелдер ұйымды басқаруда тиімді көшбасшы болуы мүмкін бе? Бұл зерттеудің мақсаты – көшбасшылықтың гендерлік аспектісін талдау және ұйымда ерлер мен әйелдердің басшылар ретіндегі сипаттамаларын айқындау. Көптеген зерттеулер көшбасшылықта тек қана айырмашылықтар бар екенін көрсеткенімен, гендерлік аспект туралы сөз қозғалғанда, кейбір зерттеулер көрсеткендей, қабылдау, мінез-құлық және стратегиялардағы айырмашылықтар сайып келгенде, ұйымның функционалдығын өзгертуі мүмкін. Бұл зерттеу басшылықтың әр түрлі, атап айтқанда, «PepsiCo» компаниясындағы С. Рейнемунд және И. Нуйи стилдерін салыстырмалы талдауға негізделген. Нәтижелер көрсеткендей, көшбасшы әйелдер коммуникацияға және қызметкерлермен жеке қарым-қатынастарды дамытуға көбірек көңіл бөле отырып, ұйым басшылығында тәрбие және бірге қатысушылық тәсілдерін қолданады. Ал ер адамдар негізінен міндеттер мен оларды орындау сатыларына көңіл бөледі. Алайда, тек қана гендерлік аспектілерге негізделген ешқандай ерекше, сапалық айырмашылықтар анықталған жоқ.

Тірек сөздер: менеджмент, көшбасшылық, гендерлік мәселелер, ұйым, бизнес, басшылық стилі, тиімділік.

**Аннотация**

Данная статья посвящена актуальным гендерным вопросам лидерства: кто лучше проявляет себя на лидерских позициях. Отношение к термину «лидер» часто стереотипно и создает образ доминирующего человека в сознании большинства людей. Тем не менее со временем пол и эффективность руководства остаются весьма спорной и обсуждаемой темой. Сокращение гендерных разрывов во всем мире поднимает важные вопросы с управленческой, экономической и психологической точек зрения. Стиль женского лидерства отличается от мужского? Могут ли женщины быть эффективными лидерами в управлении организацией? Цель данного исследования – проанализировать гендерный аспект лидерства и определить характеристики руководителей как мужского, так и женского пола в организации. Хотя многие исследования показывают, что есть различия только в лидерстве, когда речь заходит о гендерном аспекте, некоторые исследования показывают, что различия в восприятии, поведении и стратегиях могут в конечном итоге изменить функциональность организации. Данное исследование основано на сравнительном анализе различных стилей руководства, в частности, С. Рейнемунда и И. Нуйи в компании «PepsiCo». Результаты показывают, что женщины-лидеры применяют более воспитательный и соучастный подходы в руководстве организацией, уделяя больше внимания коммуникации и развитию личных отношений с сотрудниками, в то время как мужчины сконцентрированы более на задачах и иерархии их выполнения. Однако никаких качественных различий особого характера, основанных исключительно на гендерных аспектах, выявлено не было.

Ключевые слова: менеджмент, лидерство, гендерные вопросы, организация, бизнес, стиль руководства, эффективность.