

## Gender and Styles of Leadership in Higher Education

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### Abstract

The presence and absence of differences in leadership styles of men and women were investigated and reviewed in many types of research. The expectations regarding leadership styles of gender stereotyping are that women are inter-oriented, whereas men are task oriented. In contrast to this stereotype, leadership styles are different for genders according to research studies. The current paper attempts to identify the prevalent styles of leadership between both genders, as well as identifies the predominant style of leadership in women in higher educational institutes. The results indicated that the transformational leadership is the most dominant leadership style across the higher educational institutes. It could be useful for academic leaders and be intended at increasing the efficiency of universities. That is by enhancing the capabilities of academic leaders and helping them achieve a profitable performance and productivity.

**Keywords:** Women and Leadership; Leadership Styles; Effective Styles of Leadership; Higher Education Leadership; Feminine Style of Leadership

### 1. Background

Leadership studies have been focused on males in the past (Rhee & Sigler, 2015), styles of leadership (Minelgaite & Edvardsson, 2012; Rhee & Sigler, 2015), and authoritative effectiveness (Dunn *et al.*, 2014; Peker *et al.*, 2018; Rhee & Sigler, 2015). One of the barriers preventing women from occupying positions of authority is the fact that those roles still belong to male representatives of line hierarchical patterns and involve fundamental dynamics and testing duties. However, studies on gender and leadership mainly show that women are ineffective in leadership qualities.

There is barely any difference between both genders in terms of perceived leader productivity: males and females are viewed as equally skilled in management and authoritative roles (Paustian-Underdahl *et al.*, 2014). Edvardsson (2012) supported that contrasts exist among male and female representatives in the Indian territory when considering administration and its related factors. However, it was found that women are better leaders in comparison to men (Minelgaite & Edvardsson, 2012). Gender can be perceived as a construct that empowers both men and women to behave in a determined

characteristic and assists them to understand various tasks to be carried out regardless of family and society. Women have reported encountering boundaries, and progression impediments because of their sexual orientation, such as discrimination, avoidance from general meetings, posturing, absence of mentoring, working environment provocation, and income imbalances (Diehl, 2014).

Whether women are employed in a large company or a higher educational institution, leaders offer a variety of attributes that might be useful. In the public's assessment, few characteristics are significantly more valuable than others. Examples of "significant" administration characteristics are trustworthiness, knowledge, and conclusiveness. (Kim & Horowitz, 2015). Ion and Folch (2009) contended that gender plays a critical perspective in authoritative research, and that gender differences have an impact on the qualities carried by the authoritative people or leaders in Kota Marudu Schools, Malaysia (Ion & Folch, 2009). White (2011) identified that women are largely excluded from managerial roles and leadership positions in universities, which partially reflects the perceptions on how men and women are perceived in senior positions in Australian Universities (Tessens *et al.*, 2011).

Powerful administrative leadership styles depends on a variety of variables such as their conduct as well as establishing a positive environment within the organization (Sirisookslip *et al.*, 2015). Females scored higher on the subscales of appeal, idealized, impact, inspiration, scholarly incitements, and individualized thought (Pihie *et al.*, 2011). Yet, the presence of women in senior administrative roles is remarkably low (Welch *et al.*, 2012).

## **2. Method**

This exploratory qualitative study adopts a literature review approach that involves extensive pursuit to track down significant reviews. Additionally, it utilizes rules to incorporate or exclude studies. A literature review examines all the information on a given point and distinguishes the informant's premise and provides explicit solutions to explicit queries. It helps in combining knowledge from various studies (Wohlin, 2014). The study is conducted by reviewing manual search of the authors who discussed and found out certain styles of leaderships used by both genders in various administration sectors.

### **2.1 Data Collection and Data Analysis**

Data is extracted from all potentially relevant papers in accordance with the research questions. The selected 21 papers were published in 2003 until 2022. These papers are either empirical or literature studies.

1. The data collected for the purpose of the study was from past studies, and the data was tabulated using the following criteria: Relevance to the main topic area.
2. The source and its reference of either journal article or thesis.
3. Demographics of the publication along with the author's credentials.
4. Summary or findings of the study including the research questions.

The collected data is segregated into 'Transactional and Transformational leadership style' which helped in deriving conclusions.

## 2.2 Inclusion Criteria

- i. Literature review studies pertaining to leadership styles with characterized research questions, search measures, data extraction and interpretation. Regardless of gender , time period, or system of education level.
- ii. Articles and studies related to gender and styles of leadership along with predominant styles implemented in the senior management positions.

## 2.3 Exclusion Criteria

- i. Casual writing reviews (no characterized research questions; no characterized search measure; no characterized information extraction measure).
- ii. Copy report of such comparable reports (when a few survey reports existed in various journals).

The process of evaluating research papers considered for the article are collected, sorted and summarized. Later, the research includes the studies' findings in a significant manner that recommends a new contribution to the current study. The following sections of the paper outline the prevalent leadership styles between genders and the predominant style of leadership which is acclaimed as an effective style of leadership across studies through the literature review. Lastly, the paper concludes with discussions and conclusions drawn.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

'Think leader think male' has been consistent with the ratings provided by the studies. Despite the fact that women are generally more effective, most people still prefer to work under men (Rhee & Sigler, 2015). The importance of women's participation and demonstration of authority is no longer a gender issue as studies have suggested that feminine model of leadership is commonly regarded and accepted in terms of the qualities and skills attributed to a leader such as confidence, well organized, and mentoring others (Dunn *et al.*, 2014).

Leadership is one of the most vital aspects for organizational tasks, which may be assessed and created involving the rule of continued improvement in quality confirmation. Additionally, leadership styles expand on a hierarchical achievement, however their equilibrium remains in the requests of the circumstance being handled. The subject of authority is investigated with specific consideration given to Leadership style ideal models relevant to the topic, such as transactional and transformational styles, where 'transactional leadership' is found to be vital for the productivity and smooth operation of higher education institutions. The empirical outcomes from several articles and studies support the contention that transformational leadership is vital in higher education for organizational development and flourishing. This has been supported by the study conducted by Dear (2016) which showed that women are found to have transformational style of Leadership and are encouraged to be more masculine, which is mostly adopted by women rather than men (Dear, 2016).

A study conducted by D'Souza and Akhtar Kang (2021) has given significant pieces of information about leadership that positively affects the effectiveness of any organization. Nevertheless, the transactional style might not work when the situation requires a significant change in direction, or conditions demand inventive problem-solving. The transformational style of leadership is

occasionally required and will be more productive overall (D'Souza, A., & Kang, n.d.). The majority of women felt compelled to keep institutional guidelines characterized by masculinized standards, and in order to be effective in their leadership style they compromised on feminist standards (Lau Chin, 2011). This was supported by Michalinos Zembylas and Sotiroula Iasonos in their study on 'Leadership styles and multicultural education approaches' which revealed that half of the administrators who partook in this study implemented a combination of conservative multiculturalism and transactional leadership style (Zembylas & Sotiroula, 2010).

This article has covered the frequently used styles of leadership in various educational organizations along with gender oriented styles. Furthermore, the analysis reflects that the most effective forms of leadership styles are inclusive of honesty, empathy, democratic and fostering methods being implemented in execution of styles. Additionally, the review answers the research questions by distinguishing the prevailing leadership styles between men and women generally as well as identifying a predominant style of leadership of women in higher education, which is an evident that women leaders were more transformational than their male counterparts with regard to their administration styles.

The required qualities are found to be more feminine which are supported by the studies throughout the higher education institutes. The female managers have largely implemented 'Transformational leadership' which is predominately followed by men both theriotically and practically. The perceived qualities of effective leadership have been mostly voted out for Transformational Leadership. However , it was less recognised as a feminine form of leadership and was attributed to men. Transformational leadership is the result of past experience to future strategy through innovative thoughts, perspectives and intellect. Transformational leadership refers to the most common way of developing commitment to the organization's goals and motivating subordinates to attain them, enhancing employees' abilities that can improve their previous performances.

#### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations:**

Some women achieve leadership positions despite the barriers to their advancements, but these barriers nonetheless shape their leadership experiences and development. The literature review discusses about a confusing range of ideas regarding the styles of managers in Higher Education, with a few distinctions between male and female leaders. It is interesting to notice from the findings that male and female leaders displayed female styles of leadership which is transformational style with an insignificant variation. Women are more persuaded than men that a successful administrator is man. An undeniable degree of understanding among male and female insights was noted concerning the degree of instrumental qualities which successful administrators ought to have. Curiously, both genders supervisors would in general utilize the pronoun "he" while depicting a successful leader. It appears that women continue to accept that successful leaders tend to have a manly leadership style. The study is limited to democratic styles of leadership and their effect on their subordinates along with the impact and effectiveness of different styles of leadership. to encourage and grow the number of women in senior management positions, research regarding most suitable leadership styles must be conducted by re-characterizing some administration jobs normally connected with feminine attributes. In spite of the fact that there were a few disparities between results across the studies, the findings were largely comparative in particular, female leaders were evaluated equally to their counterparts.

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