Gender Terminologies in Management Literature: A Feminine Perspective

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Abstract: Research on women in C-Suite has become a significant field of study after globalization. In earlier times, very few studies were conducted in the field of gender in Management. Those studies were androcentric in nature and the theoretical reflection of the manager was male. Masculine attributes like stubbornness, arrogance, and dominance were the standard. Leaders were assessed on the basis of whether they had an 'acidic tongue', 'sarcastic tone' and 'fist pounding on the table' kind of behaviour. Formerly, women in management were not considered as a sign of natural social development. Now, however, things are changing and a lot of studies on this topic are happening across the world. Workplaces are recognizing the value of feminine leadership traits like compassionate, collaborative and empathetic. Strong corporate culture should view people as a critical resource and value them as individuals. This paper aims to evaluate the developing field of gender in Management Literature and to examine how 'Think Manager, Think Male' attitude has changed over three decades.

Keywords: Gender, Globalization, Corporate culture, Feminine Leadership

INTRODUCTION

Historically, our society is a male-centric society (Lakoff). Globally, women have always been considered as the oppressed sex or second sex (Spender). Gender discrimination and gender oppression are experienced and found universally (Baxter). Sexism in language is a reflection of social reality (Sapir). In literature, especially in management literature men outnumbered women as authors and reviewers (Peterson & Kroner). Androcentric language promotes sexist behaviours and the oppression of women (Jesperson). Multiple studies have proved that androcentric language reinforces the sexist social structure (Lakoff).

Gender in management becomes an area of research at the beginning of the 1970s (Schrier). Before that, a few studies were conducted which was androcentric in nature and the theoretical reflection of manager have masculine traits (Schwartz). The term "management" has highly been co-related with men and masculinity (Jamieson).In Henry Mintzberg's book,*'The Manager's Job: Folklore and Fact'* (1975), where "a manager" had been meticulously denoted as "he". The concept of "doing gender's" repetitive execution can be seen in our daily lives (Parks & Roberton).

Literature reflects a society's emotional attitudes and sensitivities (Rybacki & Rybacki). Literature has vital influences in the thinking process and in gender perceptions of an individual (Stanley). Men are the central characters of the majority of biographies and business case studies (Peel). Masculine attributes have more marketability and were considered to be standard (Wood) and worth studying. Women's experiences and career journeys are underestimated (Ndure). Feminine terms undergo a semantic degradation, which shows oppression in the language (Dai). Feminine suffixes like "ette" and "ess" leads to recognizes women as derivative of man, and it reinforces male supremacy (Lee).

Conventional methods favour the masculinization of workplace norms and unaddressed women or treated them as a derivative (Ruiz). Visibility of women is less compared with men (Ansary & Babil). According to a study of more than 300 books by some Indian researchers says that 'literature is filled with the gender omission, prejudice, and gender stereotypes (Ndura). Men are characterized by qualities like shrewdness (Lili & Zhenzhou) and aptitude while women are characterized by gentleness, and unawareness (Table2). National Business Daily says that women with bachelor degrees tend to get less pay than men with the same degree (Freeman).

Each industry replicates a certain conviction regarding the social mandate and has an effect on students outlooks, insights, and feelings (Weatherall). Picturing of men as leaders or managers and women in subordinate roles is common gender stereotyping of management literature. When literature is filled with such unfairness (Parks & Roberton), it will significantly affect management students perceptions (Ndura). 'Think Manager, Think Male' convention obstructs women from climbing the corporate ladder (Parks &Roberton).Masculine pronoun 'he' is used for referring to both men and women (Pattalung). Female invisibility is the main feature of an androcentric language (Jesperson). When the language omits women, the mental image representation also excludes women (Foss), which in turn leads to gender stereotyping (Lakoff).

GENERIC 'HE'

English is considered as a sexist language and it defines everyone as a male in general (Martyna) . Androcentric language strengthens under-representation of women (Adulavidhaya) in conventionally male-dominated professions (Spender). English does not have a 3rd person gender-neutral singular pronoun (Lei). Sexism in language can happen knowingly or unknowingly (Bradley). Most of the times gender comes into the communication where it is irrelevant (Saphir). The traditional rules of grammar lower feminine status in society (Nimnual).

Generic masculine pronouns like 'he' and 'man' are used in most job descriptions (Hyde). It gives an indirect message that women candidates are not preferable for such jobs (Kanemaru). For example, 'businesswomen' is a usage which underlines that business is a man's world (Bhattacharya et al). Most of the designation like Post Man, Police Man, Business Man and Chairman have a sexist tinge (Adulavidhya). Such usages monopolize profession (Solvenko) and lead to the social pacts that gender is the basis of allocating duties, responsibilities and privileges (Dai). These usages can be replaced by a Postal Officer, Police Officer, Business Person, and chairperson which is more gender inclusive (Rybacki &Rybacki). 'Best man for the job' can be replaced by 'best candidate' and 'best person' (Table1).

Gender bias in language leads to gender stereotypes which in turn creates gender inequalities (Broadbridge et al). The language has not only the power to reflects our culture but also to constructs it (Baxter). Cultural conditioning is influential, and research shows that people are less prone to act in a recruitment advertisement that contains wording subjective against their gender (Spender). This is the major reason for job segregation and the Glass Ceiling. Use of gender-inclusive or non-sexist language will make to respect people as professionals irrespective of their gender (Cronin & Sawsan). Earlier the word 'disabled' is used for physically challenged people. But when the term is changed with 'differently-abled' it brought a positive change in societal attitudes. The term 'differently-abled' is more inclusive and it offers an equal platform to all who comes under that umbrella (Jespersen).

DOES ANDROCENTRISM MATTER?

Androcentric language has an effect on the self-esteem of the leaders and on their social conditioning (Rybacki &Rybacki) . Accepting the existence of the double bind is the first step in solving this issue. The unequal, detrimental treatment of women by making them completely exclude or less visible is a deliberate form of gender discrimination (Ruiz). Androcentric language influences one's attitude towards women (Parks and Robertson) and plays a vital role in gender role acquisition. When management literature promotes sexism, gender role portrayal and patriarchy, the industry will also follow those gendered practices (Foss).

Aggressive nature gives men an ambitious image but women a bossy or bitch label (Foss). Climbing the corporate ladder is a tough task especially when you wear a high heel (N). The unseen barrier which we called 'Glass Ceiling' exists in almost every organization. Anyhow, a sea change is happening nowadays. More number of women are cracking glass ceiling and making their way to top-level management, maybe instead of a glass ceiling, women are now experiencing a 'Glass Labyrinth' and men have a privilege of 'Glass Escalator'. Women have the opportunity to progress to the upper echelon of an organization, but they face many stoppages on their career path, unlike men.

Conventional finest qualities of the male are featured differently from females (DeFrancisco & Palczewski) is a part of unconscious gender discrimination (Blauberg). Taking care of children is considered as mothers responsibility (Indrambarya). Only when a male is taking care of the child, the word 'babysit' is used. But when a female is doing the same, it's called parenting. Womb/brain binds is a myth, which means feminity and competence, cannot co-exist (Peel).Women can either be a good mother or can be managerial woman, but not at the same time reflects womb/brain double binds (Jamieson).

Marital status is a mandatory column in most of the job applications. Addressing women as married or unmarried and Men by their title can be considered as a sexist practice (Lee). It reinforces the patriarchal male ownership rights over women. It shows the prejudiced mind that married women and mothers are not fit for the job (Ruiz). 'Ms' can be used to address women irrespective of their marital status (Parks and Robertson).

METHODOLOGY

The research was qualitative in nature. Most of the studies on managerial women have done from a Psychological or Management outlook. There are very few studies, which were done from a literature point of view. This study aims to explore the degree of sexism in Management Literature in the last three decades in India. A pilot study was conducted among 100 MBA students to know the feasibility of the research. Questionnaire and the interview methods are used in the pilot study to understand the image of the leader, which they perceived from management literature. The 7-point 'Women as Managers Scale' (WAMS) method was used and found out that the mental image of the manager is male for the majority of students.

In order to deliver a precise review of management literature, this paper used publications which talks about terminologies like 'Gender Discrimination', 'Gender Stereotypes','Feminine Leadership' and 'Gender Role Portrayal' in the field of Management. Psych INFO, ERIC and ABI/INFORM were used to conduct the searches to include all literature published in the field of management. The literature search was also supplemented by a manual search. Websites like google.com, bookfinder.com, findarticles.com and amazon.com were used to conduct the searches. LitAssist software is used to review the research literature and Content analysis is done to analyse the degree of sexist language. Structured Literature Review Method is used to examine the position of managerial women at management literature. Gender biases, socially unfair outlooks towards women and androcentric perceptions regarding gender roles were investigated.

ATLAS.ti software is used for data analysis of the selected 30 works of literature. The Literature Review is managed by using qualitative software NVivo. Qualitative tool Dedoose is used for coding the texts and 'Discover Text' is used for classifying and analysing textual data. Sub-themes and attributes were listed out using these qualitative tools. Organizational Culture, Organisational Commitment, Organizational support, Organizational Justice, Sexist assumptions, Gender Role Portrayal, Gender Stereotypes, Feminine Leadership, Patriarchy, Sexist assumptions and Presenting a Frontier Image were the major sub-themes.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Language reflects society. Socio-cultural beliefs and outlooks of people can be assumed by the language they use (Ruiz). Linguistic Sexism is an institutionalized unfair form of gender discrimination (LSA Bulletin) which can consider as the root cause of all social inequalities. Women are curtailed from using power (Foss). Androcentric language legitimizes power ladders in social groups (Weatherfall). Masculine standards are used to assess females. Conventionally, feminity is defined as empathetic, caring, helpful and excluded competence. Androcentric language strengthens patriarchy (DeFranscisco & Palczewski) and discriminatory attitudes (Blaubergs) which lead to typecasted perception about gender roles   (Cronin & Jreisat).

Sexism is not a male characteristic. It is an attitude that is irrespective of gender. Culture and language are interweaved. Therefore, the way in which women are portrayed in written language impacts society's opinions and behaviours. The way people interpret, the language affects their self-concepts and their views. No Literature is neutral (Ansary & Esmat). Each mirrors a socio-cultural perspective (Auerbach & Burgess). Language transfiguration is the basis of social reform (Blaubergs).It is essential that literature should exhibit

a reasonable view (Auerbach & Denise) and not to propagate prejudiced impressions about women and their roles (Peel).Academic and journalistic writing should follow the practice of using gender-fair language (Steyer).

After globalization, a large number of women are getting educational opportunities in India and have been entering into jobs formerly kept to men. Women have reacted to escalating prospects. It is seen that this change is not observable in managerial literature where the figure of a manager or leader is still male. When industries are experiencing such a transformational phase, Management Literature should also need to be abreast (Spender). The age-old method of defining the concepts and constructs should be discarded. It is the need of the hour to use gender-neutral language in the workplace to break gender stereotyping and to assure gender equality.

Most of the time authors are unaware of the use of androcentric language, sexist biases and assumptions. They have adopted subtle androcentric behaviour unconsciously (Peel). The use of one sexist word cannot be justified by the use of 100 non-sexist words. Replacing it with the inclusive gender-fair language needs commitment and practices. Book reviewers should be trained in Sociolinguistics. Changing terms are only the tip of the iceberg, but it has huge symbolic importance.

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APPENDIX

Table 1. Sexist Terms and their Alternatives

To be avoided	*To be preferred*
Man	People, humans,individual, human beings, humankind,person
Man's achievements	People's achievements, our achievements
The best man for the job	The best person (or candidate) for the job
Man-made	constructed ,human made,artificial, manufactured
Manpower	Employees,staff,workers, workforce, labor, human resources
Chairman	Chairperson, chair

Table2.   Gendered norms about men and women

Area	*Men*	*Women*
Emotion	Control over emotion ,Aggressive	No/Less control, emphatatic
Approach	Proactive	Reactive
Social Role	Bread winner	House wife, mother
Decision making	Fast	Indecisive
Competence	Competent	Incompetent
Interpersonal relations	Assertive	Shy
Planning skills	Highly organized and calculated	Low, disorganized, chaotic

Table 3. Review of management literature

S.No	Sub -themes	Literature
1	Organisational culture	Schreier, 1973 Lee,2005 Montgomer,2013
2	Organisational Commitment	Useem,2000 McChrystal,2016 Hamel,2010
3	Organizational Support	George,2007 Weil,2017 Paloni,2017
4	Organisational Justice	Greenwald,2005 Stack,2014 Skakoon,2014 Jain,2017
5	Gender Role Portrayal	Gardner,2011 Rath,2009 Mackay,2005
6	Gender Stereotypes	Anderson,2008 Stainer,2016 Judith,2017
7	Feminine Leadership	Bennis ,2009 Willink,2018 Mintzberg,2008
8	Sexist Assumptions and Practices	Gill,2013 Taylor,2016 Lencioni,2012 Khairoowala,2006
9	Patriarchy	Goleman,2013 Bhattacharya,2018
10	Presenting a Frontier Image	Wood,2007 Unger,2004