



Female leadership communication styles from the perspective of employees

Joyce Cheah Lynn-Sze
Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia
joycecheah@uum.edu.my

ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of a leader is assessed by his or her ability to communicate a vision, goals, strategy and set of attitudes that will gain support and traction. It demands women leaders to use powerful communication styles to assertively motivate, inspire and influence. Many research claim that even when women have the necessary skills and abilities to effectively lead an organisation, they may still have difficulty convincing others of their leadership potential. It is more difficult for women to become leaders and attain success in leadership roles. These women's voices deserve attention due to the concerns on the growing percentage of women entering workforce. Thus, this study aims to understand the leadership communication styles practised by female leaders from the employees' perspective. Interviews with 10 employees from various fields helped illustrate the communication styles, characteristics, and perceptions of female leadership. Findings reveal that female leaders demonstrate a mix of transformational, transactional, and participative leadership style in leading their organisation. Female leaders also tend to display both masculine and feminine characteristics when communicating with employees. This study provides a greater understanding of female leaders from the perspectives of employees, especially in the communication aspect as well as what organisations can do to help women overcome gender bias and discrimination in the workplace.

Keywords: ***Leadership communication, female leader, leadership style, leadership characteristics***

INTRODUCTION

A leader is someone who uses his/her ideas to encourage and inspire followers by way of praising creativity, innovation, self-realisation, and change (Kotter, 2013). Based on past studies, men are still more likely to be perceived as better leaders than women because women are always judged against a standard that is defined by men (Crites, Dickson, & Lorenz, 2015; Mangan, 2019; Stegmann, Bark, Junker, & Dick, 2017). Further, female leaders are often portrayed as less capable leaders than men and will likely to be rejected by those who espouse traditional gender roles, preferring women to be housewives and mothers. As conservatives support the traditional role allocation between women and men, one could assume that they feel uncomfortable about women in high-status positions (Al-Barghouthi, 2017; Appelbaum, Shapiro, Didus, Luongo & Paz, 2013).

Although the number of female employees have more than doubled over the last 30 years, women are still underrepresented in managerial positions across the globe (Catalyst, 2020). Similarly, a report by McKinsey Global Institute (2012) stated that the percentage of women in executive committees and on corporate boards in Asian countries is even lower, compared to the United States and Europe (Chui et al., 2012). Nevertheless, our society is experiencing a period of significant change in the concept of women's role. This change is reflected in the increasing number of women joining the working world and significant change for women leadership in Malaysia (Hilal, 2015; Hamzah, Hamzah, Othman, & Devi, 2016).

There is currently a dearth of studies regarding female leaders, especially on their leadership communication style as well as their characteristics in managing multicultural organisations in Malaysia (Hilal, 2015; Hamzah et al., 2016). However, researchers contend that females are better communicators and thus better leaders than their male counterparts (Katila & Eriksson, 2013). In contrast, other researchers argue that the differences in communication style and weaknesses in female communication is in fact the major reason why women are not awarded senior management positions (Mayfield, Mayfield, & Sharbrough, 2015). Moreover, the issue of females as leaders and their leadership styles has always been judged by their employees.

Therefore, this qualitative study attempts to understand the perspectives of employees towards their female leaders' leadership communication. It aims to identify the leadership communication styles practiced by a female leader and how her employees perceive them. This study also seeks to discuss the female leader's characteristics when communicating with her team members. In fact, it is important for women to know their leadership abilities and embrace their unique perceptions and leadership styles.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Female vs male communication style

Barrett (2014) defined leaders as individuals who guide, direct, motivate, or inspire others. They are men and women who influence others in an organisation or in a community and command others' attention. Mayfield and Mayfield (2016) defined leadership communication as the perceived articulation of talk or action that is recognised by others as being capable of achieving the goal and vision of the leader. The style in which a leader chooses to communicate to his/her employees is just as important as the message which the leader is attempting to convey and deliver. Barrett (2014) referred to communication style as an individual's tendency to communicate via unique patterns or combinations of code, content, and communication rules.

Mayfield and Mayfield (2016) stated that communication is the key element that bonds, makes, and creates effective teamwork. They also stressed that members must exchange information to ascertain other members' competence and intentions, and they must engage in communication to develop a strategy and plan their work. Sudarmanti (2015) also posited that leadership is one of the greatest social phenomena and that communication is an essential activity of a leader. Knowing and understanding the importance of any leader within an organisation can be made clearer when examining the relationship that leaders have with their employees as well as the content of a leader's communication.

Appelbaum et al. (2013) claimed that there are differences between male and female leaders. Women are often classified as using a transformational style of leadership while men adopt a transactional style. Transformational leadership means that females use a community-based approach, often trying to build consensus instead of dictating to the teams they manage (Sharif, 2019). By using the transformational style, women often adopt collaborative and open communication and is therefore considered a more feminine approach. However, the transactional approach is typically equated to leadership qualities in a more masculine manner (Eagly, Koenig, Mitchell, & Ristikari, 2011).

Meanwhile, Helgesen and Johnson (2010) suggested that men and women assess their surroundings differently thus leading to different communication styles. For instance, when analysing information, women take a very broad approach, which involves continually scanning their environment for information, whereas men are more apt to restrict their observations to what a specific set of actions requires (Helgesen & Johnson, 2010). With the more narrow and purpose-driven approach adopted by males, one can see that there is a significant gender difference in communication styles.

Furthermore, Gipson, Pfaff, Mendelsohn, Catenacci, and Burke (2017) indicated that employees perceive a democratic leader to be relaxed, animated, attentive, and friendly. While an authoritative leader is perceived to be dominant and argumentative. When it comes to managing people, communication style has been found to be related to task-orientation, influencing employees and employee satisfaction.

However, there are also a few studies that propose certain perceptions that employees have of their female leader. In a study on nonverbal communication, females individually, rated themselves higher than men in their decoding ability, and as a group were perceived by both men and women to be both better decoders and encoders of nonverbal cues (Al-Barghouthi, 2017). In other words, both males and females rated their female leaders to have better nonverbal communication skills than male leaders.

Al-Barghouthi (2017) stated that another typical leadership style of female leaders is participative leadership. Participative leaders offer supervision, contribute, and provide for the employee. This approach is characterised by the "I share" philosophy. Decisions are made within teams, with each member contributing equal inputs (Iqbal, Anwar, & Haider, 2015). Although they are unproductive compared to other leadership styles, the contribution of an employee in this type of group is high.

Characteristics of a female leader when communicating

The characteristics of a leader are the qualities or features that belong to them and make them distinctive. Hilal (2015) contended that the qualities that make a good leader do not vary between men and women. After all, it's the person, and not the gender that determines a leader. And although women are only just catching up to men in terms of leadership roles, their unique experiences and supportive nature make them more than capable of leading the future.

Leadership has typically adopted the notion that certain characteristics can influence a leader's communication and performance (Mayfield & Mayfield, 2016). Abdul Halima and Abdul Razak (2013) claimed that men and women come from two different cultures of communication. Both men and women can possess stereotypic masculine (active/instrumental) traits as well as stereotypic feminine (expressive/nurturant) traits. A combination of these traits is termed as androgynous.

It is generally believed that leadership, communication, and organisational culture are constructed with a masculine approach, and the dominant views on leadership find it difficult to integrate femininity (Kennedy, Bishu, & Heckler, 2019). This is supported by Place and Winter (2018) who agreed that leadership has been historically portrayed primarily in masculine terms, and many theories of leadership have focused mainly on stereotypically masculine qualities.

Because women are more likely than men to possess expressive traits, what looks like an essentialist gender difference may actually be a trait related difference (Latu, Mast, Lammers, & Bombari, 2013). The same study found evidence that gender affects how listeners perceive different types of communication. "Masculine" men are most likely to perceive questions as a sign of sensitivity, whereas "feminine" women are most likely to perceive questions as a sign of insensitivity. Although leader roles are traditionally masculine in their cultural definition and male-dominated numerically, they vary widely in these respects. Some leader roles are less culturally masculine and in recent years, are increasingly occupied by more women than men (Place & Winter, 2018).

According to Appelbaum et al. (2013), women leaders focus on empathy, whereby they will share information, ideas and build a relationship with their teams as well as are more interpersonally-oriented in their communication styles. In the same way, Abdul Halim and Abdul Razak (2013) stated that "open communication" with their team members is the key to female leadership effectiveness. In their qualitative study, Hill and Wheat (2017) found that females utilised a teamwork-oriented, open communication approach as one of the fundamental aspects to their leadership. This differs from the way men value communication in their leadership style and offers a distinct binary between how men and women communicate in the workplace.

Besides these, female leaders focus on the relationships between people whereas men tend to focus on the issues or tasks at hand (Mangan, 2019). While male leaders' communication styles have been mentally associated with masculine qualities such as being aggressive and result-oriented (Eagly et al., 2011), female leaders, on the other hand, communicate using a more feminine approach involving collaboration, relationship building and information sharing (Appelbaum et al., 2013).

Thus, masculine, and feminine styles have their strengths and weaknesses. If an organisation is dominated by a masculine or feminine style, the weaknesses of this approach are at risk (Sudarmanti, 2015). But if there is a balanced use of masculine and feminine approaches, the group will benefit more from the strengths and circumvent the disadvantages of each approach (Chuan, 2018).

METHODOLOGY

To understand and assess the leadership communication style of female leaders, this study examined the perceptions of employees with female bosses. Informants were gleaned from a convenience sample of employees that were part of the researcher's personal network who agreed to participate in the interview. Qualitative studies typically use small sample

sizes because of the intensive nature of such studies (Creswell, 2014). The research study interviewed 10 informants who have experience working under the supervision of female leaders for at least a year. All 10 informants were female employees. The informants come from various industries including retail, education, and fashion. The age of the informants of this study varied from 23 years old to 41 years old.

Data were collected from a series of interviews, each approximately 30 to 60 minutes, which were recorded and later transcribed. The interviews were designed to extract information on the thoughts and perceptions of the employees towards the female leaders' communication style and characteristics. The interview questions were based on the theory and literature that have been discussed previously. During the interview, the researchers were sequencing questions based on the process and feedback from different informants. Informants answered questions regarding their leader's leadership communication style. According to Creswell (2014), this technique promotes interaction between researchers and informants by enabling researchers to explore informal thinking and requesting further information spontaneously.

Each interview was manually transcribed by the researcher and all the transcripts were read and checked by two other researchers. The transcripts were analysed using the NVivo12 software program. The broad categories that guided the initial findings included leadership communication style and leader characteristics.

FINDINGS

Female leadership communication style

Successful leaders can drive creativity and productivity, while also enhancing an organisation's performance (Zuraik & Kelly, 2019). Leadership styles are often linked closely with the type of personality. The results of the interview revealed that effective leaders should demonstrate multi-styles or a combination of styles that makes them successful in controlling and inspiring employees. Some leaders have their own style that doesn't fit well into a personality. Labelling leadership styles is a general practice, but each leader will have a more detailed, in-depth orientation in his/her approach to manage, inspire, and drive outcomes within his/her organisation.

Based on the interviews with 10 informants, three leadership communication styles emerged: transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and participative leadership.

Transformational leadership

Transformational leaders support the exploration of new ways to achieve breakthroughs in organisations (Zuraik & Kelly, 2018). They facilitate innovation by focusing on exploration, fostering a learning climate, promoting safety, being open, allowing for mistakes and empowering employees.

Based on the perceptions of the employees, female leaders who practise transformational leadership styles tend to give input to employees by giving ideas, suggestions, and the best options for her employees.

“She is very helpful. Sometimes the ideas she has in mind are the ideas that can be applied. In addition, she also manages the company and her staff very well.”

(Informant 8, education sector)

“Every time after discussions with her, she will share her opinions and will take note of any important information that is mentioned by her staff. I like to work with her because she does not give us pressure but is willing to share and give ideas to the staff.” (Informant 10, education sector)

Moreover, transformational leaders are also leaders who are willing to help employees when they face difficulties in completing their tasks. At times, the female leader will guide her employee in doing tasks by sitting next to the employee and monitoring them.

“She will provide details and guide me as I work on my tasks. Sometimes if I do not understand or there is any amendment that must be done, I will refer to her.” (Informant 5, retail industry)

“My boss has designing skills. She will come to my computer and help me edit the design based on her preferences. In this way, I managed to learn the latest techniques and tricks that she used in editing software and create something creative. Sometimes, she will help me through WhatsApp if she is busy and not in the office.” (Informant 6, fashion industry)

Transactional leadership

Cook and Glass (2014) described that transactional leadership involves rewarding employees when they succeed, and reproving or punishing employees when they fail. In the interviews, some informants shared that their leader will reward them if they manage to complete their tasks. They further admitted that being rewarded is very important because it will motivate them to stay focus and improve their performance. They would feel happy if their leader rewarded them for their achievements, through annual bonus or increment.

“She motivates me because there are rewards for certain tasks given by her if I manage to complete it. For example, when she gives tasks to me, she promises to give commission or bonus, so this motivates me to make sure all my assignments are perfect and ready on time. Her attitude to promising a good deal is helpful and so far, she has never broken her promise.” (Informant 4, retail industry)

“Yes, she will appreciate her staff, for example she will say thank you and praise the work that I have done. Every year, she will reward all her staff gifts for her birthday. Because she wants her staff to be happy on her birthday, as she always said, seeing her staff happy is the best birthday gift for her.” (Informant 6, fashion industry)

Participative leadership

Another leadership communication style practised by female leaders is participative style. Participative leaders who adopt this leadership style inspire employees and involve them in the decision-making process in the organisation. According to Iqbal et al. (2015), decisions are made in teams with equal input from each member. The contribution of employee in this form is very high. Participative leaders tend to make employees feel they are an important part of the group, which helps to foster dedication to the group (Ingersoll, Glass, Cook, & Olsen, 2019).

Based on the informants, female leaders who value listening is another trait appreciated by employees. Employees will be happy to share their thoughts if their leader listens to them.

“Since I am from the sales department team, she will discuss with us on how to reach the sales target and which product should we focus to reach our monthly target sales. She will ask us to predict the target we can achieve for the month. Every decision is based on our teams’ agreement, she will never decide herself, she will first ask our opinions and suggestions.” (Informant 1, fashion industry)

“She will discuss with all her staff. Sometimes, she will call the head of every department to meet, discuss and make decision. From the discussion, she will send an email to all the staff to announce the decision.”
(Informant 9, education sector)

“For every decision she makes, she would call all the staff to discuss; here, all staff would voice their opinions, and the decisions will be made with everyone’s agreement.”
(Informant 10, education sector)

Female leadership characteristics

The findings from the interviews revealed that the communication characteristics of a female leader can be divided into two categories, which is masculine and feminine.

Masculine

Cook and Glass (2014) defined masculine as a set of male attributes, behaviours and roles which have varied across different cultures and historical periods. Both men and women may exhibit these male traits and behaviour.

A number of characteristics were highlighted by informants which match masculine characteristics such as strict, brave, and independent. One of the informants stated that female leaders will earn trust and respect by being strict and firm in the organisation.

“Strictness is a very important characteristic; we like a leader who is strict and firm. For example, staying firm in making decisions, giving directions to employees and strict in managing employees. This attitude reflects their credibility as a leader and employees will respect them as their leader.”
(Informant 4, retail industry)

“She needs to be balanced between being a good leader and a strict leader. To be an effective leader, she needs to be able to influence and at the same time, she needs to be credible so that her employees will respect her. It depends on the situation; if the situation is critical, she must be serious and strict, but at other times, she can mingle around with the staff. She does not need to be strict most of the time.”
(Informant 2, fashion industry)

“Yes, she must be strict because she is a woman. If she is soft, the staff will not listen to her. Besides, she is also very understanding. We like leaders who understand the way the employees work, and not just force us to follow her way.”
(Informant 9, education sector)

Feminine

Female leaders will give extra attention to details, and they are very meticulous about the various attributes of the work given. They often work hard and will go the extra mile to perfect the output (Katila & Eriksson, 2013).

According to the informants, their leaders display characteristics such as being detailed, neat, understanding, knowledgeable and soft-spoken. Based on the descriptions, the researcher classifies these characteristics under feminine because the feminine characteristic likes to create a personal relationship with employees.

“She is a very neat and detailed person. I like her way because staff will work hard to make her satisfied with the assignments. For instance, I will check my work a few times before I submit my assignments because she will check the work thoroughly.” (Informant 8, education sector)

“The way she manages her company is also very good. She will make sure everything is under control. Every decision needs to be approved by her beforehand, she is not the type of a leader who will let the staff do everything.” (Informant 6, fashion industry)

“She is firm, motherly and understands the problems faced by her employees. Easy to understand and easy to deal with. She is always there if needed, not too firm, but still, there is firmness in her.” (Informant 10, education sector)

It should however be noted that both masculine and feminine characteristics have their own strengths and weaknesses. It might be more effective for the organisation if the female leader can balance the masculine and feminine characteristics, as it will benefit more from the strengths and circumvent the disadvantages of each characteristic. The findings suggest that female leaders should demonstrate both type of characteristics to be respected and accepted as a leader.

DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Generally, this study aims to understand the leadership communication styles demonstrated by female leaders. The findings reveal that female leaders demonstrate the transformational leadership style, transactional leadership style and participative leadership style. This is aligned with Appelbaum et al. (2013) who claimed that feminine characteristics are usually linked to transformative, participatory, and people-oriented leadership. Women are often observed practising the transformative leadership style which means female leaders use community-based approaches, often trying to complement the teams they manage instead of commanding them (Cook & Glass, 2014). This leadership style translates into the way a female leader communicates with her employees, which is often collaborative and open.

Besides leadership communication style, this study also examined the communication characteristics demonstrated by female leaders. The findings reveal that female leaders utilise a combination of masculine and feminine characteristics in managing organisations. This is evidenced as female leaders demonstrate masculine characteristics such as strict, brave, and independence, while at the same time, embody feminine characteristics such as being detailed, neat, understanding, and knowledgeable.

It may seem that the simple solution would be for women to demonstrate these qualities to improve the general perception of their leadership capability. However, when women do attempt to be perceived as more agentic and display more common leadership qualities, it works to their detriment.

Certain research suggests that women are perceived more negatively when they communicate using a more masculine style; thus, creating tension between likeability and aggressiveness (Place & Winter, 2018). This has led to women finding themselves in a double bind situation whereby if a woman acts communally, then she is not respected, but if she acts aggressively, she is disliked (Eagly et al., 2011).

This study adds to what we understand about employees' perceptions of female leadership communication styles. Most of the literature to date argues that the double bind association between male and female leaders often puts female leaders at a disadvantage. What this study proves is that female leaders can adapt their communication and leadership style based in part on the gender of the employees they are managing. In other words, we suggest that women can tailor their communication leadership style with communal aspects for female employees and agentic aspects for male employees.

This study has several limitations. First, it only included female leaders found in the researcher's own personal network. This may present certain inherent biases. Future research should look at several different female leaders from different industries and companies. By analysing the leadership of several leaders in different industries, common themes across leadership can be uncovered such as which leadership communication style and communication characteristics are commonly used among top leaders.

Second, assessing male leaders would have been helpful in providing a comparison. This a potential issue for future studies to explore. Future research can also extend the current study by adopting several approaches, for instance, broadening the sample size or comparing leaders in the same industries to determine if different employee perception criteria is found in industries with traits that encompass male leaders.

CONCLUSION

In cognisance of the rising number of female leaders, especially in Malaysia, this study intends to help female leaders understand the suitable leadership communication style, and their characteristics from the perspective of employees. This study also hopes to change the perception of employees towards working with female leaders and boost the confidence of female leaders in their capability as an effective leader. Lastly, it is hoped that this study will also encourage all females to rise up and develop their career path as well as set their goal to become a leader one day.

Open Access: This article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC-BY 4.0) which permits any use, distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author(s) and the source are credited.

References

- Abdul Halima, N. A., & Abdul Razak, N. (2013). Communication strategies of women leaders in entrepreneurship. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 118, 21 – 28.
- Al-Barghouthi, S. J. (2017). Women in leadership positions, road to success: A case study, Bahrain. *Case Studies in Business and Management*, 4(2), 52–69.
- Appelbaum, S. H., Shapiro, B. T., Didus, K., Luongo, T., & Paz, B. (2013). Upward mobility for women managers: Styles and perceptions. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 45(2), 110–118.

- Barrett, D. J. (2014). *Leadership Communication* (4th ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- Catalyst. (2020, Aug 11). Women in management. Retrieved from <https://www.catalyst.org/research/women-in-management/>
- Chuan, T. P. (2018). Adopting masculine traits to get ahead—An exploratory study of Malaysian female and male public relations practitioners' job role and organisational position disparities. *SEARCH Journal of Media and Communication Research*, 10(2), 59–86.
- Chui, M., Manyika, J., Bughin, J., Dobbs, R., Roxburgh, C., Sarrazin, H., Sands, G., & Westergren, M. (2012). *The social economy: Unlocking value and productivity through social technologies*. China: McKinsey Global Institute.
- Cook, A., & Glass, C. (2014). Women and top leadership positions: Towards an institutional analysis. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 21(1), 91–103.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Crites, S. N., Dickson, K. E., & Lorenz, A. (2015). Nurturing gender stereotypes in the face of experience: A study of leader gender, leadership style and satisfaction. *Journal of Organizational Culture, Communication and Conflict*, 19(1), 7–29.
- Eagly, A. H., Koenig, A. M., Mitchell, A. A. & Ristikari, T. (2011), Are leader stereotypes masculine? A meta-analysis of three research paradigms. *Psychological Bulletin*, 137(4), 616–642.
- Gipson, A. N., Pfaff, D. L., Mendelsohn, D. B., Catenacci, L. Y. & Burke, W. W. (2017). Women and leadership: Selection, development, leadership style, and performance. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*. 53(1), 32–65.
- Hamzah, S. R., Hamzah, A., Othman, J., & Devi, S. (2016). Impact of Islamic values on the leadership style of Muslim women academics in Malaysia. *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, 18(2), 187–203.
- Helgesen, S., & Johnson, J. (2010). *The female vision: Women's real power at work*. Oakland, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.
- Hilal, H. (2015). Perceptions towards female leadership in Malaysia. *Journal of Modern Education Review*, 5(5), 517–525.
- Hill, L. H., & Wheat, C. A. (2017). The influence of mentorship and role models on university women leaders' career paths to university presidency. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(8), 2090–2111.
- Ingersoll, A. R., Glass, C., Cook, A., & Olsen, K. J. (2019). Power, status and expectations: How narcissism manifests among women CEO. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 158, 893–907.
- Iqbal, N., Anwar, S., & Haider, N. (2015). Effect of leadership style on employee performance. *Arabian Journal of Business Management Review*, 5, 146.
- Katila, S., & Eriksson, P. (2013). He as a firm, strong-minded and empowering leader, but is she? Gendered positioning of female and male CEOs. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 20(1), 71–84.
- Kennedy, A. R., Bishu, S. G., & Heckler, N. (2019). Feminism, masculinity, and active representation: A gender analysis of representative bureaucracy. *Administration & Society*, 52(7), 1101–1130.
- Kotter, J. P. (2013, Jan 9). Management is (still) not leadership. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2013/01/management-is-still-not-leadership>
- Latu, I. M., Mast, M. S., Lammers, J., & Bombari, D. (2013). Successful female leaders empower women's behavior in leadership tasks. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 49(3), 444–448.
- Mangan, S. (2019). *Leadership styles in male-dominated organizations: A mixed-methods study*. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10791/291>
- Mayfield, J., & Mayfield, M. (2016). Leadership communication: Reflecting, engaging, and innovating. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 54(1), 3–11.
- Mayfield, J., Mayfield, M., & Sharbrough, W. C. (2015). Strategic vision and values in top leaders' communications: Motivating language at a higher level. *International Journal of Business Communication*, 52(1), 97–121.
- Place, K. R., & Winter, J. V. (2018). Where are the women? An examination of research on women and leadership in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 44(1), 165–173.
- Sharif, K. (2019). Transformational leadership behaviours of women in a socially dynamic environment. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis*, 27(4), 1191–1217.
- Stegmann, B. S., Bark, A. S. H., Junker, N. M., & Dick, R. V. (2017). Think manager-think male, think follower-think female: Gender bias in implicit followership theories. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 47(7), 377–388.

- Sudarmanti, R. (2015). Women's empowerment: Examining leadership communication of women entrepreneurs in Indonesia and the USA. *Malaysian Journal of Communication*, 31(1), 153–170.
- Zuraik, A., & Kelly, L. (2019). The role of CEO transformational leadership and innovation climate in exploration and exploitation. *European Journal of Innovation Management*, 22(1), 84–104.

Joyce Cheah Lynn-Sze (Phd)

is currently a senior lecturer at the Communication Department, School of Multimedia Technology and Communication (SMMTC), Universiti Utara Malaysia. In 2016, she received her PhD in Communication from UUM. Her research interests focus on leadership communication, with a specific emphasis on Chinese values from cross-cultural countries.
