GENDER DIFFERENCES AND LEADERSHIP: AN EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

Prof. Dr. Mahmood A Bodla
COMSATS Institute of Information Technology Sahiwal
director@ciitsahiwal.edu.pk

Ghulam Hussain
COMSATS Institute of Information Technology Sahiwal
hussain@ciitsahiwal.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

Gender diversity at workplace with respect to leadership practices and need for leadership among followers have drawn the considerable research attention among leadership researchers across the world. A number of studies depicting the masculine and feminine leadership practices and followers' needs and preferences pertaining to leadership have been conducted in American and European Contexts during the last couple of decades, yet this subject area is the most neglected area for the behavioral scientists in Pakistan. Therefore, this study aims at exploring the difference in opinions of both male and female subordinates about their leaders' leadership characteristics. Secondly, it aims at determining the extent to which male and female employees differ in their need for leadership in banking sector of Pakistan. As a result, the implications of the study for practitioners and researchers are offered at the end.

Keywords: Gender diversity,, leadership characteristics, and need for leadership

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender diversity is among the leading changes that have eventuated in organizations over the years and has become catalyst for researchers in understanding the behavioral differences of men and women at workplace. In this regards, two issues have been broadly addressed by earlier studies a) the differences in leadership characteristics in masculine and feminine perspectives b) dissimilarities in needs and preferences of male and female subordinates. It is evident that gender differences have strong impact on leadership styles of supervisors (Eagly et al., 1987 & 1990 & 2001 & 2003; Loden, 1985; Rosner, 1990; Kanter, 1995; Kelley, 1997; Lorocca, 2003; Sim and Ansari, 2005; Nyberg, Bernin, and Theorell, 2005 and Stafyla, 2008) and on subordinates' preferences for leaders' interventions (de Vries, 1997).

While considering these two issues, the present study is framed in Pakistani context and will be carried out in the banking sector of Pakistan to examine the behavioral dissimilarities of male and female employees. Firstly, it aims at investigating the gender's impact on leadership characteristics. Secondly, it aims to explore the gender's influence on need for leadership among followers. To put both the issues in perspective, next section elucidates these issues in separate subsections with related research findings from the earlier literature.

1.1 IMPACT OF GENDER ON LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS

The influence of gender on leadership practices are extensively explored by researchers across the world, yet this area in not free from ambiguities due to inconsistent opinions of theorists. On one side, proponents (e.g. Graen, 1976; Terbogr, 1977; Wanous, 1977 and Eagly et al., 2001) theorize similarity in leadership styles of both male and female managers. They advocate that paid job holders are expected to follow the standardized instructions. Moreover, they assert that employees occupying managerial positions have to perform necessary activities of planning, coordinating, directing and providing work related feedback to the followers. On the other hand, Money and Ehrhardt (1972), Henning and Jardin (1977), Sargent (1981), and Hall (1984) hypothesize that male and female leadership behaviors are different due to biological dissimilarities and differences in personality traits. Theorists debate continues, however, a number of studies have also evidenced some differences in male and female leadership practices. A careful analysis of literature provides that majority of studies assessed masculine and feminine leadership in terms of: a) autocratic vs. democratic or task oriented vs. human oriented b) transformational vs. transactional leadership.

Here, the remaining part of this subsection is devoted to empirical findings from related earlier researches.

Numerous studies conducted by earlier researchers (Brovemen et al., 1972; Eagly et al., 1987 & 1990 & 2001 & 2003; Ben, 1974; Spence and Helmreich, 1978; Rosner, 1983; Gibson, 1995) have reported the stereotype gender differences (where men were ascribed to having agentic qualities characterized by assertive behaviors whereas women were ascribed to communal qualities characterized with affection and emotional expressive).

Russell, Rush and Herd (1988) explored the women expectations about the effectiveness of male and female leadership. They utilized a sample of 188 university female employees. Results obtained were partially consistent with earlier gender stereotyped findings and female leaders were found exhibiting the higher level of consideration and initiating structure in their leadership styles.

Eagly and Johnson (1990) reviewed 162 studies comparing the leadership styles of men and women for meta-analytic purpose. Results obtained indicated that *"92% of available comparison went in the direction of more democratic behavior from women than men"* (p. 247).

Gibson (1994) investigated gender differences in leadership styles across four countries. She utilized a sample of 209 managers and collected data through Leadership Effectiveness Questionnaire developed by Flamholtz (1986). Results obtained were to some extent consistent with gender stereotyped findings. Men across all four countries were found involved more in goal setting activities but did not differ on directive leadership styles than women. Women stressed more on interaction facilitation but did not differ in supportive behavior than men.

Gardinner and Tiggemann (1999) investigated the gender differences in leadership styles. For this purpose, industries were classified in to male dominated and female dominated industries. Data were collected from a sample of 120 (60 male and 6o female) managers. Results indicated that in male dominated industry, male and female leaders did not differ. However in female dominated industry, female leaders were showing more interpersonally oriented aspects of leadership than male leaders.

Stafyla (2008) explored the impact of gender on leadership styles. Data were collected from a sample of 115 supervisors (81 male and 34 female) employed by different organizations using SBDQ (Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire). Findings were partially consistent with earlier studies. Results revealed that female leaders were adopting more consideration oriented leadership styles and male leaders were adopting the combination of both consideration and initiating structure oriented aspects of leadership.

Bass, Avoilio and Atwater (1996) examined the gender differences in leader behavior in three diverse samples. Data were collected through MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) and ratings were obtained from subordinates. Sample I consisted of 229 leaders (79 female and 150 male) rated by 877 subordinates, and in sample II 96 supervisors were rated by 271 subordinates, and in Sample III 289 supervisors were rated by 913 subordinates. Overall results showed that female leaders were rated more on certain dimensions (i.e. charisma and individualized consideration) of transformational leadership than male leaders but effect sizes were generally small.

Another study conducted by Carless (1998) to determine the gender differences in transformational leadership. Data were collected through MLQ from a sample of 345 (239 male and 129 female) branch managers employed by an international bank, and ratings were obtained through different source: subordinates ratings, self ratings, and superior ratings. Results obtained were consistent with earlier studies.

In the light of above discussion, the present study focuses on the following hypothesis:

H1: Male and female employees significantly differ in their perception about their leaders' leadership characteristics.

The next sub section is dedicated to gender's impact on need for leadership among followers.

1.2 INFLUENCE OF GENDER ON NEED FOR LEADERSHIP OF SUBORDINATES

Need for leadership is defined as *"the extent to which employees wishes the leader to facilitate the path towards individual, group, and organizational outcomes"* (de Vries, 1997, p. 122).

De Vries (1997) explored the difference in need for leadership of male and female employees from a sample of 578. Results showed that female employees have strong need for leadership than male employees. Therefore, on the basis of above results, the present study will test the following hypothesis:

H2: Male and female employees significantly differ in their need for leadership.

To empirically test the above hypotheses, the next section elaborates the research methodology.

2. METHODOLOGY

This section is further divided into three separate subsections and these sections describe the population and sample selection briefly, data collection methodology, source and characteristics of the measures.

2.1 TARGET POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Multistage stratified random sampling technique was applied to get the representatives sample from banking sector of Pakistan. At the first stage, among 41 different banks 8 banks were selected based on the classification of public sector (2), private but national banks (4), and foreign banks (2). At the second stage, out of more than 550 braches in Lahore and Sahiwal cities, 70 branches were selected and with in these braches officers grades (OG – III, OG – II, and OG – I) were chosen for data gathering purpose.

2.2 DATA COLLECTION METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Data was collected through self administered questionnaires. Ratings were obtained from followers. Questionnaires consisted of three parts; first part was related to general information about respondents and in second part they were asked to rate their present leaders' leadership characteristics on four dimensions (leader's expertise, human oriented leadership, task oriented leadership, and charismatic leadership), and in third part, they were asked to assess their need for leadership.

A total of 750 questionnaires were administered to targeted employees in the selected branches and 261 were returned. Of the 261 returned questionnaires 6 were incomplete and 255 were usable for analysis purpose. Following table shows the respondents category based on their gender.

Table 2.1: Sample Composition by Gender

Gender	Sample (N)	Percentage
Male	204	80
Female	51	20
Total	**255**	**100**

2.3 MEASURES

Basic leadership styles (i.e. human oriented and task oriented leadership) were measured through shortened version of Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire (Fleishman, 1953). Total 16 items (8 each for human oriented and task oriented leadership styles) were adopted from SBDQ (Supervisory Behavior Description Questionnaire). The cronbach alpha for human oriented leadership was 0.82 and for task oriented leadership, it remained 0.77.

While scale measuring charismatic leadership was adopted from reduced version of transformational leadership of Bass (1985a). Total 8 items were chosen and value of cronbach alpha for 8 charismatic leadership was 0.78. Whereas, leader's expertise was measured through 3 items and these items were adopted from Podsakoff, Todor, and Schuler (1983) leader's expertise scale. The value of cronbach alpha was 0.60 for these three items.

Need for leadership of the followers was measured through 17 items of de Vries (1997) and value of cronbach alpha was 0.90 for these 17 items.

All the items related to leadership characteristics were measured on likert scale ("1" strongly disagree to "5" strongly agree), and items related to need for leadership were also measured on likert scale but with minor changing (need for leadership "1" not at all to "5" a lot).

All the data sets were analyzed using SPSS and the results of the study are summed up in the next section.

3. RESULTS

This section is further divided into two sub-sections. In first section, empirical results regarding gender's impact on leadership characteristics are presented. In second section, impact of gender on need for leadership among followers is calculated.

3.1 IMPACT OF GENDER ON LEADERSHIP CHARACTERISTICS/STYLES

Independent sample t test was performed to determine the mean difference in perceived leadership characteristics of leaders by their male and female subordinates. The results are given in the table below.

Table 3.1: Independent Sample t test of male and female employees' perception about their leaders

	Mean (Male)	SD	Mean (Female)	SD	Mean Difference	df	t test
Leader's Expertise	3.50	.74	3.81	.68	-.31	253	-2.74**
Human Oriented –Leadership	3.53	.67	3.76	.61	-.23	251	-2.25**
Task Oriented Leadership	3.54	.60	3.80	.52	-.27	249	-2.92**
Charismatic Leadership	3.60	.61	3.79	.61	-.19	229	-2.00**

**The mean difference is significant at the level .05 (Two Tailed)

The results showed that on average, female followers rated their leaders significantly more on all four dimensions than their male fallows.

3.2 GENDER INFLUENCE ON NEED FOR LEADERSHIP OF FOLLOWERS

This section provides empirical evidence regarding the gender impact on need for leadership among followers. In this connection, the results of independent sample t test are given in the table below.

Table 3.2: Independent Sample t test of need for leadership among male and female followers.

	Mean (Male)	SD	Mean (Female)	SD	Mean Difference	df	t Value
Need for Leadership	3.58	.63	3.75	.55	-.17	249	-1.77*

*The mean difference is significant at the level .10 (Two Tailed)

The above results have shown that on average females has higher need for leadership than their males co-workers. Although this difference is slight but still gender plays an important role in determining the need for leadership among subordinates.

4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The empirical results of the current research have supported the hypotheses of the studies suggesting that gender has impact on leadership practices of the managers and need for leadership among subordinates. It is interesting to note that the results of present research especially in human related and task related facets of the leadership were partially consistent with the gender stereotyped findings of the earlier researches. Here, it is found that females rated high their leaders on both dimensions of leadership styles. Moreover, these findings have supported the results of Russell, Rush and Herd (1988). While in case of charismatic leadership, the results of this study are also consistent with earlier studies of Bass et al., (1996) and Carless (1998), where female leaders were found showing more charismatic leadership than male leaders. Furthermore, in case of leader's expertise, female subordinates also perceived their leaders to be experts more in all job related aspects than male subordinates.

While in case of followers' need for leadership, results are also consistent with earlier results of de Vries (1997), where females were found having high need for leadership than their males' co-workers.

Thus, the findings of the current research have proved the fact that despite the structural forces or formalization minimizing the gap differences in role performance, job occupants adopt different behaviors at workplace and find different ways to perform their jobs due to their characteristics and gender is one of the characteristic among these characteristics enforcing the job holders to behave differently.

Therefore, on the basis of above results, it can be predicted that when these females will reach in supervisory roles, they will practice the same leadership, as they perceive. In this way, female leaders can be proven effective leaders than male leaders. Moreover, the research findings have disproved the old conception of leadership, where leadership characteristics were primarily attributed to men.

The empirical results of the current research have positive implications at workplace predicting that female employees in male dominated society have the potential to grow as efficient workers and effective leaders. Although due to glass ceiling, female employees were not selected for top managerial positions. However, the results of this study are persuading the selectors to choose female employees for top management positions. Moreover, once the females inside the organizations have proved their selves as efficient workers and effective leaders, new opportunities will be waiting for those who are outside the organizations.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The results of the study are based on the data that are collected from limited sample and ratings are obtained from single source i.e. subordinates' ratings. Due to limited number of female employees in managerial role, the researchers were unable to obtain the self ratings of supervisors. Of the selected 70 branches only 3 females were located in supervisory role but still they were not branch managers. These lessen number of female employees restricted to get self ratings of the supervisors about leadership characteristics. Therefore, for future researchers it is suggested, as female employees are increasing at workplace and in near future they will be in managerial positions, it will possible for researchers to obtain multi ratings from different sources (subordinates' ratings, self ratings, and superior ratings) in order to strengthen the significance of their researches.

REFERENCES

Bartol, K.M., & Martin, D.C. (1986), "Women and men in task groups". The social psychology of male and female relations: A critical analysis of central concepts, pp. 259 – 310.Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Bass, B.M. & Avolio, B.J. (1995), The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (5x-Short), Mind Garden, Redwood City, CA.

Bass, B.M., Avolio, B.J. and Atwater, L. (1996), "The transformational and transactional leadership of men and women", *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, Vol. 45, pp. 5 – 34.

Blake, R.R. & Mouton, J.S. (1964). The managerial grid. Houseton, TX: Gulf.

Blake, R.R. & Mouton, J.S. (1964). The new managerial grid. Houseton, TX: Gulf.

Brown, S.M. (1979), "Male versus female leaders: A comparison of empirical studies", Sex Role, Vol. 5, pp. 595 – 611.

Carless, S.A. (1998), "Gender differences in transformational leadership: An examination of superior, leader and subordinate perspectives". *Sex Roles*, Vol. 39, pp. 887 – 902.

De Vries, R. E. (1997), "Need for leadership: A solution to empirical problems in situational theories of leadership"*,* Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands.

Den Hartog, D.N., van Muijen, J.J. and Koopman, P.L. (1997), "Transactional versus transformational leadership: an analysis of the MLQ", *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, Vol. 70, pp. 19 – 34.

Eagly, A.H. & Johansenn, S.M.C. (2001), "The leadership styles of women and men", *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 57 No. 4, pp. 781 – 797.

Eagly, A.H. and Johansenn, S.M.C. (2003), "Transformational, Transactional, and Laissez-Faire Leadership Styles: A Meta-Analysis Comparing Women and Men", *The American Psychological Association,* Vol. 129 No. 4, pp. 569 – 591.

Eagly, A.H. and Johnson, B.T. (1990), "Gender and leadership styles: A meta analysis", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 168, pp. 233 – 256.

Eagly, A.H. (1987), "Sex differences in social behaviors: A social role interpretation", Erlbaum, Hillsdale.

Eagly, A.H. and Carli, L.L. (2003), "The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the Evidence". *The Leadership Quarterly,* Vol. 14 No. 6, pp. 807 – 834.

Eagly, A.H. and Karau, S.J. (2002), "Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders", *Psychological Review*, Vol. 109, pp.573 – 98.

Flamholtz, E.G. (1978), How to make the transition from entrepreneurship to a professionally managed firm. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Fleishman, E.A. (1953), "The management of leadership aptitudes in industry", *Journal of Applied Psychology,* Vol. 36, pp. 153 – 158.

Fleishman, E.A. (1970), Manual for supervisory behavior description questionnaire. Washington, DC: American Institute for Research.

Gibson, C.B. (2003), "An investigation of gender differences in leadership across four countries", Journal *of International Business Studies*, Vol. 26 No. 2, pp. 255 – 279.

Kanter, R.M. (1977), Men and women of the corporation. New York: Basic Books.

Maher, K.J. (1997), **"**Gender-Related Stereotypes of Transformational and Transactional Leadership", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 37 No. (3 & 4).

Money, J. and Ehrhardt, A.A. (1972), Man & woman, boy and girl. Baltinmore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Podsakoff, P.M., Todor, W.D. and Schuler, R.S. (1983), "Leader expertise as a moderator of the effects of instrumental and supportive leader behaviors", *Journal of Management,* Vol. 9, pp. 173 – 185.

Rassell, J.E.A., Rush, M.C. and Herd, A.M. (1988), "An exploration of women's expectations of effective male and female leadership", *Sex Roles*, Vol. 18, pp. 279 – 287.

Rice, R. W., Instone, D. and Adams, J. (1984), "Leader sex, leader success, and leadership process: Two field studies", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 69, pp. 12 – 31.

Rosner, J.B. (1990). "Ways women lead", *Harward Business Review,* Nov. – Dec: pp.119 – 125.

Sargent, A.G. (1981). The androgynous manager. New York: Amacom.

Sargent, J.F. and Miller, G.R. (1971), "Some differences in certain communication behaviors of autocratic and democratic group leaders", Journal *of Communication*, Vol. 21, pp. 233 – 253.

Spence, J.T. and Helmreich, R.L. (1978), "Masculinity & femininity: Their psychological dimensions, correlates, & antecedents", Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press.

Stafyla, A. (2008). "Gender and leadership in Greek enterprises", 4th European Conference on Management, Leadership and Governance, Ryeson University, Toronto, Canada.

Tannenbaum, R. and Schmidt, W.H. (1958), "How to choose a leadership pattern", Harward Business Review, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 95 – 101.

Terborg, J.R. (1977), "Women in management: A research review", *Journal of Applied Psychology*, Vol. 36, pp. 788 – 793.

Wanous, J.P. 91987), "Organizational entry: Newcomers moving from outside to inside", *Psychological Bulletin*, Vol. 84, pp. 601 – 618.

Professor Dr. Mahmood A Bodla

Prof. Dr. Mahmood A Bodla has doctorate degree in HRM and Econometrics from Wayne State University, USA. He is currently working as the Director of COMSATS Institute of Information Technology Sahiwal Campus, Pakistan. He has an extensive teaching and research experience in various prestigious national institutions. He more than 60 research publications, conference papers, and case studies in the areas of human resource management, econometrics, and change management.

Ghulam Hussain

Ghulam Hussain is MS scholar at Department of Management Sciences, COMSATS Institute of Information Technology (CIIT), Lahore. He is currently working as a Lecturer at CIIT, Sahiwal Campus