

Thai Women in Leadership and Management

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The roles of women are changing in many societies, including Thailand. Though “Thai women are viewed as subservient to men and take an unequal role in family responsibilities” (Cho et al., 2015, p. 16), there are many women leaders in Thailand. Women in Thailand are moving toward equality with men in many aspects. To describe the experiences of women leaders in Thailand, including challenges and opportunities, the first author conducted an extensive review of Thai literature related to the topic, while the second author developed the case of a Thai woman leader using personal experience with her and conducted an accuracy check upon completion.

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HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXTS OF THAI WOMEN

In one way, Thailand has shown potential for gender equality since the reign of King Rama the Fourth, when laws supporting inequality were eliminated in 1865 (Kittirattakarn, 2006). In 1932, in the reign of King Rama the Seventh, Thailand shifted from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy. The first constitution of Thailand in 2475 B.E. (Bhuddist Era) (1932) granted all people of Thailand who held the qualifications the right to vote, regardless of gender (*Thai Government Gazette*, 1932). Then, in 1992, Thailand's 7th National Economic and Social Development Plan established an agenda for eliminating discrimination against women (Yukongdi, 2005). Also, according to Charoensap (2009), since 2000, women have had the same education level as men. Charoensap (2009) noted that the proportion of women and men students in public universities in 2009 was 55% to 45%. This differential proportion has continued to grow; in 2015, it was 56.1% to 43.9% in higher education (Office of the Educational Council, Ministry of Education, 2015).

However, relying on laws and policies, alone, cannot ensure a firm ground for women to grow in leadership. There are still issues of concern for women in leadership. While women in Thailand receive the same (or more) education as men, women have less opportunity to climb to top positions in organizations (Charoensap, 2009; Martpo, 2006), not only in the private sector, but also in government sectors. Women held fewer than 20% of decision-making positions in 2008. The only exception was in the legal and judiciary system, where 38.4% of judges were women (Charoensap, 2009).

According to the 2016 labor force survey of the National Statistical Office, Thailand's population aged 15 and above consisted of more women than men (28,660,320 women to 26,811,590 men), while the labor force consisted of more men than women (20,859,710 men to 17,452,580 women) (National Statistical Office, 2016). Yukongdi (2005) suggested that discrimination of women in leadership is not based solely on perceptions of women's personal characteristics.

Additional dimensions have played a role in preventing women from making it into leadership roles. Stereotyping of women's roles is still imprinted in the Thai society. Women are still perceived as inferior to men. Mass media and literature still reinforce these perceptions. Women are still seen as second to men, keeping them underrepresented in the workforce and in leadership positions (Kittirattakarn, 2006; Yukongdi, 2005). Women

have been seen more for their family roles, as mothers and wives, than for their professional roles (Kittirattakarn, 2006). Men are still expected to take a leading role in both family and work, and men are still expected to be in charge.

However, Martpo (2006) suggested that women in Thailand are gaining better opportunities in administrative and leadership roles. A turning point for women leaders in Thailand may have been in 2011 with Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra, the first female prime minister in Thailand. In Thai society, there have been many other women in leadership and management roles. There are now many more women leaders at the top of corporations and small businesses, employees in major consulting firms, and independent consultants, as well as in positions of senior managers in public and private sectors, ministers or deputy ministers in the government, and senior academic faculty and administrators (Yukongdi, 2005, 2015). Globally, 24% of management roles were held by women (Thornton, 2014). Comparatively, Thailand is outstanding with 38% of management roles held by women (Thornton, 2014).

Women and men face different leadership challenges. In particular, Charoensap (2009) argued that a husband's role needs to be one of cooperation and support to enable women executives to be successful in their careers. Different from men, a spouse's support is crucial for women to be able to dedicate themselves to their work. To clarify, men in leadership might not have to consider this issue of support from their spouse, as it would be taken for granted that wives would take care of the housework and kids. When considering women in leadership, this aspect becomes an issue due to the social expectation and convention of women's roles in the family.

Dr. Chiraprapha Akaraborworn (Tan) and her family illustrate this point well. Tan is an Associate Professor and former dean of the School of Human Resources and Organization Development at the National Institute of Development Administration (NIDA) in Bangkok. At the time of writing, she was Assistant to the President for Quality Development, reporting directly to the President of NIDA. Tan is married with two children. Like many other women leaders, she has developed her career along with her family. She shared that her husband has been a great support in her life. He gave a helping hand in raising their children. When they cried at night, it was her husband who got up and took care of them. He took a strong supportive role in transporting the two children to

school, to music lessons, and to social activities. He also drove her elderly parents around when needed. Even in her early career stage, having that kind of support allowed her to dedicate herself to work and focus on her work. He has also provided support and assistance as she initiated her very successful consulting company and has provided assistance in her research and projects (he also has a PhD). Such extensive and consistent support has given her the space to grow in her career. Her career is a good example of how a husband's role can support a woman's career growth. This case also illustrates how the culture in Thailand is slowly evolving toward egalitarianism in gender roles.

INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP PERSPECTIVES OF THAI WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

In this section we describe the context of the reviewed research, the methods and methodologies researchers have used, and the themes researchers have identified.

Context of Studies

Most of the research reviewed was conducted in the context of education; 18 of 22 studies were conducted in educational institutions. This might be explained by ease of access and the success of women in leadership in the education sector. In 2008, there were more women teachers than men in Thailand (277,072:178,907) (Wongsamarn, 2012). It is possible that this situation results from Thai social norms that women are more nurturing and caring. Therefore, women's roles are considered to be nursing and teaching (Yukongdi, 2005, 2015). While being a teacher is an important job, taking for granted that teaching is a woman's job denigrates both women and the job itself. Another possible explanation about the context of studies found here is that the proportion of women in administrative positions in educational institutions has been growing. In 2004, only 9.95% of education leadership positions were held by women. Thailand aligns with the global situation in which education and social services were the industries with the highest number of women in management roles, now at 51% (Thornton, 2014). It is possible that women in leadership roles in other contexts were so minor that there was not much to research in those contexts.

Research Methodologies and Methods Used by Researchers in Reviewed Literature

This section is important as it raises awareness that, even though we use research to explore and understand women in leadership and management, we are still failing by using the same research paradigm over and over without recognizing that the use of one paradigm does not adequately get at the lived experiences and deep understanding of such women.

Most of the reviewed research was survey research. Among the 22 studies reviewed, 12 used quantitative methods with the use of a questionnaire. Eight studies used mixed methods of structured interviews and questionnaires. Qualitative methods with structured interviews and integrative literature reviews were undertaken once each. Quantitative methods still dominate in Thailand.

Though there were variations in research methods, there was only one research methodology: post-positivism. This is obvious for those who used quantitative elements. However, even with qualitative methods, researchers attempted to provide objective knowledge about women leadership in Thailand with the use of structured interviews. Objective knowledge is a concept of post-positivism (Nawrin & Mongkolsirikiet, 2012). Though all studies focused on women leadership in Thailand, there were, inappropriately, attempts to generalize the results beyond Thailand (positivism).

Results

Content analysis led to six primary themes about women leaders' traits, characteristics, and behaviors. Five themes concerned women leaders' individual aspects, with the sixth focused on external factors.

Women leaders normally see themselves differently from their followers in terms of leadership. According to Dulchamnong (1998), women leaders considered themselves to be democratic leaders, while their followers considered them to be autocratic leaders. Moreover, according to Chaisricholtharn (1991), women leaders considered themselves to be strongly task-oriented, while their followers considered them to be both task- and people-oriented. Additional themes follow.

Personal background. Personal background cannot be changed easily or quickly as it has been developed throughout a person's life. Education is an important factor for women leaders. According to Charoensap (2009),

Wongwatkasem and Boonreungrat (2013), and Seanghirun (1998), a higher education background supports women in achieving leadership. This matches Yukongdi's (2005) conclusion that educational opportunities play an important role in contributing to women's leadership and facilitating advancement toward leading positions. Other studies mentioned intelligence and cleverness as characteristic of women leaders (Buaiam, 2001; Chankesorn, 2011; Seanghirun, 1998; Wongwatkasem & Boonreungrat, 2013). These factors might have contributed to the educational background of these women leaders cognitively.

Family is also a part of personal background. Charoensap (2009) and Seanghirun (1998) found that most successful women leaders were married. Seanghirun (1998) suggested that a nuclear family was most likely to provide support for women's careers. Wives in nuclear families have less to take care of than those with collective families, where they need to be concerned about not only their husband and children, but also relatives. Seanghirun (1998) found that a supportive spouse and family can influence women's leadership roles. Yukongdi (2005) noted that, while women's roles have shifted toward equality in terms of work, women are still expected to hold more responsibilities at home. Having family members who understand the leadership role of the wife/mother could free her from the obligations at home, allowing her to dedicate more energy and time to work. Family of origin (the family in which one grows up) is also important; Charoensap (2009) observed that the family of origin facilitates women's career advancement, as that family becomes a source of personal assumptions and personality. The ability to manage family responsibilities, with the support of her family, is crucial for women leaders (Buaiam, 2001).

Economic status is another personal factor. Suesajjapong (1997) and Seanghirun (1998) found that economic status supported women leaders' advancement. Yukongdi (2005) connected economic status with social class or socio-economic status. This status could lead to educational and career opportunities, both directly and indirectly. Women with higher socio-economic status have better access to educational opportunities, which directly enhances their career opportunities. Moreover, socio-economic status, indirectly, supports women's career and leadership roles. Having sufficient resources to hire someone to handle housework and childcare allows women to dedicate more of their time and energy to work. Yukongdi (2015) also found that women executives reached the top of the organization with crucial family and domestic support.

Age and work experience were also important. It was difficult to tie age directly to career success. However, age is directly associated with work experience. Wongwatkasem and Boonreungrat (2013) found that being experienced leaders allowed women to reach a higher leadership position. Charoensap (2009) and Seanghirun (1998) also found that years of work experience supported women in becoming a leader or manager.

Motives. The need for achievement is a dominant motive or inner driver for advancement for women in leadership (Chamnankul, Visalapon, Klinkulab, & Chuanchom, 2014; Neufeld, 1998; Rattanaseanwong, 2012; Siripirom, 2007). This is illustrated by Ketsara Munchusri, a woman executive of the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), who earned her leading position after 13 years of working with the organization. Her motives are reflected through her vision. She had strong intrinsic motivation to set a clear goal for the organization and drive toward that goal. Her story illustrates women leaders' need for achievement (TerraBKK, 2015). According to Rattanaseanwong (2012), women in leadership want to receive feedback on their performance and desire to perform challenging tasks. Chamnankul et al. (2014), Chankesorn (2011), and Rattanaseanwong (2012) found that women leaders' need for achievement results in dedication, determination, and persistence. While many have suggested that women leaders' need for achievement was a dominant motive, Charoensap (2009) suggested that the need for power was the strongest motive of women leaders, followed by the need for achievement. Both factors relate to Yukongdi's (2015) observation about the importance of a self-driven personality for women leaders.

Traits. Emotional intelligence was found in several studies to be an element of Thai women leaders. Three elements were found. First was the ability to handle stress and frustration (Chamnankul et al., 2014). Second was self-emotional control of both positive and negative emotions (Boonyasatid & Chompukum, 2010; Chamnankul et al., 2014; Srikrudong, Chantane, & Suyaphrom, 2014; Wongwatkasem & Boonreungrat, 2013). Leaders need to be able to control themselves and not be subsumed by emotions in decision making. This includes calm and prudent behaviors (Martpo, 2006; Suesajjapong, 1997). Third, emotional intelligence of women leaders includes paying attention to others' feelings, successes, and career advancement (Chamnankul et al., 2014; Rattanaseanwong, 2012).

Chaisricholtharn (1991) and Martpo (2006) found that important traits, as labeled by them, included being disciplined and traditional, which might also be reflected in subsequent behaviors. They observed that leaders were precise, careful about regulations, and punctual. This

work discipline can extend, however, to non-flexibility and rigidity. For example, women leaders in Thailand are known for handling decision making strictly according to the rules without an attempt to find alternatives (Chaisricholtharn, 1991). This characteristic of ambiguity was found to have a negative impact on subordinates (Boonyasatid & Chompukum, 2010).

There were elements of charismatic leadership found among some women leaders. Suesajjapong (1997) suggested that women leaders possessed a high degree of self-confidence and had a dignified personality. Chankesorn (2011) suggested that women leaders should have strong determination to achieve. Chaisricholtharn (1991) proposed that women leaders have the characteristics of sportsmanship and sincerity, while Nopparujjinda and Shinatungkura (2011) suggested that they are inspiring and express individual concern.

Consciousness of ethics was mentioned as another trait of women leaders (Nopparujjinda, & Shinatungkura, 2011). Honesty and faithfulness (Srikrudong et al., 2014; Wongwatkasem & Boonreungrat, 2013), kindness (Srikrudong et al., 2014), and fairness (Srikrudong et al., 2014) were included in this category, especially reflecting fairness in performance evaluations and career advancement (Pratumnok, 2001).

Ability. Women leaders need both social and work-related abilities. Social ability includes developing good relationships with colleagues and subordinates (Boonyasatid & Chompukum, 2010; Chamnankul et al., 2014), concern for others at work and in their personal lives (Boonyasatid & Chompukum, 2010; Prasertsri, 2001), and developing mutual understanding without exercising position power (Suwannarit, 1994). Yukongdi (2015) suggested that facilitating factors for women's career advancement include people management and networking skills.

Work-related ability is a major portion of the requirements for women leaders. Such abilities include adaptability (Chankesorn, 2011), communication (Srikrudong et al., 2014; Surabulkul, 2012; Suwannarit, 1994), and negotiation skills (Surabulkul, 2012). Martpo (2006) observed that women leaders preferred communicating via official reports rather than through unofficial verbal communication. Another work-related ability is compartmentalization of work and personal issues (Boonyasatid & Chompukum, 2010). Change management ability was identified by Chamnankul et al. (2014) and Nopparujjinda and Shinatungkura (2011) as a trait of Thai women leaders. Women leaders were also expected to have a degree of technological knowledge

and the ability to help subordinates with technological problems (Boonyasatid & Chompukum, 2010; Nopparujjinda & Shinatungkura, 2011; Wongwatkasem & Boonreungrat, 2013). This issue has not been frequently mentioned in general leadership or leadership literature studying men in leadership in Thailand. It may be that women have been seen as not being technologically savvy. Therefore, this issue needed to be put forward for women leaders. The ability to offer a vision is another work-related ability mentioned by Srikrudong et al. (2014) and Rattanaseanwong (2012).

Work behaviors. Many studies found that empowerment was a significant work behavior in women leaders (Pratumnok, 2001; Suwannarit, 1994). Moreover, successful women leaders were very energetic (Chankesorn, 2011) and open-minded (Chamnankul et al., 2014). Participative management is another work behavior found in women leaders, as women leaders tend to involve subordinates in decision making and welcome opinions from them (Pratumnok, 2001; Rattanapasart, 1991; Rattanaseanwong, 2012; Suwannarit, 1994; Tanbua, 2015). Rattanapasart (1991) also found that women leaders were role models of effectiveness and good performance. Supajee Suthumpun, an executive officer in Thaicom Public Company Limited, Thailand, illustrates this. Her subordinates often mentioned that she always had a kind look. However, when it came to the issues of work, she tended to be tough (TerraBkk, 2015). Performance has been a key aspect of women leaders. Rattanapasart (1991) also found that women leaders exemplified supportive behavior. Supattra Paopiamsap, managing director of Unilever (Thailand), a multinational company operating in Thailand, said in her interview about her working philosophy that running an organization was not just business; it was also about taking care of thousands of families (TerraBKK, 2015), a form of supportive behavior. She also said that, while men leaders tended to use command and control in their leadership, women leaders tend to listen and gradually change. She preferred to support subordinates' learning and to persuade subordinates to agree upon decisions made in the organization (TerraBKK, 2015). While men leaders tended to use punishment, women leaders tended to reward and utilize relationships (Prasertsri, 2001) and provide psychological support (Rattanapasart, 1991). Continuous learning behavior was more frequently found in women leaders (Chamnankul et al., 2014; Rattanapasart, 1991; Srikrudong et al., 2014). However, women leaders were also found to be indecisive and to avoid risks (Boonyasatid & Chompukum, 2010).

External Factors. Other dimensions of women's leadership exist that are external (Yukongdi, 2005, 2015). It is important for women leaders to be successful that the Thai society accept women as leaders (Pratumnok, 2001; Rattanaseanwong, 2012). This context lies outside of organizations where women leaders are working (Siripirom, 2007), yet it is crucial.

It is not surprising that organizational context was also found to be vital. A supportive organizational culture was frequently mentioned (Buaiam, 2001; Siripirom, 2007). Within organizational culture, it is important that human resource policies promote gender equality (Sukhontrakul, 2003; Yukongdi, 2015). Another important aspect of organizational culture is Surabulkul's (2012) conclusion that a feminine organizational culture, such as giving back to others and showing care and empathy (Pimpa, 2012), was vital to the success of women leaders.

Job characteristics are also important. Suwannarit (1994) suggested that jobs that require creativity tended to be more suitable for women leaders. In this light, Buaiam (2001) suggested that academic jobs were favorable for women leaders. Care needs to be exercised, however, in these conclusions as they represent stereotypes, and many individual women are not accurately described by these stereotypes.

Another societal context that was mentioned as influential in the acceptance of women in leadership was the environment of women acting together, consistent with the collective society. The more that women in organizations can bond, the more likely that women will be accepted in leadership (Sukhontrakul, 2003). Because of these external factors, Buaiam (2001) suggested that successful women leaders need to work up to four times harder than men to prove their leadership and to be accepted by subordinates.

In light of these research findings, research on women leaders in Thailand has mainly focused on individual factors. According to Yukongdi (2005, 2015), the situation of women leaders needs to be studied in multi-dimensions, not just one. It is important to understand individual, interpersonal, organizational, and societal factors (Yukongdi, 2015), as well as to understand their complex interactions (Yukongdi, 2005).

LEADERSHIP THEORIES

This section discusses Thai women leadership related to leadership theories. The results above match many leadership theories. Emotional intelligence relates to adjustment in the Big Five Dimensions of Traits, or

the five desirable characteristics of leaders (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002). Further, the high degree of self-confidence exhibited by Thai women leaders is related to the concept of surgency, a personality of extroversion and dominance (Achua & Lussier, 2010).

There were, however, leader characteristics found in the research that are not mentioned in theories of leadership, such as sportsmanship, the quality of those who can experience losses without complaining and victories with fairness, generosity, courtesy, and fellowship with others, even if they are opponents (Neufeld, 1998). Thai women leaders tended to be task-oriented, yet they were thought of as kind and considerate by subordinates. Thus, Thai women's leadership style belongs to both control and results-oriented behaviors, and considerate and people-oriented behaviors, which are mentioned in behavioral theories of leadership on a continuum of behaviors (Achua & Lussier, 2010). However, women leaders' needs for achievement and power are opposite of the Thai character of high femininity, while the characteristics of being indecisive and avoiding risks match with the Thai character of uncertainty avoidance (Pimpa, 2012).

The results that suggest that women leaders are inspiring and concerned for individuals go along with the transformational leadership concept of inspirational motivation and individual consideration (Bass, 1985; Riggio, 2009). The finding of empowerment also aligns with Daft's (2008) suggestion about the new paradigm of leadership, changing the leading perspective from controlling to empowering. Being empowering, open-minded, communicative, and using networking skills also contribute to findings in the Thai context, as they were found to be elements of effective leadership for innovative organizations in Thailand (Sritanyarat, 2016).

Contingency leadership was not explicitly addressed in the identified literature. However, there are situational elements of Thai women leaders to be considered based on followers' readiness and abilities (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 1996), leader-members' relationship, task structure, and leaders' position power (Fiedler, 1972). Women in leadership have to deal with situations of family as well as social expectations. To extend our understanding of Thai women leaders, more research focus is needed on elements in situation-based leadership. Moreover, it is difficult to explain Thai women leadership within any existing leadership theory alone. To cope with the complex interaction among multiple dimensions, it is important to incorporate multiple leadership theories and concepts in any study of Thai women in leadership.

Feminist Theory

Discussion of women in leadership would not be complete without considering feminist theory. Key concepts of feminist theory relate to oppression, gender stereotyping, and inequality (Chitchai & Satsomboon, 2012). Based on the research presented in this chapter, it is difficult to deny the existence of these concepts to some degree. As reported, women leaders have to work harder than men to reach the same stage of leadership as men. According to Baumgartner and Schneider (2010), women have to sacrifice for family, due to social roles assigned by society. Women are considered to be more caring and collaborative and have better interpersonal communication skills than men. However, when it comes to leadership, men were assumed to be more effective (Baumgartner & Schneider, 2010).

However, no evidence has been presented to indicate that men are more effective leaders. Leadership is about relationships among leaders and followers (Achua & Lussier, 2010; Daft, 2008). As there is a wide range of followers, and given the construct of situational leadership, there is no one best way to lead. Women leaders do not need to be similar to men leaders. Just as there is a wide range of leadership types among men leaders, so, too, is there a wide range of types among women leaders. Further, even when differences exist, this does not mean that they are better or worse; they are just different. As Chitchai and Satsomboon (2012) proposed, both men and women are subject to being oppressed when men and women are treated differently, especially when it comes to their leadership. Therefore, to contribute to feminist theory, future studies about leadership could look at both genders' oppression and effective leadership styles without assuming that there will be one best way.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THAI WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

As reviewed in the beginning of this chapter, Thailand started out with good potential for gender equality in terms of policies and regulations. However, inequality, including leadership, was not prevented or resolved by policies alone. Discrimination has been a social phenomenon. There are still challenges for Thai women in leadership. Some were formed out of the protective regulations that have caused more

stereotyping and discrimination against women. For example, the maternity leave laws could make employers hesitate to hire women for important positions to prevent the cost of pregnancy (Yukongdi, 2005). Prohibition of employment for women in dangerous jobs could be seen as patronizing and keeping women out of higher paying jobs often associated with dangerous employment. Such laws assume that women are more frail than men, ignoring that there are differences within both genders. Thus, while systems supporting equality have been developed in the form of laws and regulations, social norms have not developed accordingly.

It is important for Thai society to understand more about women in leadership. In this chapter, we have described research in Thailand that has not been able to provide much in-depth understanding about women in leadership. Therefore, one of the biggest challenges for Thai women in leadership is to overcome the lack of understanding in context and factors of women in leadership that exist in Thai society. It is challenging for women leaders when Thai society still holds stereotypes about women leadership styles. Such research may enhance opportunities for Thai women in leadership.

Despite such challenges, the Thai socio-culture context has been changing in the direction of equality (Yukongdi, 2005, 2015). We can see opportunities provided for Thai women in leadership and for women to become leaders. Thai society needs to be educated to transform in that direction. Functioning within a global environment, the influx of western tourists, the influence of higher education from abroad, international trade, and the international media are supporting this movement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The results found from literature review have revealed where we are in researching and understanding women in leadership in Thailand. There is definitely much more to learn and do. Much more research is needed to help us understand the in-depth experiences and surrounding factors of women in leadership in Thailand. This chapter intends to provoke new thinking, new research ideas, and new attempts to find answers to having more women leaders in Thailand, as an equal playing field is created for both genders. The following recommendations, we believe, will move both research and practice related to women in leadership in Thailand forward.

Recommendations for Future Research

It is important to understand in-depth experiences of being a woman in leadership in Thailand. Therefore, there is need for research to be done using research paradigms or methodologies different from post-positivism. Phenomenology, critical theory, feminist theory, and auto-ethnography (Grenier & Collins, 2016), among others, should be considered to extend our knowledge. Country-specific women leaders' histories, aspirations, frustrations, and experiences could be studied and revealed. This aligns with what Chitchai and Satsomboon (2012) suggested about focusing on the lived experiences of women leaders in top companies (and small- and medium-sized enterprises, non-government organizations, government agencies), as well as those who failed to reach the stage of leader to learn more about their journey to leadership. Similar research on men in leadership roles might also help to identify the sources of in-organizational contexts that inhibit women from moving into leadership roles.

Recommendations for Improvements in Practice

External factors are a part of women's leadership and affect women's path to leadership. It is important to guide and coach women, especially those with desire and potential to climb the leadership ladder, to be able to handle those factors effectively. Coaching and training on leadership competencies and consideration of individual factors are still important. Young girls need to learn the importance of selecting a supportive mate, and there needs to be extensive consideration about how family roles will be fulfilled. Many women in leadership are choosing not to marry or not to have children as a way of minimizing challenges of balancing leadership responsibilities with family duties. This conversation needs to take place before marriage, such as the role that parents and parents-in-law will play in managing childcare and handling home tasks. A much more serious approach to family and marriage considerations needs to become part of all school curricula. Further, given the role of Buddhism within the Thai culture, temples can play an important role in changing the Thai culture and help individuals make better decisions to support their individual visions for their futures (Yamnull, McLean, & Singsuriya, 2008). Higher education is also in a good position to model desirable practices for both boys and girls; while this is happening, it is not

happening as quickly as desired. As practices begin to change throughout the society, it will become more and more acceptable for women to be in positions of leadership and for men to become equal in homecare and childcare.

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