

Gender Balance in Management: The Case of Malaysia

Sieh Lee Mei Ling
Ong Fon Sim

ABSTRACT

The relationship between gender balance in management and organisational performance was examined by asking if a more gender balanced management team would result in better performance or higher productivity. Findings indicated that there were fewer women managers than men in managerial positions. When compared to their male counterparts, women managers tend to be more meticulous, careful, patient and cooperative.

ABSTRAK

Hubungan di antaraimbangan jantina dalam pengurusan dengan prestasi organisasi telah diselidiki. Di antara penemuan-penemuan yang diperolehi ialah terdapat ramai kaum wanita dalam jawatan-jawatan pengurusan berbanding dengan lelaki setaraf dengannya, pengurus-pengurus perempuan didapati lebih teliti, berhati-hati, sabar dan kerjasama.

INTRODUCTION

Women in Malaysia have come a long way since independence in 1957. The age old attitude that women's place is in the home and that they are not to be seen nor heard in the work place are certainly being replaced. Women have gained some economic significance and are increasingly recognised as an important source of manpower. They are definitely "seen" and "heard" in work environments. In Malaysia, working women have been successful to the extent that they represent about 35 percent of the labour force. But how have women fared as managers? Are they entrusted with key managerial functions that determine the health of their organisations? Or are they merely making the numbers in management and continue to remain in the so called "soft" functional areas? Are firms with a more balanced management team performing better compared to those employing predominantly male managers?

In an attempt to search for some answers, a study was conducted to investigate the current position of women in management. First, the balance

of men and women managers was surveyed. Secondly, the relationship between gender balance in management and organisational performance was examined by asking if a more gender balanced management team would result in better performance or higher productivity. Thirdly, the opinions of CEOs and human resource managers on the comparative traits of managers from both sexes were also compiled.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review consists of two parts. The first part is intended to review women's position in general while the second part takes a closer look into the profile of women managers in Malaysia.

WOMEN'S POSITION

As the role of women in the labour force grew in importance, studies on women in management have gained prominence (Jabes 1980, Pereira 1978, O'Leary 1974). However, a cursory examination of the literature revealed that virtually little was said of the effects of women's participation as decision makers on organisational productivity and performance.

Although employment of women had increased substantially over the past fifty years with economic development and modernisation, they tended to be concentrated in low-status, low-skilled and low-paid jobs. Opportunities for personal success through upward mobility were severely restricted as compared to men (Goffee and Scase 1985). Women were a minority in highly paid managerial, administrative and professional occupations. Even where women worked alongside men, they usually held positions of lower responsibility and performed tasks of a less skilled nature. This situation was also found to be true in public sector management and administration (Licuanan 1992, Col 1990).

The typical role expectations confronting a wife and mother, greater stress than men due to lack of role models, lack of counselling and training, lack of recognition of professional competence, feelings of isolation, gender-based discrimination are but some of the explanations for the current status of women (Sieh et al 1991, Hoffarth 1989, Heath 1981). Women subordinates also rated their female superiors as less effective than did men rate her, reflecting women's lower expectations for female success in a masculine task. If so, it may explain Israeli women's preference for working under male managers (Gafni 1980). In addition, women tended to suffer a negative self-image, were non-assertive, sensitive, dependent and passive. Other barriers included difficulties of socialisation, a lack of political awareness and tokenism (Lyles 1983).

Among women who have succeeded in their careers, it was found that their success was largely dependent on those of their fathers or their husbands (Goldthorpe et al 1980). Important external stimuli included support of bosses or mentors and contact made through work (Hoffarth 1989). Inherent qualities such as a hardworking nature, competence, talent, a people-oriented nature, creative thinking, and problem solving skills were also important (Tepper and Tepper 1980).

A BRIEF PROFILE OF WOMEN MANAGERS OF MALAYSIA

It is well known that women managers, broadly defined to include private sector managers, public sector administrators and own account entrepreneurs, constitute an extremely small proportion of the labour force of Malaysia, of which females account for around one-third. The 1990 data from official statistics show that women in administrative and managerial positions in Malaysia have continued to remain at less than one percent of all women in the labour force (Sixth Malaysia Plan). Women classified as employers and as own-account workers, who are indicative of those who can be regarded as entrepreneurial managers, represented well below one percent and one fifth of all working women respectively. They formed only 8.6 percent of all employers and 26.8 percent of all own account workers in the economy, as compared to 91.4 percent and 73.2 percent of the two groups who were men (Labour Force Survey Report).

The main characteristics of women managers in Malaysia can be gleaned from a study conducted in the latter half of the eighties on three groups of women, namely, corporate women managers, secondly, women entrepreneurs where they themselves were key decision makers actively involved in the managing of their enterprises and thirdly, women managers of non-profit organisations both in the public and private sectors (Sieh et al 1991). As much as 70 percent of women corporate managers and women entrepreneurs covered by the study were of Chinese descent while 64 percent of those in non-profit organisations were Malays. However, this pattern is expected to change as more Malay women will opt for self-employment and as more with formal business education will seek employment in large corporations.

Generally, corporate managers were somewhat younger with 90 percent below 40 years of age, whereas entrepreneurs were older with 30 percent of them in their forties. Women managers in non-profit organisations had a relatively more mature profile with 47 percent in their forties. It was not surprising that 70 percent or more of the women managers in corporations and non-profit organisations were married whereas 40 percent of the women entrepreneurs were single, separated or divorced. The fact that majority of the women studied were married implied that in Malaysia, marriage was not an obstacle to their career in administrative and managerial positions, despite

difficulties in balancing home and career responsibilities. Several cases of how women managers and entrepreneurs in southeast Asia, including Malaysia, have successfully managed their multiple roles have been documented (Licuanan 1992).

With regards to formal education, women entrepreneurs were not as highly qualified as those in corporations and in non-profit organisations. Over 90 percent of those in non-profit, primarily public sector organisations, had university degrees compared with 70 percent of the corporate managers and 25 percent of the entrepreneurs. Except for managers in non-profit organisations, 38 percent of whom considered education the most important factor for their success, all managers attributed success to factors other than education.

It was found that important factors that have contributed to the success of women managers included the following, in descending order: support from boss or mentor, hard work, determination and perseverance, and support from family, be it husbands or relatives. Entrepreneurs in business seemed to attribute their success to basically the same factors though in the reverse order. Half of them cited encouragement from their husbands or relatives as the second important external factor, after good market for products. Hard work, honesty, competence and natural talent were rated as the most important inherent success factors by the entrepreneurs.

As expected, women managers either in corporations or in non-profit organisations faced very different problems from business women. Although sex discrimination was the main difficulty for the former, entrepreneurs were more concerned with the need to improve in the marketing and financing aspects of their business. Entrepreneurs also reported stress and balancing home with career as other important problems they faced.

This review thus concludes that research on gender balance in management is extremely limited, if non-existent. The ability or otherwise of women to work side by side with predominantly male managers and their contribution towards positive organisational effects had largely not been examined.

METHODOLOGY

DEFINITION OF CONCEPT OF GENDER BALANCE

Two approaches were developed and used in this study to measure gender balance in management. The first, the Ratio Method, referred to the ratio of female managers to male managers, where the management of a firm was considered gender imbalanced if the team was predominantly male or female. In developing this measure, three cut-offs in decreasing order of stringency -

“strict”, “moderate” and “laxed” measures - were used. First, a “strict” criterion was used to classify firms as gender balanced if the ratios of their management team fell within the range of one or more female managers to 2 male managers, up to 2 female managers to 1 male manager, that is, at least a ratio of between 1:2 and 2:1 number of female to male managers. If the ratios fell outside this range, firms would be regarded gender imbalanced in their management. Secondly, a “moderate” criterion defined firms as gender balanced if the ratios of female to male managers were within the range of 1:3 to 3:1. Thirdly, a “laxed” criterion reclassified firms as gender balanced if their female to male manager ratios were between 1:4 and 4:1.

The second approach was to apply the Participation Method which measured the extent of female participation in management by expressing the number of female managers employed to the total number of male and female managers. This was thus simply the percentage of female participation in the entire management team.

A high percentage of female managers would mean that female participation in management was high for that firm. Three cut-offs were developed based on the 35% female participation rate in the Malaysian labour force. First, under the “strict” criterion, a firm would be considered as having a high female management participation if women managers constituted 50% or more of all its managers. Firms with women managers of less than 50% in their management team would be considered as low in female management.

Secondly, the “moderate” criterion defined a firm as high in female participation in management if the percentage of women in their management team was 35% or more. Thirdly, adopting the “laxed” criterion, firms were classified as high in female participation if their management team had 25% or more of women managers.

THE SURVEY INSTRUMENT

A fully structured questionnaire was designed based on the literature review and brainstorming sessions with top executives of large corporations.

The questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section I attempted to gauge opinions of respondents on non-financial aspects of their companies, such as product or service quality, achievement of company in the industry, leadership styles, communication, research and development, employees’ training, motivation, marketing and policies towards employment of women managers. Close-ended questions with ten-point Likert type scales were used for these variables.

In addition, open-ended questions were included to assess perceptions on issues relating to gender balance in management: women managers’ strengths and weaknesses, similarities and differences between men and women managers, and concerns, if a more gender-balanced management policy were

adopted. Section II covered the financial performance of companies which included profitability, liquidity and growth ratios.

As non-financial measures were not quantifiable and hence relied largely on the nature of questions asked, it was necessary to test their reliability by using a conventional method, Coefficients of Cronbach Alphas. Since their alpha values exceeded 0.5 (alpha value for achievement was 0.6268, quality was 0.7314, and employee motivation was 0.7224), this implied that the measures were reliable (Nunnally 1967).

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Employing both the Ratio Method and the Participation Method yielded results on the extent of gender balance in management (Table 1). As the measure of gender balance was relaxed from very stringent to laxed, the number of firms that were gender balanced increased while gender imbalanced firms decreased. Similarly, assessing the extent of female participation in management using the Participation Method yielded results in the same direction. As the measure was relaxed from very "strict" to "laxed", the number of firms that were considered high in female participation increased while firms considered low in female participation in management decreased.

TABLE 1. Gender Balanced and Gender Imbalanced Firms Based on Ratio and Participation Methods

	Method					Total
	Ratio		Total Firms	Participation		
	Balanced Firms	Imbalanced Firms		High	Low	
Strict Measure	14	23	37	6	31	37
Moderate Measure	18	19	37	11	26	37
Laxed Measure	22	15	31	19	18	37

BALANCE OF MEN AND WOMEN MANAGERS

CONCENTRATION IN JUNIOR AND SERVICE FUNCTIONS

The 1991 survey on gender balance found that, as expected, there were fewer women than men in managerial positions. Men overwhelmed women managers by three times. Further, women managers concentrated in junior and services functions. Women were rarely found in top

management. Only 2.1 percent of the women as compared to 6 percent of the men were in the highest decision making levels of their firms. Nearly 80 percent of the women managers were in junior managerial positions. Moreover, they were concentrated in the servicing functions, such as administration, public relations, general management, publicity; or sales and marketing; or finance and accounting. Seventy five percent of the women managers in the sample were almost equally distributed among these three functional types (Table 2).

These findings confirm the general opinion that women are only suitable for jobs that require attention to details and where integrity is paramount, for example accounting. In areas where communication skills are required, such as public relations, women managers are believed to be able to enhance the probability of success. According to a chief executive of a major player in the services sector, women have such fine qualities in marketing that he did not know what would happen to sales if they were to be taken away.

TABLE 2. Comparison for Managers in Balanced Firms and Imbalanced Firms by Functions and Levels(%)

Functions	Balanced		Imbalanced	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Production	59.8	91.1	40.2	8.9
Sales & Accounting	48.6	90.6	51.4	9.4
Finance & Accounting	67.0	86.7	33.0	13.3
Personnel / Human Resource	44.1	79.1	55.9	20.9
Administration / Public Relations/ General	52.7	74.6	47.3	25.4
Others	82.0	18.7	18.0	81.3
Level of Management				
Top	56.8	87.8	43.2	12.2
Middle	42.5	82.3	57.5	17.7
Junior	54.7	85.7	45.3	14.3

On the other hand, in functional areas such as production, women hardly accounted for a fifth of all managers employed. Males were considered superior to women in terms of technical know-how and physical ability. Therefore, women managers not only continue to remain largely in junior management positions, where they are hardly tested for their true managerial capabilities, they are bunched in less demanding areas traditionally labeled as staff functions which complemented the activities of the profit generating line activities.

APPREHENSIONS ABOUT WOMEN MANAGERS

The findings pin down some fears and reservations about women in management. First, women are still regarded as less suitable for major decision making. A more macro perspective needed in order to compete in a highly competitive business environment seemingly exists only among men. This is due to the effects of stereotyping where male managers are often believed to be more intellectual, more assertive, emotionally more stable, and naturally possess masculine traits in management that are deemed to be desirable.

Secondly, married women have to balance their time between home and work. The dilution of attention to work appears also to be a women problem, besides the costly maternity leave. One CEO remarked that he did not mind having one "Jane" at the middle or top management level but he definitely could not bear having more than one "Jane". As he rightfully declared, "maternity leave is one issue, job left undone is a more important issue because any replacement would not be able to carry out the duties as efficiently as the person holding the job". Such fears are not unfounded and it would appear that women managers have to work harder in order to prove that they are equally as good as their male counterparts even though they have to balance between work and home. Perhaps a reversal to the extended family system would help remove obstacles attributable to conflicts that arise from women's dual responsibilities.

GENDER BALANCE AND PERFORMANCE

MEASURING GENDER BALANCE IN MANAGEMENT

In attempting to examine the degree of gender balance in management among the organisations surveyed, the rate of women's participation in the labour force was used as a guide to classifying firms into "gender balanced" and "gender imbalanced" depending on the number of female to male managers employed. A state of balance referred to a situation where the number of female managers to male managers was at least equal to the participation rate of women in the labour force. In other words, gender balance was achieved if the ratio of female to male managers ratio was 1:3, that is, at least one female manager was employed for every three male managers engaged by the firm. Based on this, 18 firms could be described as having a gender balanced management team. Nineteen were found to be imbalanced since their ratio of female to male managers did not reflect the labour force composition of females to males. However, 3 firms did not provide enough data to be classified.

CHARACTERISTICS OF GENDER BALANCED FIRMS

Of the small number of female managers employed in top management positions, 87.8 percent were employed by gender balanced firms compared to a mere 12.2 percent employed in gender imbalanced firms. Similarly, for middle and junior management levels, gender balanced firms employed 82.3 percent and 85.7 percent of the total number of female managers respectively (Table 2).

Gender balanced firms seemed to adopt a more favourable policy towards women in that they employed more women managers in all types of management functions compared to the imbalanced firms. For example, 91.9 percent of all female managers engaged in production functions were employed in gender balanced firms compared to a mere 8.9 percent of female managers similarly employed by imbalanced firms. Are gender balanced firms, which are more women friendly, different from gender imbalanced firms? A comparison of gender balanced and gender imbalanced firms suggests that there are differences.

It is interesting to observe that 63.6 percent of the gender balanced firms were services oriented compared to 40 percent of the gender imbalanced firms (Table 3). This is well supported by a recent study on intermediate services firms of Malaysia where 27 percent of the professionals and 26 percent of the administrators and managers were found to be females (Sieh 1992).

In terms of age of firms defined by years of operation, 25 out of 33 firms (75.8%) had been in business for at least 16 years. Of this, 15 firms (60%) were gender balanced compared to 10 (40%) which were gender imbalanced. For firms that have been in business operation for more than 30 years, 5 out of 9 were gender balanced. It appears that gender balanced firms tend to be older than gender imbalanced ones. This suggests that the older firms can better afford to be "women friendly" with the support of their strong financial resource base.

TABLE 3. Characteristics of gender balanced and gender imbalanced firms

Extent of Gender Balance	Industry					Age (years)			ProductionCapacity		
	Planta tion	Finance	Proper- ty	Manufac- turing	Other Services	1-15	6-30	Above 30	Remained	increased	Substantially Increased
Balanced	-	8	4	4	6	4	10	5	-	7	5
Imbalanced	1	1	-	8	5	4	6	4	1	6	1

GENDER BALANCE AND FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The heart of this survey centred around the association between gender balance in management and the performance of organisations.

The financial performance measures included profitability ratios, liquidity ratios and growth ratio. Profitability of firms was measured by return on equity, return on investment and earnings per share. Current ratio and acid test ratio were applied to test the liquidity of firms, while growth was measured by sales growth. Chi-square tests were used to determine the relationship between gender balance and financial performance. On the basis that only 4 out of 18 tests showed that gender balanced firms performed better, and 14 tests showed no difference in performance between the two groups of firms, this implied that women managers were as capable as their male counterparts in management (Table 4). This may be attributed to their innovativeness in management, leadership qualities, and ability managing their role as career women and homemakers as found in other studies on successful Malaysian women managers.

TABLE 4. Extent of gender balance and financial performance: ratio method

Criterion	Gender Balance	Return on equity		Return on investment		Earnings per share		Current Ratio		Acid Test Ratio		Sales Growth	
		Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High	Low	High
Strict Measure	Balanced	9	13	10	4	9	4	8	4	7	5	7	5
	Imbalanced	11	9	10	9	11	9	13	6	17*	1*	8	9
Moderate Measure	Balanced	14*	4*	15*	4*	13	5	11	6	11*	9*	15	4
	Imbalanced	6*	9*	5*	9*	7	8	10	4	14*	9*	18	9
Laxed Measure	Balanced	14	7	15	7	14	7	13	7	14	5	10	9
	Imbalanced	6	6	5	6	6	6	8	3	11	-	5	5

Notes: * Significant at 5 %

- Low : < 14 % Low : < 1.53
High : > 14 % High : > 1.7
- Low : < 16 % Low : < 1.7
High : > 16 % High : > 1.7
- Low : < 11.80 Low : < 45 %
High : > \$11.80 High : > 45 %

GENDER BALANCE AND NON-FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

The non-financial performance measures that were used included areas concerning marketing and sales, production and productivity, and human

resource conditions. Important differences between firms that had a balanced management team and those that did not were particularly found in relation to developing new product uses, seeking new users for existing products and adhering to technological specifications in the production process while considering the firms' productivity (Table 5). Management of gender balanced firms appeared to take on less market risks than gender imbalanced ones. For motivating employees, gender balanced firms were more people-oriented and worked through incentives more than those that were imbalanced. Other differences in human resource management were found in bonuses given for exceptional performance, opportunities for career development and matching of salaries with jobs.

Differences in management style were significant in terms of employee cooperation among associate companies and effectiveness of communication with subordinates. Although the gender imbalanced firms employed less women in their management teams compared to the balanced firms, the former thought that the number of women managers should be increased at least at the junior management level, when asked if the proportion of women managers should be maintained or changed. This partially explains the perception that women managers would affect productivity and efficiency.

TABLE 5. Gender balance and non-financial variables

Variables	Mean Scores	
	Gender Balanced	Gender Imbalanced
The Ratio Method		
(i) Development of New Uses for Product	6.63*	7.52*
(ii) To Seek New Users for Product	7.46*	7.91*
(iii) Effects on Productivity and Efficiency		
Women Managers are		
(a) Decreased at Top Management	4.50	4.45
(b) Decreased at Middle Management	4.58	4.35
(c) Decreased at Junior Management	4.92	4.10
(d) Increased at Top Management	5.64	4.85
(e) Increased at Middle Management	5.27	4.10
(f) Increased at Junior Management	5.36	5.25
(g) Maintained at top Management	4.83	5.00
(h) Maintained at top Management	5.58*	4.95*
(i) Maintained at Junior Management	5.75	5.05
(iv) Bonuses for Exceptional Performance	8.78*	8.11*
(v) Communication Needs to Subordinates	7.45*	7.27*

(Continue)

The Participation Method

(i) Constant Adherence to Technological Specifications	8.20	8.66
(ii) Customers' Acceptance	9.60	8.97
(iii) Salary Commensurate with Job	8.83*	8.11*
(v) Communication Needs to Subordinates	7.37*	7.39*

Notes: * Significant at 0.05 level

**Table shows only those variables that were selected for analysis

DO WOMEN MANAGERS MATTER?

REAL BENEFITS FROM WOMEN MANAGERS

What do women managers bring with them that really benefits their organisations? Are women managers different from male managers? Do female managers complement male managers or do they cause more problems than help?

The opinions of CEOs and human resource managers expressed during the interviews can throw some light on these questions. Generally, human resource managers were of the opinion that women managers exhibit a high capacity for detailed work, are well-organised and systematic. They usually possess a strong commitment towards their career as well as to the organisations they work for. When compared with their male counterparts, women managers tend to be more meticulous, careful, patient and cooperative.

Women managers were reported to make excellent superiors since they are caring and understanding towards subordinates. An outstanding quality of successful female managers is their strong people-orientation and flair for communication with those they lead, which are essential leadership qualities for motivating subordinates. A few of the CEOs interviewed commented that women managers are extremely hard working and their loyalty and dedication are unquestionable. They are invaluable assets because they are excellent role models for their subordinates. Such leadership qualities are expected to contribute to the uplifting of morale among staff and would indirectly enhance performance and productivity especially through team effort. Team work is increasingly recognised as important in today's work environment where high-tech and complexity of tasks require a high degree of cooperation among people with different capabilities and personalities.

But acceptance by subordinates and by male colleagues is still not encouraging as found by studies elsewhere, such as in the United States and India. Obstacles include a distinct favour for managerial attributes unique to men. The negative attitude of male managers towards female counterparts - where women are not rated equally with men for managerial posts - raises the

issue of acceptance of women as managers in a male-dominated world despite their positive qualities of competency and commitment. Greater conviction may be brought about among “women averse” firms not only through such qualities but also because of important economic benefits that women managers bring to the organisation.

WEAKNESSES OF WOMEN MANAGERS

It would be unrealistic to create an impression that women managers are without weaknesses. Among their weaknesses are their emotional, sometimes temperamental nature, and their lack of assertiveness. It is thought that women managers could improve their independence in decision making and be more aggressive in controlling subordinates. Their undesirable traits are often aggravated by their negative feelings of self worth and low self esteem. Such poor self perception do not augur well for their career advancement particularly among those in lower levels of management.

The problems of women managers that arise from their multiple roles at home and at work also cause difficulties. It is thought that the productivity or performance of their organisations may be partly inhibited by problems associated with their family commitments. Maternity leave among married women is an example. The reluctance of women managers to travel as demanded by their managerial responsibilities is another liability. Though such role conflicts, to some extent, have been alleviated by the availability of domestic help and child care facilities, employers tend to favour men, if given a choice, to avoid such potential problems. This may be the real cause of the much talked about “glass ceiling”.

Nevertheless, some respondents felt that such problems are somewhat compensated by the lower job turnover of women managers, their greater sense of loyalty and dedication to their work. However, the weaknesses and criticisms leveled against women managers should be received and taken positively by women so that ways to overcome them can be sought. Success in reducing these shortcomings will enhance opportunities for women to scaling greater heights in their careers as managers.

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN FEMALE AND MALE MANAGERS

When comparisons were made with their male counterparts, female managers were found to be equally capable and competent. Many women managers have been equally well educated and trained, and were regarded to be as well equipped with problem solving skills as men. They also have the potential of being as effectively trained and further developed as men for future contributions to performance.

However, male managers were thought to be more image-engrossed, while women managers tended to be more task-oriented. The survey respondents generally preferred men as managers since men were perceived to be intellectually more superior, possess a more macro view and have greater clarity of thought and analysis. Men were thought to be able to make decisions faster, less fickle minded, more assertive and aggressive than women.

The study went one step further to seek the opinions of human resource managers on adopting a more gender-balanced policy for managerial positions. Generally, they did not think that such a policy would pose any serious problem. But in fact, no definite policy on gender balance in management could be detected in any of the firms surveyed.

CONCLUSIONS

Women in management has been an important area of research not only for women themselves but also for human resource management. The emerging concept of gender balance which has not been systematically researched and developed should provoke interest among corporations to investigate further into the benefits that can be reaped by adopting a more gender balanced approach towards human resource development. As evident from studies on gender balance, men and women possess different qualities which, if put together effectively, can produce synergistic effects to result in higher productivity for the organisation as a whole. Perhaps team work building should incorporate the gender dimension.

Although women appear to have taken a big stride from where they were previously, their success can hardly match the achievement of their male counterparts. By knowing their respective strengths and weaknesses, women should work continuously towards proving their worth. They should diversify courageously into areas which are traditionally male domains, especially in an era of rapid industrialisation in the case of Malaysia. However, certain obstacles will have to be removed before women can really make their contributions comparable to that of men in the corporate sector. Working hard alone is insufficient. Net-working and mentoring are important factors. Women who are at the top should avoid falling into the "queen-bee" syndrome. Instead they can assist other junior female managers so that more women could reach the upper echelons of management and in a shorter time period. They can act as role models to their female subordinates.

Women managers in top management can also pave the way for the next cohort by instilling confidence among male colleagues, particularly CEOs, not only concerning women's competence and efficiency, but also in pushing for a gender balanced human resource development policy. In a full employment situation, as currently experienced in the economy of Malaysia, conditions for adopting such a policy are certainly conducive. "Productivity

enhancement” should replace “discrimination reduction” as the justification for such a policy. The ultimate goal for promoting gender balance in management should be to achieve a state where recruitment and promotion are based on merit and not on gender.

REFERENCES

- Col, J-M 1990. 'Synthesis of National Trends in Women's Career Advancement' in *Sub-Regional Workshop on Policy Development For Women's Increased Participation in Public Management*. The national Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and The United Nations Department of Technical Cooperation for Development.
- Gafni, Y. 1980. The Readiness of Israeli Men and Women to Fill Senior Administrative Positions, M.A Thesis, Ramat-Gan, Israel: Bar-Ilan University (Hebrew).
- Goffee, R & Scase, R. 1985. *Women in Charge*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.
- Goldthorpe, J.H. et al. 1980. *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Heath, A. 1981. *Social Mobility*. London: Fontana
- Hoffarth, V.B 1989. *Corporate Women Managers Southeast Asia*. Metro Manila: Asian Institute of Management.
- Jabes, J. 1980. Causal Attributions and Sex-Role Stereotypes in The Perceptions of Women Managers. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science-Revue Canadienne Des Sciences Du Comportement* 12 (1): 52-63.
- Licuanan, V.S. (ed) 1992. *Beyond Profit - ASEAN Women Managers in Government and Not-for-profit Organizations*. Manila:Asian Institute of Management.
- Licuanan, V.S. (ed) 1992. *Women Entrepreneurs in Southeast Asia*. Manila: Asian Institute of Management.
- Lyles, M.A. 1983. Jan-Feb: *Strategies for Helping Women Managers - or Anyone Personnel*, 69.
- Malaysia 1991-1995. *Sixth Malaysia Plan*, Kuala Lumpur:Government of Malaysia.
- Malaysia, 1994. *Labour Force Survey Report*, various years, Kuala Lumpur:Department of Statistics.
- Norma Mansor. 1994. *Women Managers in Malaysia: Their Mobility and Challenges in Competitive Frontiers: Women Managers in a Global Economy* ed. by Nancy J. Adler and Dafna N. Izraeli, Blackwell Publishers: Massachusetts, United States of America.
- O'Leary, V.E 1974. Some Attitudinal Barriers to Occupational Aspirations in Women' *Psychology Bulletin* 81: 809-826
- Pereira, B.F 1978. Organisational and Personal Correlates of Attitudes Toward Women As Managers', *Indian Journal of Social Work* 39 (3): 287-296.
- Sieh, L.M.L. 1992. *Producer Services Development and Trade - Malaysia and ASEAN in the Uruguay Round*, Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya and International Development Research Centre of Canada.
- Sieh, L.M.L., Phang, S.N., Lang, C.Y., Mansor, N. 1991. *Women Managers of Malaysia*, Kuala Lumpur:Faculty of Economics and Administration, Universiti Malaya.
- Tepper, T.P & Tepper, N.D 1980. *The New Entrepreneurs*, New York: Universe Books.

Sieh Lee Mei Ling & Ong Foon Sim
Faculty of Economics & Administration
Universiti Malaya,
Lembah Pantai,
59100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia