



The perceptions of female leaders humble leadership global scenario-concept, need and challenges

Mamidi Kishan

B.Ed (Bachelor of Education), Department of Political Science, O Smania University, Telangana, India

Abstract

In the present scenario, the present study explores the perceptions of political leaders of humble leadership in despite the proliferation of leadership research in the past years, investigating the ways in which female and male leaders enact and experience leadership continues to surface unanswered questions. Through the framework of selection, development, leadership style, and performance, it report gender-related findings from a broad survey of existing literature from the past three decades. It includes differential rates of selection for female and male leaders; leader development considerations that vary by gender; evidence in favor of general similarities in leadership style between female and male leaders; and similar performance outcomes between women and men leaders. The importance of context is it job type, group composition, organizational culture, or industry/sector, will be revealed. The comparison of most of the studies the perceptions of political leaders of humble leadership implementation of different organizations.

Keywords: leadership, humble leadership, and perceptions of male and female leader

Introduction

Leadership is the ability of an individual or a group of individuals to influence and guide followers or other members of an organization. Leadership involves making sound -- and sometimes difficult -- decisions, creating and articulating a clear vision, establishing achievable goals and providing followers with the knowledge and tools necessary to achieve those goals. An effective leader possess the following characteristics: self-confidence, strong communication and management skills, creative and innovative thinking, perseverance in the face of failure, willingness to take risks, openness to change, and levelheadedness and creativeness in times of crisis.

“Effective leadership is all about building trust and relationships. With Humble Leadership, Ed and Peter help us actually get there by understanding relationships on a much more granular and tangible level.” —Severin Schwan, CEO, Roche G

“Humble leadership” might seem like one of the biggest oxymoron phrases since “jumbo shrimp,” and that’s potentially true. Although all leadership is really about soft skills, and we all know that without humility people are unable to learn, humble leadership is still fairly rare. We’ve got worse, bell-ringing managers clogging up companies to a level where we don’t even know what to do. Gallup has said 82 percent of managers end up as the wrong hire. Bad leadership costs companies \$144,000 per day. Crappy middle management costs the U.S. \$3 trillion/year. These are all very real, very sad things about the state of leadership in America (and the world). Humble leadership isn’t walking through that door.

“I stand here before you not as a prophet, but as a humble servant of you, the people.”- Nelson Mandela

According to research from the University Of Washington Foster School Of Business, humble people are more likely to be high performers in individual and team settings and they also tend to make the most effective leaders. Yet the attribute of humility seems to be neglected in leadership

development programs and it’s often misunderstood. The research team defined humility as a three-part personality trait consisting of an accurate view of the self, teach ability, and appreciation of others’ strengths. “Humble leaders foster learning-oriented teams and engage employees. They also optimize job satisfaction and employee retention.”

Leadership Principles of Humility

Two of the best predictors of performance — both academic and on the job — are intelligence and conscientiousness, and humility predicted performance better than both. The best leaders are the people who are behind the scenes, guiding their employees and letting them shine.

This “quieter” leadership approach — listening, being transparent, being aware of limitations, and appreciating strengths and contributions — is also an effective way to engage employees.

To shape a formal leadership development program, the research suggests a curriculum designed around six basic principles:

- **Know what you don’t know:** Resist “Master of the Universe” impulses. You may excel in many things, but as a leader, rely on those who have relevant qualifications and expertise. Know when to defer or delegate.
- **Resist falling for your own publicity:** We all tend to put the best spin on our success, and then frequently forget that reality isn’t as flawless. Basking in the glory of a triumph can be energizing, but too big a dose is intoxicating and it can blur our vision and impair judgment.
- **Never underestimate the competition:** You may be brilliant, ambitious, and audacious, but the world is filled with other hard-working, highly intelligent, and creative professionals. Don’t let your guard down and think that they and their innovations aren’t a serious threat.
- **Embrace and promote a spirit of service:** Employees

(and customers) quickly figure out which leaders are dedicated to helping them succeed, and which are scrambling for personal success at their expense.

- **Listen to the weird ideas:** There's ample evidence the most imaginative and valuable ideas tend to come from left field, or perhaps from an employee who may seem a little offbeat or may not hold an exalted position in the organization.
- **Be passionately curious:** Constantly welcome and seek out new knowledge, and insist on curiosity from those around you. There are correlations between curiosity and many positive leadership attributes, including emotional and social intelligence. Take it from Albert Einstein: "I have no special talent," he claimed, "I am only passionately curious."

Leadership in all its forms—organizational, political, military, and even sports—continues to command the general public's attention. In academia, leadership research has also flourished, with a recent Web of Science search for "leadership" revealing more than 165,000 articles. Women in leadership have also come under study, with approximately 5% of current Web of Science articles addressing both leadership and gender related issues. With the nomination of the first female presidential candidate and the rapidly changing demographics of the United States, it is becoming even more important to understand the ways in which social identity variables, such as gender interacts with leadership. More specifically, determining whether or not qualitative differences exist between male and female leaders. The purpose of this report is to provide the beginnings of an answer to this question, through a systematic summary of the state of leadership research as it specifically pertains to women leaders, providing utility for both practitioners in the field, as well as researchers in academia explore the experiences and perceptions of female leaders throughout all stages of the leadership process.

This framework is a point of departure from previous work in this domain that often explains gender difference when it comes to leadership by situating the findings in the traditional diversity literature (Northouse, 2015). Prior research on women leaders focuses heavily on stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination as prominent explanations for gender differences in the leadership experience (e.g., Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 1983; Rudman & Glick, 2001). These explanations provide an important departure point for our research especially with regard to understanding how individual-level factors affect women leaders. Our framework allows for a different understanding of gender differences by distilling gender and leadership research into four discrete domains: selection, development, style, and performance, which are most commonly assessed in the leadership field and in organizational life (Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994)

Using the framework outlined above, we examine how, and under what conditions, male and female leaders are selected, the ways in which they are developed (or would ideally be developed, given the appropriate resources), the leadership styles they are likely to enact, and their effectiveness. Viewing the existing gender-related leadership research through these four domains allows us to explore whether men and women are selected for leadership positions at different rates and whether they are given the same developmental opportunities. Furthermore, we can begin to

address whether men and women demonstrate different leadership styles, and whether men or women generally perform better as leaders. The answers to these questions are complex, varied, and have been the focus of countless studies to date. We provide a recent view of the field as it relates to women and leadership and expand on Eagly and Johnson's (1990) meta-analysis on leadership behavior by offering additional dimensions of analysis (i.e., selection, development, and performance). Due to the depth and comprehensiveness of Eagly and Johnson's (1990) review, studies published before 1990 were not included in our report. Thus, this survey of the literature has two aims: to document the recent findings on leadership as it relates to women and to provide a new framework in which to look at and understand the experiences of women leaders. Our exploration into women and leadership begins with a review of the public and scientific discourse devoted to leader selection, the first tenet of our leadership frame.

As selection is the first phase of the leadership process, it is an appropriate departure point for our report. To that end, this section will review the recent literature on gender and leader selection in order to determine how often women are selected for positions of leadership, the conditions surrounding their appointments, and future areas of exploration within this domain. Despite the fact that women make up nearly half of the U. S. workforce (47%; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011), men hold the vast majority of leadership positions in the corporate and political arenas (Catalyst, 2016; Center for American Women and Politics, 2016; Eagly & Carli, 2007). While women have had success obtaining supervisory and middle management positions in rates proportional to their representation in the workforce, access to the upper echelons of leadership still remains relatively illusive (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2011). In S&P 500 companies, women occupy less than a third of executive- and senior-level positions (25.1%), less than a fifth of all board seats (19.9%), and less than 5% of all chief executive officers (4.2%; Catalyst, 2016). When it comes to political leadership, women are also underrepresented in elected office. To date, the United States has never elected a woman to the presidential office. Of the 535 seats in the U.S. Congress, women occupy only 104 seats (19.4%; Center for American Women and Politics, 2016).

Furthermore, only 24.6% of state legislators, 12% of state governors, and 18.4% of mayors are women (Center for American Women and Politics, 2016). The underrepresentation of women in senior leadership positions is not limited to the United States alone. Gender inequality when it comes to leader selection is well documented worldwide (e.g., Grant Thornton, 2016; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016). Women hold less than a quarter of senior leadership positions in corporations across the globe, with a third of businesses having no women at all in senior roles (Grant Thornton, 2016). Internationally, women also are underrepresented in political office. Currently, only 19 countries have a female head of state or government (United Nations, 2016). Worldwide, less than a quarter of parliamentarians are female (22.6%; Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2016). Taken together, these statistics demonstrate that selection rates for senior leadership positions do differ for men and women, both in the United States, and across the globe. When it comes to being selected for high-level leadership positions, men have a distinct advantage.

Importance and Challenges

Facts and Figures: Women's Leadership and Political Participation

Women's equal participation and leadership in political and public life are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. However, data shows that women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making worldwide, and achieving gender parity in political life is far off.

Women in Executive Government Positions

- Women serve as Heads of State or Government in only 22 countries, and 119 countries have never had a woman leader. At the current rate, gender equality in the highest positions of power will not be reached for another 130 years.
- Just 10 countries have a woman Head of State, and 13 countries have a woman Head of Government.
- Only 21 per cent of government ministers were women, with only 14 countries having achieved 50 per cent or more women in cabinets. With an annual increase of just 0.52 percentage points, gender parity in ministerial positions will not be achieved before 2077.
- The five most commonly held portfolios by women ministers are: Family/children/youth/elderly/disabled; followed by Social affairs; Environment/natural resources/energy; Employment/labour/vocational training, and Women affairs/gender equality.

Women in National Parliaments

- Only 25 per cent of all national parliamentarians are women, up from 11 per cent in 1995.
- Only four countries have 50 per cent or more women in parliament in single or lower houses: Rwanda with 61 per cent, Cuba with 53 per cent, Bolivia with 53 per cent, and the United Arab Emirates with 50 per cent.
- A further 19 countries have reached or surpassed 40 per cent, including nine countries in Europe, five in Latin America and the Caribbean, four in Africa, and one in the Pacific.
- More than two-thirds of these countries have applied gender quotas—either legislated candidate quotas or reserved seats—opening space for women's political participation in national parliaments.
- Globally, there are 27 States in which women account for less than 10 per cent of parliamentarians in single or lower houses, including four single/lower chambers with no women at all.
- At the current rate of progress, gender parity in national legislative bodies will not be achieved before 2063.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Northern America, women hold more than 30 per cent of parliamentary seats. In Northern Africa and Western Asia and Oceania, there are less than 17 per cent of women in national parliaments. Women's representation is the lowest in the Pacific Island States as women hold 6 per cent of seats, and they are not represented in parliaments in three countries.

Women in Local Government

- Data from 133 countries shows that women constitute 2.18 million (36 per cent) of elected members in local deliberative bodies. Only two countries have reached 50 per cent, and an additional 18 countries have more than

40 per cent women in local government.

- Regional variations are also noted for women's representation in local deliberative bodies, as of January 2020: Central and Southern Asia, 41 per cent; Europe and Northern America, 35 per cent; Oceania, 32 per cent; Sub-Saharan Africa, 29 per cent; Eastern and South-Eastern Asia, 25 per cent; Latin America and the Caribbean, 25 per cent; Western Asia and Northern Africa, 18 per cent.

Expanding Participation

- Balanced political participation and power-sharing between women and men in decision-making is the internationally agreed target set in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Most countries in the world have not achieved gender balance, and few have set or met ambitious targets for gender parity (50–50).
- There is established and growing evidence that women's leadership in political decision-making processes improves them. For example, research on *panchayats* (local councils) in India discovered that the number of drinking water projects in areas with women-led councils was 62 per cent higher than in those with men-led councils. In Norway, a direct causal relationship between the presence of women in municipal councils and childcare coverage was found.
- Women demonstrate political leadership by working across party lines through parliamentary women's caucuses—even in the most politically combative environments—and by championing issues of gender equality, such as the elimination of gender-based violence, parental leave and childcare, pensions, gender-equality laws, and electoral reform

The Best Leaders Are Humble Leaders

When we think of great qualities of leaders, the first things that come to mind are traits like charisma, bravado and vision. You wouldn't expect to see humility on that list—but you should. Research shows the effectiveness of humble leadership: Humble leaders have more influence, they attract better people, and they earn more confidence, respect and loyalty than those who rely upon ego and power. In my work as a coach, I emphasize not just the importance of humility but also the fact that it's a skill. Here are some key skills of humble leaders. Look through and see which you already have and which you need to develop:

- **They lead to serve:** Humble leaders shift attention away from them and focus on the contributions and needs of those around them.
- **They have reserves of inner strength:** Being a humble leader isn't a sign of meekness or powerlessness but of great inner strength. The best leaders are humble on the outside and confident on the inside.
- **They admit to their mistakes:** All leaders are human, which means they all make mistakes from time to time. When you are willing to share your own missteps and mistakes, it allows others to connect to you in a deeper way. Humility is a quality that lets others see your humanity.
- **They seek input from others:** The first step of turning to others for input is being vulnerable enough to admit that you need the help and insight of others—which is a sign of great character on its own.

- **They know themselves:** Humble leaders know who they are and behave in a way that's consistent with that knowledge. They also recognize where there's room for improvement.
- **They are genuine:** Humble leaders know the importance of being authentic. They are the same person in private, in public, and in personal life, in every situation and with every kind of people.
- **They invite trust:** A humble leader know that trust—earning it, giving it and building it—is the foundation of great leadership.
- **They treat others with respect:** Humble leaders are consistent and disciplined in their treatment of others. They treat everyone with respect regardless of their position, role or title.
- **They understand their limitations:** Humble leaders have the confidence to recognize their own weaknesses. Rather than viewing their limits as a threat or a sign of frailty, they surround themselves with others who have complementary skills.
- **They model the way:** Humble leaders lead by example. Their leadership isn't expressed as "because I'm the boss" authority but in every one of their actions and words.
- **Lead From Within:** There is always room to be a better person and leader. If you can cultivate humility as a skill, you will be strong when you are weak and brave when you are scared.

Great Leaders Expect Everyone to Be Great

Great leaders expect greatness from themselves and in turn they challenge others to be great too. They challenge people to do better, be better and to meet a higher standard. They do it because settling for substandard, low quality; second rate leadership is not an option. Great leaders set high standards for their own performance, and for those around them.

Leadership is about service to others, being your best so you can offer your best. The high standards of great leaders extend beyond the work they do include being a person of character, a leader of integrity and one who inspires the same in those around them. Here are some of the ways great leaders elevate the standard for themselves and for others:

- **Establish clarity:** Standards reflect values, so before you establish or change them you need to know with certainty what's most important to you and communicate that with clarity. When you're clear on values, making decisions becomes much simpler.
- **Show self-respect:** Never lower your standards for anyone or anything. The self-respect that comes with firm standards is everything. Whatever everyone around you is doing, stay true to your ideals. Do what you need to do and do it with meaning and purpose.
- **Passionately protest mediocrity:** "Good enough" are some of the most dangerous words a leader can hear. Nothing great was ever established on a foundation of mediocrity. Always demand more from you than anyone else could ever expect.
- **Never let anyone tell you your standards are too high:** There's nothing wrong with wanting the best for yourself and your team. When you shift your standards you create change—positive change when you raise standards, negative change when you lower them.
- **Protect your standards:** Make sure people know

what's expected, and be consistent in enforcing those expectations. If you allow disrespect, that's what you'll receive.

- **Never apologize for demanding excellence:** Never apologize for high standards. Those who rise up to meet them are the ones you want around you; those who try and need help are the ones you can work with; and the ones who reject it aren't your people anyway.
- **Lead from within:** When it comes to standards, one thing I've found to be true: However high or low you place your standards that are how far people will rise.

Conclusion

Effective leaders are willing to admit mistakes, share credit, and learn from others. Humility in leadership also leads to higher rates of employee engagement, more job satisfaction, and lower rates of turnover. There is a common belief that leadership is vital for effective organizational and societal functioning and success. However, we can conclude that leadership is the ability to direct a group of people in realising a common goal. This is done by people applying their leadership attributes.

References

1. Bono J, Ilies R. Charisma, positive emotions and mood contagion. *The Leadership Quarterly*,2006:17:317-334.
2. Mobley WH, Horner SO, Hollingworth AT. An evaluation of precursors of hospital employee turnover. *Journal of Applied Psychology*,1978:63(4):408-414.
3. Nielsen R, Marrone JA, Slay HS. A new look at humility: Exploring the humility concept and its role in socialized charismatic leadership. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies*,2010:17(1):33-43.
4. Owens BP, Hekman DR. Modeling How to Grow: An Inductive Examination of Humble Leader Behaviors, Contingencies, and Outcomes. *Academy of Management Journal*,2012:55(4):787-818.
5. Shore LM, Martin HJ. Job satisfaction and organizational commitment in relation to work performance and turnover intentions. *Human Relations*,1989:42(7):625-638.
6. US Bureau of Labor Statistics. Current population survey, 2015. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.pdf>
7. Van Engen ML, Willemsen TM. Sex and leadership styles: A meta-analysis of research published in the 1990s. *Psychological Reports*,2004:94:3-18.
8. Stevens CK, Kristof AL. Making the right impression: A field study of applicant impression management during job interviews. *Journal of Applied Psychology*,1995:80:587-606.
9. Sturm S. Second generation employment discrimination: A structural approach. *Columbia Law Review*,2001:101:458-568.
10. UN Women calculation based on information provided by Permanent Missions to the United Nations. Only elected Heads of State have been taken into account.
11. UN Women calculation based on information provided by Permanent Missions to the United Nations. Some leaders hold positions of both head of government and head of state. Only elected Heads of State have been taken into account.
12. Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women. Women in politics 2020 map, 2020.

13. Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women. Women in politics 2020 map, 2020.
14. Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women in national parliaments, as at 1 October 2020.
15. Ibid. UN Women analysis.
16. UN Women calculation based on IDEA, Stockholm University and IPU, Gender Quotas Database, and IPU, Women in national parliaments, as at 1 October 2020.
17. Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women in national parliaments, as at 1 October 2020. In December 2020, no women were elected to the parliament in Kuwait.
18. UN Women calculations.
19. Inter-Parliamentary Union. Women in national parliaments, as at 1 October 2020.
20. United Nations Statistics Division. United Nations Global SDG Database. Data as of 1 January 2020, retrieved 1 August 2020.
21. United Nations. Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, Critical Area G, “Women, Power and Decision-Making”, 1995.
22. UN Women. In brief: Women’s leadership and political participation, 2013.
23. R Chattopadhyay, E Duflo. “Women as policy makers: Evidence from a randomized policy experiment in India,” *Econometrica*, 2004:72(5):1409–1443.
24. KA Bratton, LP Ray. “Descriptive representation: Policy outcomes and municipal day-care coverage in Norway,” *American Journal of Political Science*, 2002:46(2):428–437.
25. Inter-Parliamentary Union. Equality in politics: A survey of men and women in parliaments, 2008.