

Leadership Quality of Women & Business Ethics

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Abstract: We know 'the hand that cradles rules the world'. As per Wikipedia "**Matriarchy** is a social system in which females (most notably in mammals) hold the primary power positions in roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege and control of property at the specific exclusion of males - at least to a large degree". A popular definition, according to James Peoples and Garrick Bailey, is "female dominance". What happens in Business domain? Matriarchy is believed to be a prehistoric system though still now there are a few societies where female members do dominate. However, in the competitive world today both the genders have come out in open and work hand in hand in **collaborative competition**. It is fact that only a few women have gone to the top of corporate ladder. Generally they work at the mid or bottom level. There may be various reasons for that which is beyond the scope of present study. We observe that there are large number of female employees in the Govt and Corporate world and some of them are in Managerial/Leadership position. Extensive feedback has been collected by research organizations like **Gallup** on million of employees over decades and they concluded that women appear to be more acceptable as a Leader. There may be questions on the definition of leadership quality and its measure. But we believe generally that women are doing well in a few industries like IT where their presence is as high like 30 %. While noting the observations of the Gallup reports it may be reported that on a small study on about 1000 IT employees in an IT service company it was seen that the perception of ethical compliance differs between male and female employees (all mostly engineers). The observations are presented along with some data and the question is raised whether acceptable leadership quality is well linked to ethical mindset of the Leader / Manager.

Keywords: Leadership quality, Women leaders, Employee engagement, Business ethics, Fairness

I. Introduction

In any business environment employee engagement is a major concern. It is believed (and estimated) that in any organization where employees are engaged both quality and quantity of output is improved. This is logical since commitment of competent employees is always an asset to the organization. Now the challenge will be how to identify the parameters for engagement and how do we measure them. We conduct opinion surveys and also make observations to measure the degree of engagement. Next is to identify the factors contributing to this level of employee engagement. If it is due to supervisory activity we can call it successful leadership.

II. Engagement

If we refer to Gallup business journal (May 7, 2015) report [1] by Dr. Kimberly Fitch and Sangeeta Agrawal we note they highlighted the following:

- Only one in three working Americans say they have a female boss
- Female managers are more engaged than their male counterparts
- Companies should hire and promote more female managers

The parameters that may be considered are:

3/5/2018

Female Bosses Are More Engaging Than Male Bosses

THE 12 ELEMENTS OF GREAT MANAGING

To identify the elements of worker engagement, Gallup conducted many thousands of interviews in all kinds of organizations, at all levels, in most industries, and in many countries. These 12 statements – the Gallup Q¹² – emerged from Gallup's pioneering research as those that predict employee and workgroup performance.

1. I know what is expected of me at work.
2. I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right.
3. At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.
4. In the last seven days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.
5. My supervisor, or someone at work, seems to care about me as a person.
6. There is someone at work who encourages my development.
7. At work, my opinions seem to count.
8. The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.
9. My associates or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.
10. I have a best friend at work.
11. In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.
12. This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.

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GALLUP

Figure 1

Times have changed. In 1953, Gallup asked Americans, "If you were taking a new job and had your choice of a boss, would you prefer to work for a man or a woman?" At that time, 67% of Americans said they preferred a male boss. 5% said they preferred a female boss, and 25% volunteered that it made no difference to them. A little more than six decades later the contrasts are striking: Gallup asked Americans the same question and found that now 34% would prefer a male boss while 20% would prefer a female boss, and 46% say it doesn't make a difference to them. Though women are more likely than men to say they would prefer a female boss, they're still more likely to say they would prefer a male boss overall. Similar will be situation in India too though any such extensive survey report is not available.

3/5/2018

Female Bosses Are More Engaging Than Male Bosses

FEMALE MANAGERS ARE BETTER AT ENGAGING THEIR EMPLOYEES THAN MALE MANAGERS

Employees who work for a female manager are more engaged, on average, than those who work for a male manager, according to a Gallup study of U.S. employees. Women who report to female managers have the highest engagement, while men who report to male managers have the lowest engagement.

Percentage of employees engaged



Figure 2

Obviously an attempt to bring in the feministic qualities in men will be a total failure as was observed by John Gray in his book – *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus* [1992]

III. ETHICS At Workplace

One important aspect of a good leadership quality is not clearly spelt out in Gallup studies and similar reports. That is about ethics in workplace. Defining business ethics itself is a challenging job which however many philosophers and research scholars have tried in past. Very large corporate groups like Tata in India have always considered ‘Ethics is business’ along with CSR because the stakes otherwise is huge [2]. We have seen quite a few corporate collapses globally due to failure of ethics since the days of ENRON to Nirav Mody today and it goes on. We expect a good leader to be FAIR (equal to all?). Fairness is the quality of making judgments that are free from discrimination. Judges, Umpires, and Teachers (Leaders in their own right) should all strive to practice fairness. Fairness comes from the old English fæger, meaning "pleasing, attractive." This makes sense given that the word is also used to describe physical beauty! And both Men and Women can compete for sure and you know who will win.

IV. An Employee Survey

Result of a survey in India on the employees of a large IT company is reported here. The survey was responded by more than 1000 employees. Almost all were engineers. The specific set of questions of our interest is produced below:

10. How will you rate the organizational ethical climate in XXXXX against the following parameters?

a) Trust

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

b) Mutual Respect

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

c) Integrity

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

d) Frank Communication

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

e) Freedom to Voice Concern

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

f) Commitment to Core Values

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

g) Awareness of XXX COC

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

h) Visible inspirations from senior management

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

i) Employee Involvement in Decision Making

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

j) Overall Ethical Climate

Poor Average Good Very Good Excellent

Figure 3

The responses are summarized and shown below:

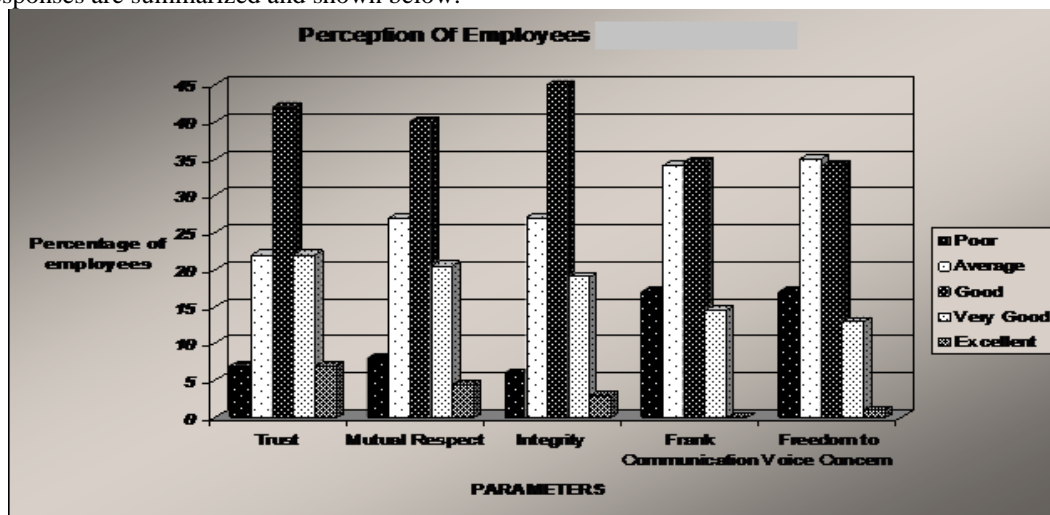


Figure 4

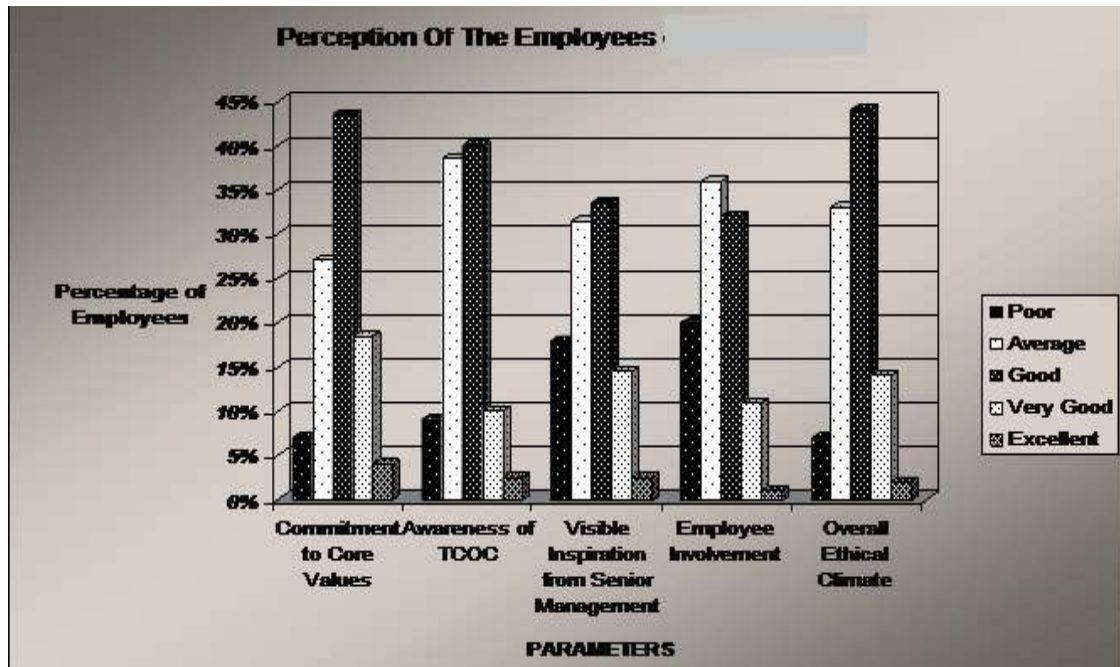


Figure 5

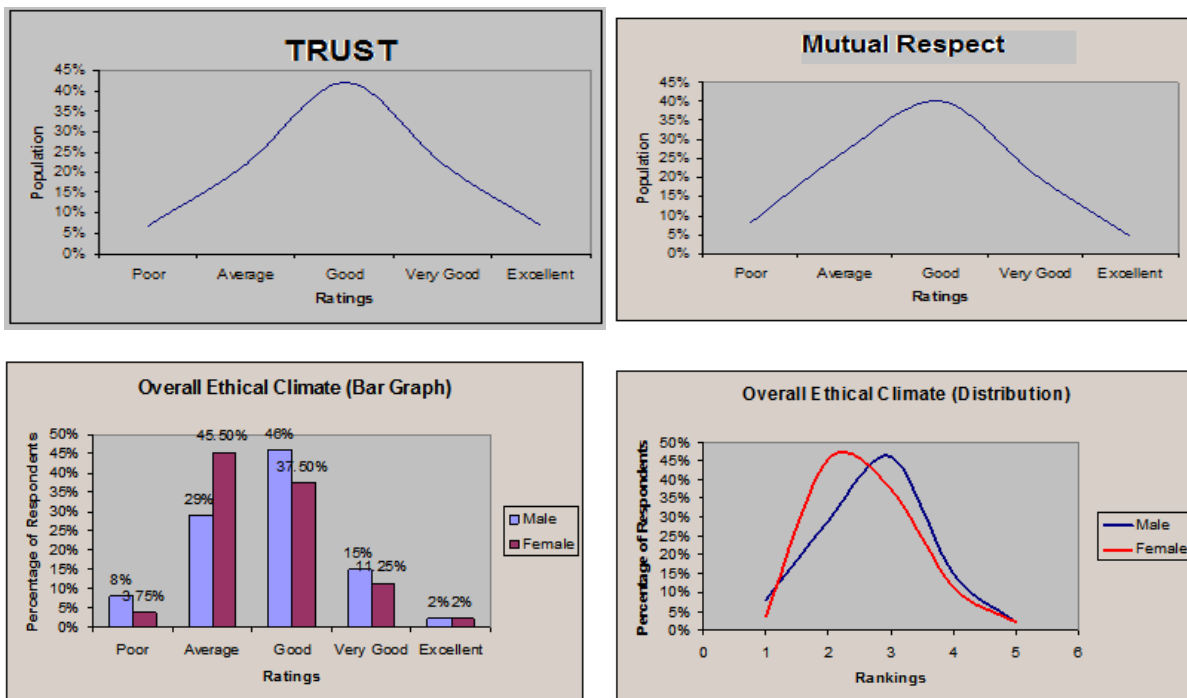


Figure 6

The demographic data collected for each respondent included gender, age & no of years in the organization etc.

The above study shows Female employees are more concerned about the Ethical Climate of the organization than male. Whether this confirms that women are more ethical is not established but as of today in the business environment they seem to be more consistent and fair.

V. Conclusions

From a business management perspective we can see women are coming up fast as a reliable partner to men in a collaborative competition. At the same time we may ponder if women are more concerned about ethics in workplace. In any case women are relatively more dependable and are engaged to any organization. They also

can build up a team which is aligned and engaged so that the potential to contribute is high. Detail study is possible for a specific organization of large size which may help HR related decision making etc.

References:

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