

The Port Sector in Malaysia – Does Gender Diversity Exist at the Management Level?

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Abstract— Gender diversity has been a growing concern in Malaysia, particularly due to the low representation of women in the decision-making level. Diversity in leadership and openness to new perspectives is crucial for charting the course in business. Companies that are diverse in its board are stronger, better positioned to tackle external and internal challenges and more focused on the bottom line. In 2016, Malaysian women represented only 17.9% at the decision-making level of the top 50 public listed companies. Women's participation in the managerial positions has largely stagnated over the year. The figure of 17.9% is low compared to developed countries such as Australia (36%) and the Philippines (48%) which is within the Asian region. Malaysia is essentially a maritime country where 90% of the international trade is transacted through the port. Hence, the purpose of this study is aimed at determining whether gender diversity exists at the management level. It further examines the perceptions of the management level towards women's involvement in port management. To profile major port operators in Malaysia, 10 questionnaires were distributed with a response rate of 90%. The results show that the women's participation at the board of directors level and the management level is still relatively low and gender diversity still exists at the management level of the ports in Malaysia. In terms of perception, male management still have preference for male peers and prefer males for port management. This study throws light on the current situation of lack of gender diversity at management level in the ports in Malaysia. With the Malaysian Government declaring the year 2018 as Women Empowerment year, the port sector should work in line to place the gender diversity as one of their strategic agenda.

Keywords— Gender diversity, women in management, port sector, strategic agenda, business case.

Introduction

Malaysia is essentially a maritime nation [1], the economic importance of the sea to Malaysia lies in the activities that are generated using the sea. It is located in the world's second busiest waterway where the number of ships in the straits of Malacca and Singapore has grown from 71,330 vessels in 2009 to 83,740 vessels in 2016. Malaysia is ranked as the 24th largest trading nation in the world with a total trade volume which increased from RM1.271 trillion in 2011 to RM1.485 trillion in 2016 [2]. The volume of exports and imports through the sea transportation amounted to RM1.48 trillion which constitutes 98 % of total trading [1]. The impact on the balance of payment is substantial. The Government has established Malaysian economic transformation plan from which five major initiatives in the development of the extension of the four major ports in Malaysia namely Port of Tanjung Pelepas, Johor Port, Pulau Carey and Kuantan Port. With the Malaysian economic transformation plan there is an increasing demand for the maritime sector including shipping, port management, transportation linkages and its related services to structure the industry to be effectively managed by an integrated and systematic centered thinking and planning to meet the high-income nation. Its growth in the industry with the extension of existing ports clearly create opportunities for job employment in the maritime sector.

A study conducted by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community of Malaysia in 2014, shows that women constitute 49 % of the 30.1 million Malaysian population, and they represent 52.4% of the workforce. However, in 2016, their representation in the labour force has increased to 54.3% from a population of 31.7 million. The female labour force participation rate was more than 55%

from the age of 25 to 54 years of age. By 2020, women are expected to represent 59% of the labour force [3]. The “30% club” movement began in the United Kingdom to motivate women leaders into the upper echelons of corporate services. Recognising the benefits of critical mass, the Prime Minister of Malaysia in May 2015 launched the 30% Club Malaysia Chapter “with the objective of harnessing the talent and energy of women in Malaysia, as equal partners in building a high income, high productivity economy with the right fundamentals for sustainable growth”[4].

Malaysia had then set a target of 30% women at the decision-making level of the top 100 listed companies by 2016 [3], [4] However, in 2016, the women’s representation at the decision-making level of the top 100 public listed companies was only 18 % though the women’s participation in the labour force rate recorded 54.3% [5].

Recognising that it is an important agenda for the nation, the 30% Club of Malaysia’s target was revisited in May 2017. The target of 30% women in the public listed companies (PLC) and government-linked industry companies (GLIC) was revised to 2020. The Chairmen, Chief Executive Officers and Board of Directors had to lobby for gender diversity and regular reporting on achievements. The Government in its 2018 budget has set the target of women’s participation on the labour force to 59% by the year 2020.

In line with that, the Government has put in a lot of effort to promote diversity and call for greater women’s involvement in the decision-making level. This also means that women’s participation in the management level has to equally improve, particularly at the seaport sector of the country.

This paper aims

- i) at establishing whether gender diversity does exist at the management level of the container port operations in Malaysia;
- ii) to examine the perceptions of the management towards women’s involvement in ports management of the maritime industry.

1.1 Maritime – Port Sector

Due to the rapid growth rates of international trade and high maritime transport demand, Malaysia is improving its port efficiency, providing the rationalized port management and administration, and tightening relationship both in government tiers and transport operator’s levels. Hence, there is an

increasing demand for the maritime services including shipping, port management, transportation linkages and its related activities. The structure for the Malaysian maritime industry can effectively be managed by an integrated and centralized maritime related knowledge and information to guide external and internal sector management supported by correct incentives and effective policies to manage the Malaysian Maritime Sector.

Seaport is a land facility designated for reception of personnel or material moved by sea, and that serves as an authorized port of entrance into or departure from the country in which it is located. Seaports are important to trading nations like Malaysia because the economy of a nation depends a lot on port efficiencies. Therefore, competent and capable management is crucial for the sustainable success of Malaysia as a maritime nation. The maritime sector covers a wide spectrum of activities; however, the interest of this study is on the seaport operations as this sector requires both skilled and competent workforce and expertise to boost up the development of the sector.

In Malaysia, there are ten major container ports carrying sea freight and they are located in both West Malaysia and East Malaysia covering Sabah and Sarawak. There are seven port authorities governing the activities of the port operators. The operation of the major ports has been privatised as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. List of Major Ports in Malaysia and its status

Major Ports		Privatised Port Operators	Local Authority
Port Klang	1	Northern (M) Sdn Bhd	Port Klang Authority
	2	Westports Sdn Bhd	
Johor Port	3	Johor Port Bhd	Johor Port Authority
Tanjung Pelepas Port	4	Port of Tanjung Pelepas Sdn Bhd	
Kuantan Port	5	Kuantan Port Consortium Sdn Bhd	Kuantan Port/Kemaman Port Authority
Bintulu Port	6	Bintulu Port Sdn Bhd	Bintulu Port Authority
Pulau Pinang Port	7	Penang Port Sdn Bhd	Penang Port Commission
Sabah Ports	8	Sabah Port Sdn Bhd	Sabah Port Authority (State)
Kemaman Port	9	Kemaman Konsortium Port Sdn Bhd	Kuantan Port/Kemaman Port Authority

The movement of throughput through these ports have been expanding over the years from RM1.271 trillion in 2011 to RM1.485 trillion in 2016. The steady growth of ports requires steady supply of competent management leader to support their development of the ports and the country.

2. Literature Review

With the growing trend of the ports development, talent management is the top risk for businesses, and global competition for the best talent will only increase if diversity matters is ignored. Malaysia has also demonstrated its commitment towards capacity building with emphasis on gender diversity in the maritime sector through strategic collaborative public-private partnership together with International Maritime Organisation (IMO) for the Integrated Technical Cooperation Program (ITCP)[6]. This enables Malaysia to consistently contribute her maritime expertise or sponsor specific capacity building programme under the purview of the IMO.

2.1 Diversity agenda of the nation

All over the world, women tend to engage in low productivity, low paying activities. Men and women face a number of choices over their life- cycle with respect to the tasks that they are engaged in. They must first decide on how much time to spend in acquiring education. They must then choose whether to engage in unpaid work at home, and whether to participate in market work (ie for financial gain).

If market work is chosen, they also must choose a sector and occupation. Globally, there are stark differences in the choices made by men and women along these dimensions, with women concentrating in low productivity, low paid tasks relative to men [7]. With these choices, there exists gender gaps in economic opportunities that impact the economy. The move by the Government to promote gender diversity in business will provide several advantages to the business environment and will support the Government's efforts in making Malaysia a high-income nation by 2020.

2.2 Rationale and Benefits of Gender Diversity

Diversity in leadership and openness to new perspectives is crucial for charting the course in business [4], [8]. Companies that are diverse in its board are stronger, better positioned to tackle external and internal challenges and more focused on the bottom line when their board embrace gender diversity. This study demonstrates that diverse group almost always outperform a homogenous (and potentially more capable group) by a substantial margin" [7]. Research group on group behavior demonstrates that diverse groups when properly managed, make more innovative business decisions than non-diverse group". A study conducted by researchers at Carnegie Mellon to measure the "collective intelligence" of a small group of people found that, all else being equal, teams with more women scored higher than teams with fewer women. What distinguishes high Intelligent Quotient (IQ) teams from lower IQ teams include factors such as the proportion of women, an individual's social perceptions' abilities, the group's ability to take turns contributing rather than be dominated by a single member and the IQ of individual team members [9]. The study also indicates that there is a strong business case for diversity – gender diverse leadership gives businesses a distinct competitive advantage that translates directly to the bottom line. McKinsey & Company research on relationship between organization and financial performance and on the number of women managers at companies suggest that companies with higher number of women at senior levels are also companies with better organizational and financial performance [7]. Specifically, this research showed that companies around the world with the highest scores of nine important dimensions of organization – from leadership and direction to accountability and motivation – are likely to have higher operating margins and market capitalization than their lower-ranked counterparts [7], [9].

By enhancing diversity and inclusion in the workplace, the organisation can harness a wide range of knowledge and experience from the employees to solve problems easily, creatively and innovatively. Based on McKinsey & Company (Diversity Matters) February 2015, companies outperform other companies by 15% when diversity and inclusion exist in workplace. The Company's performance improves including its productivity and

retention level by almost 20% lower. Secondly, among the companies for which information on the gender of senior managers was available [10], those with three or more women on their senior management teams scored higher on all nine organizational criteria than did companies with the senior level women [11]. It is also notable that performance increases significantly once a critical mass is attained; at least three women on management committees for an average membership of ten people [12]. Catalyst studies with group of companies with the highest representation of women on their top management team experience better financial performance than the group of companies with the lowest women's representation. This findings holds for both financial measures analysed: Return on Equity, which was 35 % higher and Total Return to Shareholders, which was 34% higher. Organisations that focus on diversity, experience improved talent retention and corporate image. The business case for diversity asserts that companies that recruit, retain and advance women will benefit for a number of reasons. Ultimately, companies that have diversity agenda and manage it properly, make better decisions, produce superior products and retain several key business advantages over some homogenous companies [10].

3. Methodology

Gender diversity brings both financial and non-financial benefits to the organisation and hence the nation. In order to establish whether gender diversity exists at the management level at the ports, the research design was constructed to profile the major port operators of Malaysia. The collection of data using structured questionnaire was adopted. This survey will provide quantitative or numeric descriptions of facts and figures from the sample. The quantitative research method adopted involves the process of collecting, analysing, interpreting and writing the results of the study vide structured questionnaires.

There are 29 ports and harbours registered in Malaysia, however, the study sampled the 10 major ports which are both federal owned or state owned in Malaysia (Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah and Sarawak). In meeting the two objectives of the study, the research approached the study in two parts, **Part A** establishes the basic corporate profile of the container ports including the human capital data (answering objective 1) and Part B examines the perceptions of the respondents of the port

operators towards women leadership in the management of the port (answering objective 2).

3.1 Survey

In meeting objective 1, Part A, which is profiling of the container ports, there were two sets of survey forms which were categorised into 2 Sections: Section 1 – Corporate port details, Section 2 – manpower details. Both are as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Corporate Information of the Port Operators

Part A - Items	Descriptions – Port Details
Section 1	Name of Organisation Port Operator
ii.	Types of Operations/Activities
lii	Volume throughput (Tonnage Equivalent Unit) TEU*
Iv	Port/Terminal Capacity
Section 2	Manpower Details as at 2016 – by Gender Breakdown by number of staff: Board of Directors Senior Management Management Executives Port Workers

In Part A, the questionnaire tries to establish the level of gender diversity that exists at each of the port operators. The questionnaires were submitted to ten port operators, however, only nine operators responded with complete profile of gender distribution. These ports were privately owned which mean that they are governed by the Company's Act of Malaysia 1965. Under the Act, the obligation of appointment of Board of Directors** are by the shareholders at the Annual General Meeting of the Company. The Chief Executive Officer*** of the port is appointed by the Board of Directors. The senior management (senior management and management category) are appointed by the Chief Executive Officer of the Company.

These questionnaires were sent out to the major ports as listed below and basic information was compiled as in Table 3:

Table 3. List of Major Ports Surveyed

No.	Port Operators	Privately Owned	Senior Management & Management Level Staff
1	Port of Tanjung Pelepas Sdn Bhd	MMC Group	144
2	Penang Port Sdn Bhd	MMC Group	131

3	Westports Sdn Bhd	Westports Holding	130
4	Northport (M) Sdn Bhd	MMC Group	125
5	Bintulu Port Sdn Bhd	State Port	80
6	Johor Port Berhad	MMC Group	25
7	Lumut Maritime Port Terminal	State owned	24
8	Sabah Port Sdn Bhd	Suria Capital	19
9	Kemaman Port Consortium Sdn Bhd	State owned	6

Profiling of the port operators was done by collecting the data directly from the port operators using a structured questionnaire.

Part B of the Survey was designed to answer objective 2 of the study, to examine the perceptions of the management towards women involvement in ports management of the maritime industry. In Part B, there are two (2) sections of the survey forms (A&B) which were distributed to the port operators. Section A of the survey form was categorized into 2 sections; section A - profile of respondents of port operators comprising 19 items namely: i) gender ii) age iii) ethnicity iv) marital status v) family size vi) monthly income vii) College/University last graduated viii) highest qualification ix) state the College/University last attended x) field of specialization xi) years of service in the organization xii) years of working experience xiii) professional membership xiv) status of membership xv) level in organization xvi) Current job position xvii) Department attached to xviii) Name of port Operator attached to and lastly xix) Zone location.

The data collection was done between June 2016 to August 2016. A total of 277 questionnaires were distributed to the port operators, of which 212 answered questionnaires (74%) were returned from the port operators, 121 (57%) were male and 91 (43%) were female. The questionnaires were analysed using the quantitative tool SPSS version 21.

Section B – Perceptions. To answer the second objective of the study, which is to examine the perception of the respondents towards women's involvement in port management of the maritime industry. The structured questionnaire was categorized into 10 questions. A self-administered questionnaire was developed utilising a psychometric response scale primarily used in this questionnaire to obtain respondents' preferences or degree of agreement with a statement or set of statements using the Likert scales. Respondents

were asked to indicate their level of agreement with a given statement by way of ordinal scale.

Table 4. Questionnaire Survey Items Section B – Perceptions towards port management

Item	Descriptions
1	The maritime industry is not suitable for women
2	The seaport sector is not favourable for women
3	There is no demand of women in seaport sector
4	The seaport management prefers men as it suits the nature of ports business
5	The seaport operations require men as work is tough and challenging
6	Staff working in seaports prefer men as working peers
7	Management needs to have gender diversity as the Company's strategic agenda
8	Management has preference for men for port management
9	The management treats women staff equally to men staff
10	The management is selective when it comes to hiring women managers

Each level on the scale is assigned a numeric value or coding. A seven-point Likert scale was used. The purpose is to have an added granularity. The seven scales are (1 = strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3 = slightly disagree; 4 = not sure; 5 = slightly agree; 6 = agree; 7 = strongly agree). The respondents were required to rate the items listed in the sub-sections. The ratings were compiled and analysed using SPSS V21 software.

The SPSS data was further analysed using descriptive statistics namely mean and chi square analysis the following tools. Preliminary tests shows an alpha cronbach coefficient of 0.89, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency.

4. Findings and Analysis

In the data analysis of the Part A – assessing the level of diversity at the Board of Directors level and senior management was grouped by gender in the organisation. The information of corporate profile was provided by the corporate office of the respective ports as shown in Table 5:

Table 5. Profile of Port Operators in Malaysia, 2016

Ports	Board of Directors	Senior Management	Management
Bintulu Port Sdn Bhd	12	14	66

Westports Sdn Bhd	11	27	103
Port of Tanjung Pelepas Sdn Bhd	8	33	112
Sabah Port Sdn.Bhd	7	6	13
Lumut Maritime Terminal	7	4	20
Northport (M) Sdn Bhd	6	15	110
Johor Port Berhad	4	14	11
Penang Port Sdn Bhd	4	6	125
Kemaman Port Consortium Sdn Bhd	3	3	3
TOTAL	61	122	563

The profile of the port is presented in the chart below illustrates the composition of the Corporate profile of the Port Operators. Figure 1 illustrates the composition of the corporate profile of the port operators where 15% of potential women that can be groomed to be future leaders of the port.

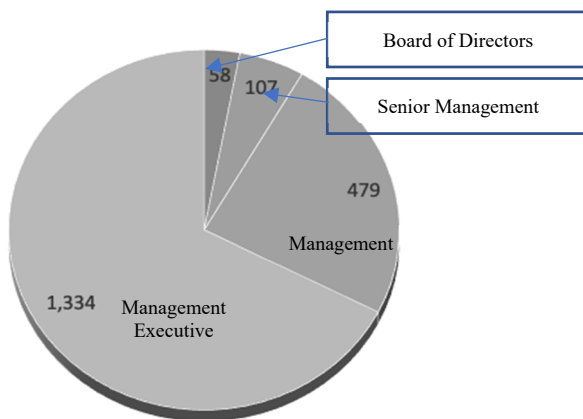


Figure 1. Overall Composition of Corporate Profile

As illustrated in Table 7, based on the 9 major port operators, the female representation at the Board of Directors level is only 10%, while at senior management is at 15% and at management level only 17%. The gender diversity level across the board of the port operators’ fall far below the diversity target of 30% (critical mass) in Malaysia as at 2016. The gender diversity at the overall port operators level, does not exist. At the management level, at senior management (15%), and at management level is 17%, falling short of 15% and 13% respectively of the critical mass. In examining at individual port level, the diversity only exists at

Sabah Port (50%) at senior management and 38% at management level.

Table 6. Corporate Profile of Port Operators by Gender (Percentages)

Name of Port Operators	Board of Directors		Senior Management		Management		Total	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Johor Port Berhad	100	0	86	14	91	9	90	10
Port of Tanjung Pelepas	100	0	88	12	81	19	84	16
Northport (M) Bhd	100	0	87	13	85	17	86	14
Westport Sdn Bhd	82	18	78	22	93	7	89	10
Bintulu Port Sdn Bhd	75	25	86	14	76	24	77	23
Sabah Port Sdn Bhd	100	0	50	50	62	38	69	31
Penang Port Sdn Bhd	75	25	100	0	80	20	81	19
Lumut Maritime Terminal	100	0	100	0	85	15	90	10
Kemaman Port Consortium	100	0	100	0	67	33	89	11
TOTAL	90	10	84	15	83	17	84	16

Note: T – Total, M –Male, F- Female

The port operators that are still behind the diversity level at both the senior management are Westports (22%), Johor Port (14%) Bintulu Port (14%) Northport (13%) and PTP (12%). At the management level, Sabah ports (38%) and Kemaman port (33%) have achieved the diversity target. Ports that are still behind the 30% target are Bintulu Port (24%), Penang Port (20%), Port of Tanjung Pelepas (19%) and Northport (17%).

A total of two hundred and twelve (212) survey forms were received of which 57% were males and 43% were female respondents. The profile of the respondents presented in Part 2 Section A of the port operators are as summarised in Table 7 below:

Table 7. Profile of Respondents participating in the Survey – Perceptions

Name of Port Operators	Respondents N=212	Respondents (%)		
		Male	Female	Total of N=212
Johor Port Berhad	30	50%	50%	14%
Port of Tanjung Pelepas	11	45%	55%	5%
Northport (M) Bhd	42	38%	45%	20%
Westports Sdn Bhd	45	58%	42%	21%
Bintulu Port Sdn Bhd	21	38%	62%	10%
Sabah Port Sdn Bhd	11	45%	55%	5%
Penang Port Sdn Bhd	6	33%	67%	3%
Lumut Maritime Terminal	33	88%	12%	16%
Kemaman Port Consortium	13	62%	38%	6%
TOTAL	212	57%	43%	100%

Where are the females positioned in the organisation, do they have the opportunity to be at senior management level and hence the board members in the near future?. Further analysis was done on the profile of the respondents from the distribution of management level is summarised in Table 8 as follows:

Table 8. Respondents Profile by Qualification & Length of Service by Percentages

Dimensions	Men (%)	Women (%)
Qualifications		
Bachelor Degree	30	32
Master Degree	7	6
Professional Degree	2	1
Overall	39%	39%
Length Of Service		
Less than 16 years	8	5
More than 16 years	8	6
Overall	16%	13

If women are equally qualified and willing to stay relevant to the organisation, are they represented fairly at the management level? Table 9 presents the analysis of gender by positions on the organisation which illustrates their positions.

Table 9. Comparison of Positions in the Organisation by Gender by Percentages

Position >	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	TOTAL
Male	2	21	2	1	4	12	8	1	1	3	55
Female	3	15	3	1	4	11	4	1	1	2	45
Total	5	36	5	2	8	23	12	2	2	5	100 %
Male							27%				
Female							19%				
Total							46%				
Note: 1. Officer, 2. Executive, 3. Senior Executive, 4. Assistant Engineer, 5. Assistant Manager, 6. Manager, 7. Senior Manager, 8. Assistant General Manager, 9. General Manager, 10. Other											

The survey results indicated that there are higher percentage (27%) of males in the manager and above level, compared to females (19%).

A further examination was done to identify possible reasons for such a situation. A structured questionnaire was developed to solicit perceptions of the respondents' towards women leadership at the port management level. Part B Section B of the survey covers 2 sections, Section A – profile of respondents and Section B (1-2) are on perceptions of the respondents on women leaders at the management level of the seaport operations.

Table 10. Overall findings of the Section B-1 – Respondents Perceptions towards women involvement in port management

Scale	Strongly Disagree. <. > Strongly Disagree						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Overall average	10. %	22. %	14 %	10%	15. %	22 %	7 %
	Disagree – 46. %			10%	Agree - 44%		
Cronbach's Alpha	0.782						
Mean (average)	3.93 – mean						

Part 2 of the survey questionnaire consists of 10 items on perceptions' of respondents towards women leaders at the management level. The respondents rated their perceptions on a 7-point Likert scale. The overall results of perception on management is presented in Table 12. From item 1, 2, and 3 in table 11, a total of 76.6% of the respondents disagree that the industry in not suitable to women.

Table 11. Respondents Perceptions towards women’s involvement in port management

Scale / Score	Descriptions	Strongly Disagree < > Strongly Agree						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	The maritime industry is not suitable for women	26	44	16	2	9	2	1
2	The seaport sector is not favourable for women	18	40	18	5	13	5	1
3	There is no demand for women in seaport sector	22	32	14	6	19	26	7
4	The seaport management prefers men as it suits the nature of port business	8	21	14	6	19	26	7
5	The seaport operation require men as work is tough and challenging	6	14	13	3	20	34	11
6	Staff working in seaport prefers men as working peers	5	18	17	9	19	26	7
7	Management needs to have gender diversity as the Company strategic agenda	3	10	5	8	17	37	20
8	Management has preference for men for port management	5	17	16	12	18	24	7
9	The management treats women staff equally to men staff	1	4	8	11	12	43	19
10	The management is selective when it comes to hiring women managers	9	19	15	26	13	18	19
	Overall average	10 %	22 %	14 %	10 %	15 %	22 %	7 %
	Cronbach’s Alpha	0.782						

The findings are further analysed to examine the differences in perceptions between male representing 57% while female represent 43% of the sample.

Table 12. Results of Responses by Gender (Mean)

Descriptions	Over all Mean	Mean (F) N=91	Mean (M) N=121
The management treats women staff equally to men staff	5.36	5.05	5.60
Management needs to have gender diversity as the Company strategic agenda	5.20	5.56	4.94
The seaport operation require men as work is tough and challenging	4.64	4.16	5.00
Staff working in seaport prefers men as working peers	4.23	4.11	4.31
Management has preference for men for port management	4.17	4.20	4.16
The seaport management prefers men as it suits the nature of port business	4.09	3.76	4.35
The management is selective when it comes to hiring women managers	3.75	3.96	3.59
The seaport sector is not favourable for women	2.75	2.34	3.06
There is no demand for women in seaport sector	2.73	2.43	2.95
The maritime industry is not suitable for women	2.33	1.93	2.62
Overall Mean	3.93	3.75	4.06

Note: F-Female , M- Male

Based on Table 12, the descriptive statistics reveal that management treats women and men staff equally. It is also noted that both male and female staff think that seaport operation requires men as “work is tough and challenging” However, the female disagree that “The maritime industry is not suitable for women”.

5. Conclusion

Two major conclusions which can be drawn from this study are: - Firstly, gender diversity still exists at the management level of the ports in Malaysia. Only one out of the 9 ports, the Sabah port successfully exercises the diversity agenda. Secondly, in terms of perception, both male and

female management treat female staff equally and agree that gender diversity should exist. However, interestingly, male management still have preference for male peers and prefer males for port management.

In spite of women being more academically qualified and increasing in the Malaysian labour market, there seems to be a lack of participation in the maritime industry, especially in the port sector.

This study throws light on the current situation of lack of gender diversity at management level in the ports in Malaysia.

Port organisations have to provide opportunities for women to be at management level as many of them have the capabilities. With the Malaysian Government declaring the year 2018 as Women Empowerment year and mandating the public-listed companies to achieve the 30% women in the decision-making level by the year 2020, it should prompt the port sector to place the gender diversity as one of their strategic agenda to support the Government in achieving its high-income nation status.

Ensuring a strong pipeline of women leaders includes providing junior female professionals a good role model and growth potentials such as Ellen Taafee Professor of Leadership and Director of Women's Leadership programme at Kellogg School of Management. This provides an avenue for management to explore efforts to motivate women to drive them to be in the management level. Efforts such as informal and formal mentoring programme in the organization could be an area that further research can be done. As the final decision on the appointment of Board of Directors rests with the shareholders, any effort for improvement will need to be mandated by the appropriate authority or by Security Commission of Malaysia if it is a public-listed company.

“Think Manager, Think Women”

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