

# Literature Review of Women's Leadership: A Cross-Cultural Comparative Study of Gender Equality

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate how female leadership functions in various cultural situations and how that influences gender equality. Throughout the research topics are the following: How does women's representation in leadership roles vary throughout cultures? What unique difficulties and chances do female leaders face in various social and cultural contexts? What part does the media play in promoting and forming the perception of women in leadership positions? This research examines women's participation and influence in leadership roles, as well as the potential and obstacles in various cultural and social situations, with a focus on the media's portrayal of women in leadership. It does this by comparing instances and data from diverse cultural contexts. Simultaneously, the objective of this study examines the gender prejudices, obstacles to professional advancement, and internal and external organizational difficulties that women may encounter when assuming leadership positions in various cultural and social contexts, as well as how these difficulties impact the growth and impact of female leaders. A hybrid research methodology, involving both qualitative and quantitative data gathering, will be used for this study. While the quantitative technique uses questionnaires to gather large-scale data to support the findings of the qualitative analysis, the qualitative research method uses in-depth interviews and textual analysis to understand behaviors and experiences at the individual and organizational levels. The study concludes that, despite notable global advancements in gender equality, women's experiences and accomplishments in leadership positions vary greatly between cultural contexts. While policy and social atmosphere in Western countries are more conducive to female leadership, invisible ceilings remain a challenge. Women in Eastern cultures, on the other hand, strike a more difficult balance between societal expectations and the needs of the contemporary job. The way that women are portrayed as

leaders is greatly influenced by the media, which has the power to both strengthen and advance stereotypes and advance gender equality. This article proposes worldwide solutions to support female leadership development in order to accelerate the attainment of real gender equality through in-depth analysis.

### **Keywords**

Women's Leadership, Cross-Cultural Comparison, Gender Equality, Media Influence, Global Perspectives

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## **1. Introduction**

It has always been of considerable interest to discuss the status of women in leadership roles. Globally, there is still a glaring gender leadership gap, despite increases in the percentage of women in leadership roles in many nations and regions. Women are seen to be less competent of working and less able to adjust to the work environment, for instance, when assignments are assigned. Women's careers inside the organization are hampered as a result of this. Businesses require highly competent resources if they want to boost employee productivity (Infante & Darmawan, 2022). Culture, social structures, the state of the economy, and educational attainment may all have a significant role in this disparity. It is crucial to comprehend how female leadership functions and the variables that affect it in various cultural situations. This research compares the effects of various cultural contexts on gender equality at the leadership level and investigates how women perform in leadership roles in various cultural environments. In order to give theoretical and empirical support for research and practice in the field of gender equality, this study will examine in-depth how culture, society, and the media shape and express women's leadership from the perspective of feminist theories through in-depth interviews and questionnaires.

## **2. Literature Review**

One of the main issues facing contemporary society is gender equality and women in leadership roles. One of the major issues facing contemporary society is gender equality and women in leadership positions. Despite improvements in gender equality at the international level, gender disparities still existed and some organizations still had only male executives at the top. In addition, the influence of the media has indirectly contributed to the development of women's leadership. The present section discusses women's leadership, cross-cultural comparisons and the impact of the media on women's leadership, and reviews key writings on related topics.

### **2.1. Women's Leadership**

Research on women in leadership roles and the obstacles they encounter in or-

ganizations is the main emphasis of this field. Women are regarded by some corporate decision makers as being less logical and less emotive, and as being slow to make decisions. I came onto Eagly & Karau (2002)'s Role Congruity Theory (RCT) while searching for literature. Women who assume leadership posts sometimes encounter increased discrimination and skepticism because of the hypothesis, which highlights the differences between the established gender roles of women and the usual attributes of leaders. "Finding the way out of a maze" is how the article compares women's struggles in the workplace. The way this is described demonstrates how little progress women have made in the workforce. Numerous challenges remain to be addressed, even with a high degree of expertise and commercial acumen. According to research, it is frequently expected of female leaders to have greater emotional intelligence and communication abilities (Rosette & Tost, 2010). If female executives adopt a more masculine work style, they could gain greater attention and an edge in the business. In actuality, though, women's leadership philosophies are frequently viewed as weak or lacking in power, with the idea that women should be in charge of their workers' growth and lack effective decision-making skills (Carli & Eagly, 2016). Furthermore, the podcast by Phipps (2020) highlights that the loss of female leadership and the number of female employees decrease with increasing organizational structure. Despite being a positive trend, the proportion of women in senior management is increasing, but not quickly enough. A fundamental barrier to women's success is still prejudice, both racial and gender. Today, a lot of people use the phrase "Glass ceiling" to describe the variety of obstacles that prevent women from moving up the corporate ladder. Another thing impeding women's quick development in the workplace is this occurrence.

## 2.2. Cross-Cultural Comparison

Studies conducted across cultural boundaries have shown that gender equality and leadership styles vary significantly throughout civilizations. The apparent role conflict that exists between women and authoritative individuals led to a low judgment of women's ability as leaders in a nation heavily influenced by religion. In contrast, a nation with comparatively little religious coloration saw female leadership effectiveness favorably and saw it as a sign of a more equal social structure. Notwithstanding the acknowledgement that women possess equivalent leadership attributes to males, this affirmative evaluation does not imply a rise in the proportion of women occupying leadership roles inside organizations (Jogulu & Wood, 2008). In order to better understand how different cultures affect leadership behavior, Hofstede developed the Cultural Dimensions Theory in 1980. This framework is a classic one for studying cross-cultural interactions and suggests dimensions like power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism versus collectivism, and masculinity versus femininity.

Hofstede (1984)'s theory was further developed by the GLOBE study project (House et al., 2004), which offered a thorough investigation of culture and lead-

ership behavior in 62 nations, along with the proposal of nine cultural dimensions. “The extent to which less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept an unequal distribution of power” is how power distance is defined in the text (Tavanti & Werhane, 2013). Owing to disparities in literacy, the degree of inequality accepted varies from place to region. The results showed that, in low power distance cultures, female leaders are more likely to be acknowledged and supported, whereas in high power distance cultures, the authority of female leaders is frequently questioned.

### **2.3. The Impact of the Media on Women’s Leadership**

The way the public views women leaders is greatly influenced by the media. Journalists’ daily judgments about the worth of the media are consistently shaped by masculine values, according to feminist media scholars, who have long maintained that this is the case in the editing of the majority of media articles. Due to the implicit belief that they are less significant than concerns and themes of interest to males, issues and topics that have historically been seen as having particular importance for women are sometimes pushed to the periphery of the media (Ross & Carter, 2011).

According to the study, when it comes to women executives, the media frequently highlights their outward looks, familial responsibilities, and emotional lives while downplaying their accomplishments in the workplace and leadership abilities (Williams, 2017). In impending leadership tasks, women exposed to gender-stereotypical commercials substantially chose the follower role over the leader position, whereas women exposed to gender-neutral advertisements showed no discernible choice for either role. This information was obtained in the study conducted by Simon & Hoyt (2013). According to these results, women may be discouraged from pursuing leadership positions in favor of roles that conform to negative preconceptions about males because they feel exposed to them in the male realm (Simon & Hoyt, 2013). These media-portrayed gender stereotypes appear to lessen women’s motivation to pursue traditionally male roles, like leadership responsibilities, even though they may no longer deter women from pursuing careers in general. Not only can this kind of coverage damage the reputation of female leaders, but it also has the potential to reduce their power and sway within companies.

Gender quota rules have also been suggested, and there are notable variations in how women leaders are portrayed in the media depending on the cultural setting. Research indicates that in certain traditional countries, the media tends to highlight the traditional gender roles of women leaders, whereas in other developed countries, the media emphasizes their professional competence and leadership accomplishments (Franceschet & Piscopo, 2008).

## **3. Conclusion**

The literature analysis mentioned above indicates that comprehending gender equality requires an examination of media portrayal, cross-cultural comparisons,

and female leadership. Despite the fact that a number of important concerns have been identified by research in numerous sectors, many topics remain unresolved and should be investigated further. Subsequent investigations may delve more into the distinct obstacles and adaptive mechanisms faced by female leaders across diverse cultural contexts, and examine the ways in which policy and practice might foster gender parity. In order to effectively eradicate gender bias, the media—which has a significant influence on public perceptions—needs to conduct more comparative research on how it covers women leaders in various cultural situations.

In conclusion, research on women's leadership that is cross-culturally comparative not only aids in understanding gender dynamics across cultural boundaries, but it also offers theoretical and empirical backing for the implementation of gender equality on an international level. Gender equality can be achieved more comprehensively and successfully if we methodically investigate the cultural variations and media influences on women's leadership.

#### 4. Potential Significance

Through a cross-cultural comparative study of women's leadership, we can better understand the current status of women's leadership and the factors that influence it in different cultures. This study will also improve the understanding of how cultural factors impact gender equity and will thus help to promote gender equity around the world and global understanding of women's rights and gender equity, thus furthering international relations and the exchange of gender equity concerns. In this case, the media plays a major role in shaping people's perceptions and behaviors in society. It would also help if this study could break down how other cultures portray women, especially in leadership, so that it could pinpoint the prejudices and stereotyping being propagated by the media in the leadership roles of women. It is rather important to know these biases, so politicians and media professionals could work on changing public perceptions of women's roles in leadership and actually provide more balanced portrayals of women leaders.

#### Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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