

Capstone Final Draft

Women's Leadership and Participation in Government in the Context of Malaysia

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In recent decades attitudes surrounding political leadership have begun to shift with increased attention to female representation. Despite this shift and attention, women continue to be under-represented in government on a global scale. Social expectations and gender norms have often come to affect women's perception of themselves and their abilities, greatly impacting their willingness to run for government. Women often feel that they are less capable and qualified to hold political office in comparison to men. The fear of social criticism also stands as a roadblock in women's willingness to run for government, as women are often expected to adopt more masculine behaviors whilst remaining non-assertive. However, the presence of female role models for young girls often changes the rhetoric around politics and running for office. Unfortunately, as these girls age and their political awareness increases, they come to conform to gendered expectations for their careers. Within Malaysia, gender biases can be seen in the lack of female representation in both politics and the workforce. The strong Islamic ties within Malaysia contribute to this lack of representation along with the expectation for women to maintain domestic responsibilities.

Considering the biases that women in political leadership face, the primary research question of this study is: 'Does leadership experience change women's willingness to run for government?' Understanding the correlation between leadership experience and a women's willingness to participate in government will shed light on the importance of providing leadership experiences for women. In order to examine this question, an experiment was conducted giving one group participant a leadership role and two others a subordinate role. Upon completing the leadership experience, participants were asked to complete a survey where they were asked questions regarding the leadership experience they just participated in as well as their

views on women in politics. This study found that leadership experience, gender, and religion all have an effect on women's willingness to run for political office.

### **Theory & Literature Review**

The Gender Socialization Theory proposes that people are socialized from a young age to conform to gender norms and expectations held by society. This socialization exists on all levels of society, contributing to unequal opportunities for women, a lack of access to resources, structural barriers within the workforce and education, and the perpetuation of stereotypes. Where men are socialized to be more assertive and confident, women are socialized to be more tentative and self-doubting. This socialization results in women having less confidence in their credentials and being more overly critical of their intelligence, abilities, and their work compared to men (Gulzar 2021). In fact, women tend to undervalue their skills and achievements from a young age and continue to enforce the idea that they are less capable and qualified as they mature. Moreover, women's self-perception of their abilities is much more likely to negatively correlate with their willingness to run for political office (Lawless & Fox 2010). Consequently, although both men and women aspire to contribute good to the world around them, men are much more likely to do so through political avenues (Fox & Lawless 2014).

Within the political realm, social expectations surrounding the traditional roles of men and women lead to biases against female candidates. The gendered classification within the workforce leads to internal biases that men are more fit for certain careers than women, with politics being perceived as a male-dominated career. Women are socialized to view politics as a "man's game" and are, therefore, less likely to view themselves as capable of holding political office in comparison to their male counterparts. This perspective of politics perpetuates a cycle, as political recruitment often places more focus on increasing the ambition of potential male

candidates, inadvertently overlooking potential female candidates altogether (Lawless & Fox 2010). Furthermore, a previous study conducted within the United States shows that, although female candidates tend to be slightly favored over male candidates by the general American public, it found that voters preferred candidates to be married with children (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018). The gendered expectations in the United States tend to place familial and domestic responsibilities heavily on women, rather than men. Female candidates, therefore, are laden with the expectation of successfully balancing both their career and their family, often under considerable pressure. In fact, many female politicians have been asked if their political careers leave them with enough time to be a good wife and mother (Dolan 2014). As a result, female politicians are less likely, at 67%, to be married than male politicians, at 89%, and tend to have less children, with an average of 1.5 children compared to their male counterparts who average 1.9 children (Teele, Kalla, and Rosenbluth 2018). Another study conducted research on whether or not female candidates were held to different standards by the voting population in terms of proving their validity as a viable candidate. The results of this study suggested that, holding all other qualifications constant, a female candidate was required to prove their competence in more tasks compared to a male candidate (Bauer 2020). Not only are women in politics expected to adhere to traditional gender norms, but they are also required to prove their competence much more than men. As society continues to perpetuate traditional gender roles, the disparity in expectations and standards between men and women in politics underscores the challenge for women to view themselves as equally capable to men when it comes to running for and holding political office.

The fear of criticism that women face when confronted with the expectation for achieving perfection in all roles is known as the “Double Bind Theory”. Gendered expectations that exist

for women deviating from traditional roles often require women to take on more masculine traits, such as being more assertive and competitive, in order to be taken seriously (Appelbaum et al. 2019). However, women are often criticized when acting too assertively or competitively in leadership positions, which can lead to further marginalization for women in male-dominated fields (Powell, Butterfield, and Bartol 2008). This criticism that women face, both in being too assertive whilst also not being assertive enough, can often lead to a hesitancy in women's willingness to run for office and hold government positions. Women must change their behaviors in order to achieve a leadership position and be open to the criticism that comes along with it (Appelbaum et al. 2019). One study finds that women tend to be more election averse than men, especially in more competitive and strategic (seeming) elections (Kanthak and Woon 2015). Women are more cautious of the selection process in elections compared to men, and are thus, more sensitive to outside criticism. Women, therefore, exhibit much less willingness to enter into an election process. However, they are not unwilling to run in the election (Pate and Fox 2018). The hesitancy in political ambition occurs more in the prospect of actually running. Moreover, the impact of the Double Bind Theory extends beyond individual hesitation, contributing to the systemic underrepresentation of women in politics and reinforcing gender biases within political spheres. Female politicians and candidates are often portrayed using female stereotypes in media which contributes to a lack of political ambition amongst women (Haraldsson and Wängnerud 2019). Perpetuating a system that sets a standard for women to conform to and be criticized under prevents a lot of women from running for and holding a government position.

A subsect of the Gender Socialization Theory, the Role Model Influence Theory, suggests that individuals are influenced by observing "role models" who share similarities in demographics or accomplishments. In this sense, the Role Model Theory can affect the gender

socialization process. The exposure that younger generations have to role models that defy traditional gender norms can challenge and change how gender is perceived. Existing research indicates that the presence of visible female politicians as role models for young girls has an impact on the social expectations and political discourse that these girls experience, especially with their parents, in their formative years of socialization. The role model effect, in this case, starts in the home, creating a greater willingness amongst parents to have open conversations surrounding politics with young girls. It is not necessarily the larger presence of women in politics, it is the attention that these female politicians receive in the media. The more discourse created about female politicians results in an increase in young girls visualizing a political career as a possibility (Campbell and Wolbrecht 2006). It is important to note that in the case of role models, if they do not encompass the same values or the exact same demographics (i.e., race, religion, etc.) it becomes much more difficult for that figure to be relatable (Morgenroth, Ryan, and Peters 2015). Role models are not “cookie cutter” and will not be effective to every person. In order for the role model effect to be truly effective, the goal or achievement must be both attainable and desirable.

A general interpretation of the Role Model Theory suggests that for young children, exposure to less-traditional role models will result in a mindset with less socialized biases (Olsson and Martiny 2018). However, despite the representation of female politician role models, as they age, girls come to view politics as a male-dominated profession (Bos et al. 2022). This is the result of gender norms becoming more internalized with age, incentivizing children to conform to societal expectations, thereby increasing interest in traditionally masculine and feminine career paths. Girls lack of interest in politics as they age is also associated with an increased political awareness (Bos et al. 2022). As young girls gain more political awareness,

they tend to find that although there are female politicians, politics is a male-dominated field. With an increased awareness in societal expectations, children come to perceive politics as a career that encompasses masculine traits, rather than feminine traits, resulting in less political ambition in girls compared to boys their same age. The notion that to have a political career you need to become more assertive and competitive, as noted by the Gender Socialization Theory, often leads to a decrease in girls political ambition. Although girls do tend to indicate a greater willingness to vote, they are much less likely to indicate a willingness to run for office (Hooghe and Dassonneville 2013). Exposure to individuals who defy stereotypical gender norms can lead to a cognitive dissonance for young individuals in regard to their socialization of gender norms, however, as children age, societal gender biases continue to affect their perspectives on female politicians and the traits necessary for political leadership.

### **Context**

Gender biases can also be viewed under the societal framework of post-independence Malaysia. Until 1957, Malaysia remained under British colonial rule. Upon gaining independence, Malaysia adopted a constitution that included values reflected by western influences. Thus, Article 8, Section 2 of Malaysia's constitution expressly identifies that there will be no discrimination against any citizen on the grounds of race, religion, or gender ("Federal Constitution" 1957). Despite this achievement of equality under Malaysia's law, because Malaysian women did not have to have a suffrage movement their fight for equality on a social level has not occurred to the same extent as it has in Western cultures. The overarching objective of the nation achieving independence took precedence over the goal of promoting equal rights for women on a social level (Ariffin 1999). This has left its mark on various aspects of society, especially women's representation in government. Female representation in government in

Southeast Asia is under the global average at 18%. Malaysia's female representation is even lower, at 10% (Khalid 2014). Despite the widely acknowledged benefits of women's presence within Malaysia's workforce and government for enhancing overall proficiency and amplifying women's voices, societal constraints continue to discourage women from pursuing leadership positions within the government. Factors such as demographics, familial responsibilities, stereotypes, workplace culture and organization, and male-dominated spaces all present challenges that hinder women's access to career opportunities (Jala et al. 2020).

The strong Islamic presence within Malaysia is another factor that perpetuates social systems that keep Malaysia functioning as a patriarchal society. Islam interprets the roles of men and women within society based on the Quran, which defines the role of men to be that of a leader with women suggested to be followers and primary homemakers and caregivers (Ammah 2013). However, within the Quran it states that the Lord created men and women from the same soul, recognizing the equality between men and women through their creation (The Quran, 4:1). This indicates that women are autonomous in that they are responsible for their actions and their fulfillment of their religious duties. Although the Quran recognizes the equality of men and women, the social expectations for Muslim women largely reflect the sentiments of Chapter 4:34, regarding women as submissive to men rather than independent individuals. When it comes to women's leadership in the workplace, not only do Islamic gender roles and stereotypes get in the way, but the necessity to put family first becomes a large barrier (Hamzah 2017). Women are less likely to be able to take time for extra trainings and require more flexible work schedules than their male counterparts. The burden for Muslim women of being a primary caregiver whilst trying to progress in the workforce restricts their opportunities in getting promoted to leadership roles. To increase Muslim women's participation in leadership positions within society, it is



necessary not only to defy stereotypes and Islamic duties, but to provide more flexible arrangements for women who have careers and act as primary caregivers to their family.

## **Inquiry**

Does leadership experience change women's willingness to run for government?

## **Methods**

To evaluate the question: "does leadership experience change women's willingness to run for government" a lab experiment was conducted, followed by a survey. The experiment established a leadership role with two subordinates. The objective was for the leader to direct the other two team members in completing a task. The purpose of this experiment is to give the leader the opportunity to feel successful in completing the task at hand in an attempt to measure if successfully holding a leadership role would contribute to the participants willingness to run for government.

In this experiment, 'women' is operationalized as any person who would assert their gender as female when asked to identify their gender. 'Willingness to run' is operationalized as the expressed willingness on the Likert scale ("Somewhat likely" or "Very likely") to run for local, state, and/or national office. 'Leadership experience' is operationalized as individuals in the experiment who were assigned to the leadership role in their group. 'Government' is defined as an assembly given the legal authority to administer over a population. 'Change women's willingness' is operationalized as the difference between the women assigned to the leadership roles expressed willingness to run for office in comparison to the women assigned to the blindfolded roles expressed willingness to run for office.

The experiment took place over the course of two days, with 23 sessions total. Each session, four groups participated in the leadership activity. Participants were randomized along

four different group demographics. The first group consisted of three female participants. The second group consisted of two female participants and one male participant. The third group consisted of one female participant and two male participants. The fourth group consisted of three male participants. The groups were divided along these specific gender lines in order to better visualize the relationship between the effect that different gender divisions had on the leadership experience of different participants.

The leadership activity was composed of two blindfolded team members and one leader who was not blindfolded. The objective of each group was for the leader to successfully direct the blindfolded team members to complete a twelve-piece puzzle. Regardless of group performance, upon completing the task, the research assistants would provide a verbal affirmation regarding the team's performance: "Good job! That was a really great time". The purpose of this affirmation is to signal success to the leader and affirm to them their abilities in a leadership role.

Before completing the group task, the participants took a pre-survey which asked questions regarding the demographics of the individuals. From this survey the participants gender, religion, and ethnicity were established. After the group completed the puzzle, the research assistants would administer the post-survey. This survey utilizes the Likert scale in response to the questions. The survey asks for the participant to identify their role. It then asks for an assessment of the individuals performance in the experiment as well as the comfort they felt in their role. This question was asked in order to establish how well women leaders felt they performed in comparison to male leaders. It also allows for a comparison between the leaders of different group compositions. For the blindfolded participants it asks, 'Do you think you would have done better as the leader than your assigned leader did?' This question is meant to assess the

confidence of the other participants and serve as a control for women participating in the experiment in the non-leadership role. The participants are asked how likely they are to run for a position in local government, state government, and national government. This question is meant to assess the feelings that different participants have regarding running for different levels of political office. The survey asks the participants to assess their confidence in future leadership positions, to see if there is a difference in answers based on role and gender breakdowns. It asks participants how much they agree with the following statement: ‘Someone like me should run for local office’ to determine their regard for their own qualifications in running for government. The survey also asks how much participants agree with the sentiment that ‘Men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women’ to assess how gender socialization affects how survey participants respond to role of leadership in society. The questions in this survey determine how the participants feel about women participating in government and assess whether or not the leadership experience had an effect on their willingness to run for government themselves.

After performing the experiment and collecting the survey responses, the survey databases were imported into R, a statistical coding program, where the data was cleaned and merged into one dataset. To evaluate that dataset, multiple regression analyses were performed. In the regressions, ‘gender’ was coded as a binary variable, ‘role’, ‘religion’ and ‘ethnicity’ were coded as factors. All questions asked in the survey (that were on the Likert scale) were coded as numeric variables with 1 representing negatively connoted answers (i.e., ‘very unlikely’, ‘very unconfident’, ‘not well at all’, ‘extremely uncomfortable’, and ‘very below average’), 5 representing positively connotated answers (i.e., ‘very likely’, ‘very confident’, ‘extremely well’, ‘very comfortable’, and ‘very above average’), and 3 representing middle-ground answers. The

variable ‘likelihood to run’ was created, which compiled the questions: How likely are you to run for local office?”, “How likely are you to run for state office?”, and “How likely are you to run for national office?”, into one variable representing overall likelihood to run for any form of public office. These variables were used to identify how different roles, gender, and religions of the participants affected their willingness to run for any government office.

## **Results**

Having examined a review of previous literature and theory considering the question ‘Does leadership experience change women’s willingness to run for government?’ and the methods employed for data collection, this paper will now explore the analysis and findings yielded from the experiment.

The first regression (see figure 1) utilizes statistical analysis to examine the effect that gender and role have on likelihood to run for any office. The purpose of this regression is to explore if there is a significant effect on the likelihood of running for government. When gender is female, and role is leader a linear regression model was deployed. Within this regression, gender and role were included as an interaction to allow for further explanation as to the effect of the two variables on the likelihood of running for government. The null hypothesis for the following regressions assumes that gender and role have no effect on the likelihood to run for government.

The results from this regression can be interpreted as such: the coefficient ‘Constant’ establishes a baseline for other variables to be evaluated. It shows that when the participant is male and blindfolded, likelihood to run for government changes by 3.074.

The ‘Role (Leader)’ coefficient shows that when the participant is male and a leader, likelihood to run for government changes by -0.400. Thus, when participants are a male leader,

they are -0.400 less likely to want to run for government compared to blindfolded male participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.057% chance of getting the results we did. Because the p-value is statistically significant at the 90% confidence level, the likelihood of the null hypothesis being true is low. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis at the 90% confidence level.

The 'Gender' coefficient shows that when the participant is female and blindfolded, likelihood to run for government changes by -0.377. Thus, when participants are female and blindfolded, they are -0.377 less likely to want to run for government compared to blindfolded male participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.029% chance of getting the results we did. Because the p-value is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, the likelihood of the null hypothesis being true is low. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis at the 95% confidence level.

The 'Role (Leader) : Gender' interaction shows that when the participant is female and a leader, the likelihood to run for government changes by 0.377. Thus, when participants are a female leader, they are 0.377 more likely to want to run for government compared to blindfolded male participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.204% chance of getting the results we did. Because the p-value is so high, the likelihood of the null hypothesis being true is high. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Based on the statistics observed in the regression output, it can be concluded that female blindfolded participants are statistically less likely to be willing to run for government compared to male blindfolded participants. It can also be concluded that male leaders are less willing to run for government compared to blindfolded participants. However, in the case of female leaders in

this experiment, it cannot be concluded that female leaders are more likely to want to run for government than blindfolded male participants because of the lack in statistical significance.

<b>Regression: Likelihood to Run</b>	
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Likelihood to Run for Government
Role (Leader)	-0.400* (0.210)
Gender	-0.377** (0.172)
Role (Leader) : Gender	0.377 (0.297)
Constant	3.074*** (0.121)
Observations	269
R <sup>2</sup>	0.025
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.014
Residual Std. Error	1.148 (df = 265)
F Statistic	2.296* (df = 3; 265)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
<b>(Figure 1)</b>	

In order to examine the difference between female participants in the leadership and blindfolded roles and their willingness to run for government, a second regression analysis was conducted (see figure 2). This regression establishes the gender as female, and, therefore, all included variables indicate that the gender of the participant must be female. The regression ran is a linear regression model, and the null hypothesis remains that gender and role have no effect on willingness to run for office.

The results from this regression can be interpreted as the following: the coefficient ‘Constant’ establishes a baseline showing that when the participant is female and blindfolded, the likelihood to run for government changes by 2.697.

The 'Role (Leader)' coefficient shows that when the participant is a female leader, the likelihood to run for government changes by -0.023. Thus, when the participant is a female leader, they are -0.023 less likely to want to run for government compared to the blindfolded female participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.914% chance of getting the results that we did. Due to the high p-value, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

From this regression output it can be determined that, due to the lack of statistical significance, female leaders are neither more nor less likely to want to run for government in comparison to female blindfolded participants.

<b>Regression: Female's Likelihood to Run</b>	
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Likelihood to Run for Government
Role (Leader)	-0.023 (0.208)
Constant	2.697*** (0.120)
Observations	134
R <sup>2</sup>	0.0001
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	-0.007
Residual Std. Error	1.136 (df = 132)
F Statistic	0.012 (df = 1; 132)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
<b>(Figure 2)</b>	

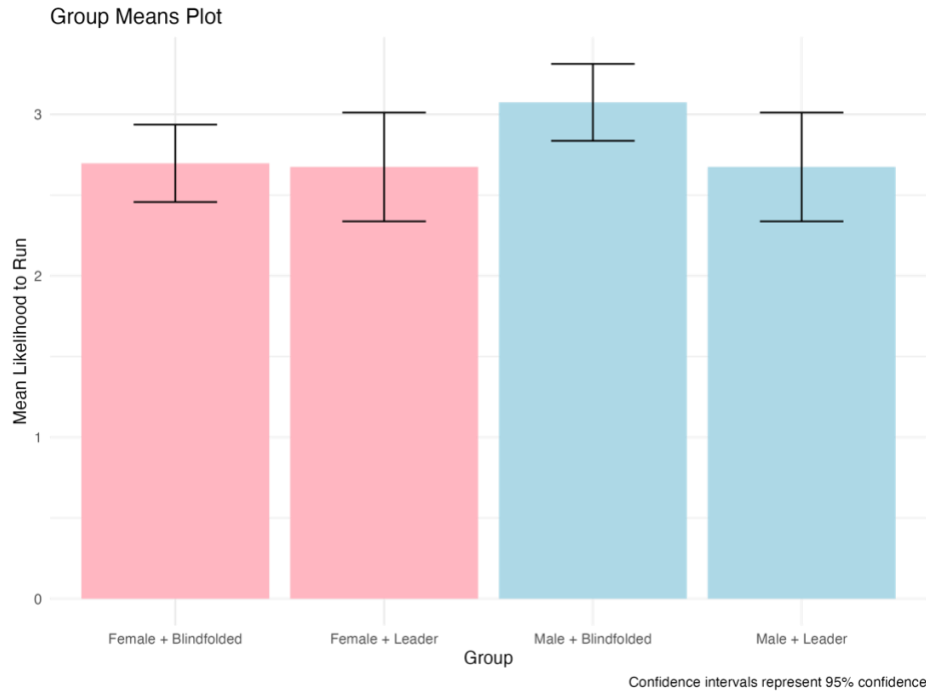
In order to better visualize the relationship between the participants role and their gender, a group means plot was created (see Figure 3). This plot compares the means of the following variables: 'Female + Blindfolded', 'Female + Leader', 'Male + Blindfolded', and 'Male + Leader' across the x-axis. The y-axis represents the average likelihood of the participants willingness to run for government. The average is on a scale of 1 to 5 (Likert scale), with 1 being

the least likely and 5 being the most likely. The error bars represent the 95% confidence interval for each variable.

The mean for blindfolded female participants is 2.697, with a confidence interval of (2.457, 2.936). The mean for female leaders is 2.674, with a confidence interval of (2.337, 3.011). The mean for blindfolded male participants is 3.074, with a confidence interval of (2.836, 3.312). The mean for male leaders is 2.674, with a confidence interval of (2.337, 3.011).

This plot shows that, on average, all participants are the most likely to answer the questions of “How likely are you to run for local/state/national office?” as “Unsure”, with their average being near the median on the Likert scale. However, it also shows that blindfolded male participants, on average, are the most likely to indicate their willingness to run for government. Female blindfolded participants are more likely than male or female leaders to indicate their willingness to run for government, and male and female leaders are equally as likely to each other to indicate their willingness to run for government. This shows that the leadership activity did not have an impact on increasing female leaders willingness to run for office. In fact, female and male leaders are the least likely to indicate their willingness to run compared to the blindfolded participants.





**(Figure 3)**

To provide further analysis on the participants likelihood of running for government, three more regressions were run to assess the responses to each level of public office; local, state, and national (see Figure 4). The purpose of this regression is to determine if the level of public office had a significant effect on the participants willingness to run. The regressions run are linear regression models. The null hypothesis for these regressions continues the assumption that role and gender have no effect on the participants willingness to run for government.

The regression output for the question “How likely are you to run for local office?” demonstrates that, holding role constant, female participants are -0.163 less likely to run for local office compared to male participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.282% chance of getting the results that we did. Because the p-value is high, the likelihood of the null hypothesis being true is also high. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis. The regression also shows that, holding gender constant, leaders are -0.244 less likely to run for local office compared to blindfolded participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.128%

chance of getting the results that we did. Because the p-value is high, the likelihood of the null hypothesis being true is also high. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

The regression output for the question “How likely are you to run for state office?” illustrates that, holding role constant, female participants are -0.321 less likely to run for state office compared to male participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.034% chance of getting the results that we did. Because the p-value is significant at the 95% confidence level, the likelihood of the null hypothesis being true is low. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis. The ‘Role’ coefficient can be interpreted to mean that, holding gender constant, when the participant is a leader, they are -0.254 less likely to run for state office compared to blindfolded participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.112% chance of getting the results we did. Because the p-value is high, the likelihood of the null hypothesis being true is high. Therefore, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

The regression output for the question “How likely are you to run for national office?” shows that, holding role constant, female participants are -0.270 less likely to run for national office compared to male participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.073% chance of getting the results that we did. Because the p-value is significant at the 90% confidence level, the likelihood of the null hypotheses being true is low. Thus, we can reject the null hypothesis. The ‘Role (Leader)’ coefficient shows that, holding gender constant, when the participant is a leader, they are -0.137 less likely to run for national office compared to blindfolded participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.390% chance of getting the results that we did. Because the p-value is high, the likelihood of the null hypothesis being true is high. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

Overall, these three regressions show that, in the case of state and national elections, female participants are less willing to run for state and national government office in comparison to male participants. Therefore, it can be concluded that the level of office does have an impact on participants willingness to run for government and that the gender does have an effect on the outcome.

### Regression Results

	Dependent Variable		
	Likelihood to Run for Local Office	Likelihood to Run for State Office	Likelihood to Run for National Office
	(1)	(2)	(3)
Role (Leader)	-0.244 (0.160)	-0.254 (0.159)	-0.137 (0.159)
Gender (Female)	-0.163 (0.151)	-0.321** (0.150)	-0.270* (0.150)
Constant	3.148*** (0.119)	3.025*** (0.118)	2.860*** (0.118)
Observations	269	269	269
R <sup>2</sup>	0.013	0.026	0.015
Residual Std. Error (df = 266)	1.239	1.231	1.227

*Note:*

\*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01

**(Figure 4)**

Another regression was run in order to examine the effects of gender and role on the survey question “Someone like me should run for local office” (see Figure 5). The purpose of this regression is to determine whether or not survey participants felt that their personality type would be a good fit for office, to see if they could visualize a person like them in office. The null hypothesis for this regression is that gender and role have no effect on survey participants opinion of the idea that someone similar to them should run for local office.

The regression output shows that female participants are -0.096 less likely to believe that someone like them should run for local office, compared to male participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.425% chance of getting the results that we did. Therefore, we

fail to reject the null hypothesis. From the regression, it can also be seen that when the participant is a leader, they are 0.122 more likely to believe that someone like them should run for local office, compared to the blindfolded participants. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.338% chance of getting the results that we did. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

This regression shows that holding a leadership role in the experiment does have a positive effect on the participants answer regarding if they believe someone like them should run for office. It also shows that when participants are women, there is a negative correlation with their answer to the question. However, since neither of these coefficients are statistically significant, nothing can be assumed based on this regression.

**Regression: Someone Like Me Should Run for Local Office**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Someone Like Me Should Run
Gender	-0.096 (0.120)
Role (Leader)	0.122 (0.127)
Constant	3.115*** (0.095)
Observations	268
R <sup>2</sup>	0.006
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	-0.002
Residual Std. Error	0.984 (df = 265)
F Statistic	0.775 (df = 2; 265)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01

**(Figure 5)**

In order to examine the impact of gender socialization on this study, a regression analysis was performed using the survey question “Men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women” and the role and gender variables (see Figure 6). The purpose of this regression

analysis is to determine whether or not there was a difference in the male and female participants view of women in politics. The results from this regression will reveal whether or not the participants in this experiment view politics as a profession better suited for men. The null hypothesis for this regression is that gender does have a difference on how this question is perceived.

The statistical analysis of this regression determines that female participants are -0.219 less likely to agree with the statement “Men are better suited emotionally for politics than are most women”. If we assume the null hypothesis is true, there is a 0.104% likelihood of getting the results that we did. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

The regression output for this relationship shows that women are more likely to disagree with the sentiment that politics is better emotionally suited for men. However, because this relationship is not statistically significant, we cannot infer that female participants disagree with the expressed sentiment. Therefore, gender socialization as a factor influencing the participants in this experiment cannot be ruled out either.

**Regression: Men are More Emotionally Suited for Politics**

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Men More Emotionally Suited
Gender	-0.219 (0.134)
Role (Leader)	-0.158 (0.143)
Constant	3.601*** (0.106)
Observations	269
R <sup>2</sup>	0.014
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.007
Residual Std. Error	1.103 (df = 266)
F Statistic	1.948 (df = 2; 266)
<i>Note:</i>	*p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01
<b>(Figure 6)</b>	

Another regression (see figure 7) was run to determine whether or not religion played a factor in women's willingness to run for office. Since the experiment took place in Malaysia, where Islam is such a prevalent factor, it was necessary to determine the religious effect that religion had on the willingness to run for government. A linear regression was conducted with the null hypothesis that religion does not have any effect on the female participants willingness to run.

The regression output determines that, holding all else constant, when female leaders are more likely to indicate a negative response compared to men in their willingness to run for office at -0.312. The p-value is 0.037, which is statistically significant, meaning the null hypothesis can be rejected.

The regression output also indicates that, holding all else constant, Muslims are -0.272 less likely to run for government. The p-value is 0.184, which is not statistically significant,

therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. Thus, we cannot confidently say that being Muslim has a significant impact on the willingness to run for government, considering the other variables.

From this regression output you can determine that, when considering gender, religion, and role, female participants are less likely to indicate their willingness to run for government compared to male participants.

<b>Regression: Likelihood to Run Based on Religion</b>	
	<i>Dependent variable:</i>
	Likelihood to Run for Government
Religion - Christian	0.194 (0.458)
Religion - Don't know/refuse	-0.129 (0.807)
Religion - Hindu	-0.393 (0.350)
Religion - Muslim	-0.272 (0.204)
Religion - None	0.606 (0.665)
Religion - Other	-1.045 (1.131)
Gender (Female)	-0.312** (0.148)
Role (Leader)	-0.212 (0.154)
Constant	3.235*** (0.199)
Observations	233
R <sup>2</sup>	0.055
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.022
Residual Std. Error	1.107 (df = 224)
F Statistic	1.638 (df = 8; 224)
<i>Note:</i> *p<0.1; **p<0.05; ***p<0.01	

**Figure 7****Discussion**

Despite the insights gained from this study, there are some limitations that may impact the interpretation of the findings. This study placed more value in the internal validity of the experiment, which results in a lack of complete external validity. By focusing on the internal



validity of the experiment confounding variables and biases were limited. The experiment required specific group demographics in order to view the actual effects of those group interactions and roles on the willingness to run for government. Therefore, the internal validity was established through the randomization of the participants in their roles. The experimental variables were also operationalized in a specific way in order to properly observe the effects of the treatment on the outcome. By isolating the treatment variables, it was easier to observe how much the participants' willingness to run was actually affected by their role and gender.

Unfortunately, by increasing the internal validity of the experiment, the experiment became less reflective of real-world conditions and, therefore, lacks external validity. However, this lack in external validity allows for a greater connection to be observed between the treatment and outcome variable. Because of this, the experiment's randomization and the variables operationalization can be justified.

This experiment required participants to determine their feelings about running for government. Whilst the experiment was taking place, state elections were being held within Malaysia. The fact that elections were being held in the country at the time of the experiment means more exposure to political campaigns and the idea of running for government for the participants. This could have a profound effect on how the participants view elections and the prospects of running for government. The way that different candidates campaign and the media's reaction and presentation of the election could influence the participants to think differently about running for office. However, because the experiment is focusing on the influence of different roles and gender on willingness to run for government, exposure to state elections should not have too much influence in the overall experiment. Since it can be assumed that all participants are being exposed to state election campaigns and information, it can be

assumed that the randomization of the experiment prevents this from becoming a confounding variable in regard to the effect that the treatment is having on the participants willingness to run.

During the experiment, in order to reinforce the belief in their leadership abilities the research assistants gave the following affirmation upon completion of the puzzle: “Good job! That was a really great time”. By giving the participants an affirmation after completing the leadership experience, this could affect their attitudes towards the experiment and possibly make them think more positively about it than they would have otherwise. However, because the affirmation was administered to all groups equally, it is not an inconsistency that is affecting some participants more than others. The affirmation is more connected to the groups success rather than being connected to the idea of running for office, and therefore, should not have a profound effect on the effect of the treatment.

## **Conclusion**

This research study provided valuable insights into the effect that a leadership experience has on people’s willingness to run for office, especially women. By examining the effect that the different role’s and the participants gender had on the willingness to run for office it was observed that blindfolded female participants are less likely to express interest in running for government compared to blindfolded male participants. Male leaders show a decreased willingness to run compared to blindfolded males, while female leaders show no significant change in their willingness to run for government. The study also found that the different level of political office (local, state, national) has an effect on the participants willingness to run, with female participants being less likely to consider running for state and national government compared to male participants. It was also determined that Islam and gender have an impact on the female participants willingness to run for office. Through this experiment, it can be

determined that leadership experience, gender, and religion all have an impact on a women's willingness to run for office in general and on different levels of political office.

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