

Transformational Leadership: A Study of Gender Differences in Private Universities

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The study of transformational leadership has received much interest from researchers during the last three decades. The purpose of this study was to investigate the gender differences in transformational leaders' behaviors. Transformational leadership was measured by utilizing Bass and Avolio's (1990) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. A questionnaire was administered to a sample of 28 leaders and 104 followers from private universities in Jordan. The final results indicated that there was a significant difference between female and male leaders' behaviors, where male leaders scored higher on intellectual stimulation. No significant differences were shown between male and female transformational leaders regarding idealized influence, inspirational motivation, or individual consideration. Although, the results indicated that there was significant difference between female and male transformational leaders on intellectual stimulation, the results did not support gender differences in the overall transformational leaders' behaviors.

Keywords: Management, Transformational Leadership, Gender.

1. Introduction

In the last three decades, the concept of transformational leadership has drawn a considerable attention from management researchers and specialists. This concept has been initiated by Burns (1978) and developed by Bass (1985) to include certain behaviors of a transformational leader and being role models in front of their followers which will result in building trust with followers and achieving value congruence between leaders and followers. Transformational leaders motivate their followers by communicating an inspiring vision, often through the use of symbols and emotional appeals (Ayman and Karabik, 2009).

In spite of the increase in percentage of female leaders in the recent years, the majority are still of male leaders. Although women participate markedly in the manpower, they are underrepresented in the same proportion in managerial jobs. This study points out the nature of transformational leadership concept and investigates the gender differences among transformational leaders in the private universities in Jordan.

2. Literature Review

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership concept was defined by Bass (1990) as exceptional leadership performance that exists when leaders broaden and elevate the interests

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of their followers, when they generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group, and when those leaders stir their followers to look beyond their self-interest for the group benefit. Rouché et al (1989) defined transformational leadership as the ability of a leader to influence others values, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors in order to achieve the mission and goals of the organization. Leaders make cultures and their fundamental role is affecting others. In other words, transformational leaders try to make changes that increase organizational efficiency and performance (Jandaghi et al, 2009).

Transformational leaders have charisma, inspiration and intellectual stimulation, inspiration and intellectual stimulation (Conger, 1999). Charisma generates the pride, faith and respect that leaders encourage their workers to have in themselves, their leaders and their technological organization, while inspiration is the ability to motivate followers through communication of high-technological expectations (García-Morales, Matias-Reche and Hurtado-Torres, 2008). Intellectual stimulation refers to the leaders' behavior that leads to promoting employees' intelligence, knowledge and learning so that they can be innovative.

Transformational leader raises aspiration and shifts people and organizational systems into new, high-performance patterns. The presence of transformational leadership is reflected in followers who are enthusiastic about the leader and her or his ideas (Schermerhorn, 2008). Furthermore, transformational leaders inspire their followers to think more than their own aims and interests and to focus on greater team, organizational, national, and also global objectives (Jandaghi et al, 2009).

In this content, the researcher should differentiate between two concepts: transactional leadership and transformational leadership. In fact transactional leadership is a process in which the relationship leader-follower is reduced to simple exchange of a certain quantity of work for an adequate price. Contrary to this, transformational leadership is far more complex process, the realization of which requires more visionary and more inspiring figures (Bowditch and Buono, 1990).

Transactional behaviors involve structuring performance environment to assist subordinates in achieving organizational objectives and receiving rewards, while transformational behaviors focus on creating changes in followers' values, self-perceptions, and psychological needs (Fein et al, 2010). Generally speaking, studies conducted on transactional and transformational leadership have added important value into the nature of leadership effectiveness.

Different empirical studies have been conducted to support the effects or transformational leaders' behaviors. A previous study showed that transformational leadership is positively related to employee satisfaction and to job performance (Bass, 1995). Ozaralli (2003) found that transformational leadership contributes to the prediction of subordinates' self-reported empowerment. Transformational leadership enhances organizational citizenship behaviors (Koh et al, 1995) and employees' commitment (Barling et al, 1996). In addition, transformational leadership mediates the relationship between leaders' emotional intelligence and group cohesiveness (Wang and Huang, 2009).

Dimensions of Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership represents the most active/effective form of leadership, a form in which leaders are closely engaged with followers, motivating them to perform beyond their transactional agreements (Panagopoulous and Dimitriadis,

2009). In general, there are four types of leaders' behaviors constitute the dimensions of transformational leadership:

- 1- Idealized Influence: Another term used to describe this form of leadership is charisma. Charismatic leaders project their self-confidence into others (Sarror and Santora, 2001). Idealized influence constitutes the charismatic factor of transformational leadership in which leaders become role models for ethical behavior by their followers (Avolio and Bass, 2002). As a result of the leaders' behaviors, followers are expected to have faith and trust in them and in their actions and decisions.
- 2- Individualized Consideration: Individualized consideration refers to the transformational leadership behaviors of dealing with followers as important contributors to the organization. Leaders, according to this behavior show consideration for followers' needs and requirements. Transformational leaders help their subordinates in fulfilling their potential talents and increasing their responsibilities in the organization (Jandaghi, 2009).
- 3- Intellectual Stimulation: Transformational leaders stimulate their followers to be innovative and creative by questioning assumptions, reframing problems, and diagnosing old problems in new ways. (Avolio and Bass, 2002). Leaders provide learning and training for their followers and develop innovative and creative climate in organization. Leaders who intellectually stimulate subordinates encourage creativity and accept challenges as part of their job; they keep their cool, working out ways of dealing with problems in a rational manner (Sarros and Santora, 2001).
- 4- Inspirational Motivation: This type of behavior describes leaders who motivate followers and encourage them to good behaviors inspirationally. Raising the consciousness of followers about the organization's mission and vision, and encouraging others in understanding and committing to the vision is a key facet of the transformational leadership style of inspirational motivation (Sarros and Santora, 2001). Inspirational motivation creates a clear picture of the future that is both optimistic and attainable. Leaders set high expectations, use symbolism to focus efforts, and communicate a vision to followers in a simple language, and then followers react by willing to increase their efforts to attain the vision (Coad and Berry, 1998).

Transformational Leadership and Gender

Gender roles consist of perceptions about the psychological attributes that constitutes the characteristics of each sex, which is called gender stereotype. Increased equivalence in the managerial roles played by women and men overtime may have been sufficient to bring about stereotype change (Powell, Butterfield and Batrol 2008).

There are many theories discussing and analyzing feminine issues. Lorber (2001) stated that feminist theories can be categorized into three frameworks:

- 1- Gender Reform Feminism: Gender reform feminism asserts that gender differences are not based on biological reasons, and both male and female has similar in their common humanity. According to this framework, sex-role socialization produces individual differences in the characteristics of men and women, which have rendered women less skilled than men to compete in the business context. Hence, if women developed appropriate traits and skills, they could be in a better situation to compete with men (Kark, 2004).

- 2- Gender Resistance Feminism: This type of feminism emerged because of women's dissatisfaction with their situation. Feminists emphasize the importance of including women's voices and experiences in the production of knowledge and culture.
- 3- Gender Rebellion Feminism: Gender rebellion feminists suggest that rather than focusing on the female advantage, they should be challenging the gender order directly by undermining the boundaries between male and female (Kark, 2004).

Furthermore, all gender perspectives should be linked to culture because cultural issues affect how community understand and interpret the gender role in leadership theories. In Jordan, as well as in the other Arab countries, the proportion of women in managerial positions has increased during the last ten years. This may be due to the increasing demand for education in female students, and the cultural change to realize the capabilities and experiences of women. However, women in top management positions in most large corporations are still rare.

3. Methodology

Participants and Procedure

The sample consisted of (36) leaders from four private universities in Jordan, who were approached to obtain their approval to participate to this study. Each leader was sent two types of questionnaires: one for self-rating and four to be filled-out by his/her subordinates. A total of (132) filled-out questionnaires were returned, of which (28) were filled-out by leaders, and (104) by their subordinates, forming a rate of (73.3%) of total distributed questionnaires.

Measuring Instruments

To assess transformation leadership behavior, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) of Bass and Avolio's (1990) was utilized. This measure has been utilized broadly by researchers and practitioners all over the world.

Respondents assessed of Likert scale five-point response scales, where 1= not at all, 2= once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = fairly often, and 5 = always. Prior to performing data analysis, data were screened for normal distribution and skewness results for all transformational leadership dimensions were below(1), which indicated that data was normally distributed. Cronbach's alphas ranged as follows in the four dimensions: idealized influence (.631); individualized consideration (.612); intellectual stimulation (.650); and inspirational motivation (.843), while alpha for all dimensions were (.704). These values can be considered satisfactory and confirm the reliability of the instrument.

4. Findings

A total of (132) self and subordinate ratings were received, of which (43.9%) were female and (56.1%) were male. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the transformational leadership dimensions were computed and reported in Table 1 below:

Table I
Descriptive Statistics and Intercorrelations
of Transformational Leadership Dimensions

Dimensions	Mean	Standard Deviation	1	2	3	4
1. Idealized Influence	3.982	.652				
2. Individualized Consideration	4.063	.528	.199* .022			
3. Intellectual Stimulation	4.056	.574	.438** .000	.249** .004		
4. Inspirational Motivation	3.790	.711	.050 .568	.081 .358	.062 .480	
5. All Dimensions	3.973	.377	.680** .000	.567** .000	.681** .000	.545** .000

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The table showed that the lowest mean was for inspirational motivation (3.790) with a standard deviation (.711) while the highest mean was for individualized consideration (4.063) with a standard deviation (.528). At the same time the mean for all dimensions was (3.973) with a standard deviation (.377).

Male transformational leaders` behaviors were evaluated more effective than female counterparts in all dimensions except for individualized consideration where female transformational leaders` behaviors were evaluated with a slightly higher score. Table II showed the means, standard deviations, and mean differences of female and male ratings regarding all the four dimensions.

Table II
Comparison of Female and Male Means and
Standard Deviations of Ratings

Dimensions	Gender	Means	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference
Idealized Influence	Female	3.925	.658	-.102
	Male	4.027	.611	
Individualized Consideration	Female	4.086	.571	.041
	Male	4.045	.495	
Intellectual Stimulation	Female	3.925	.628	-.233
	Male	4.158	.509	
Inspirational Motivation	Female	3.730	.647	-.108
	Male	3.838	.759	
All Dimensions	Female	3.917	.401	-.100
	Male	4.017	.353	

Comparison of means through independent samples t-test was utilized to examine whether there were significant differences between female and male transformational leaders` behaviors depending on both self and subordinate ratings. Table III showed the results of independent samples t-test:

Table III
Results of Independent Samples t-test

Dimensions		Levene`s Test for Equality of Variances		t test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
Idealized Influence assumed	Equal Variances	3.389	.068	-.918	130	.360
Individualized Consideration assumed	Equal Variances	2.599	.109	.443	130	.658
Intellectual Stimulation assumed	Equal Variances	2.980	.087	-2.348	130	.020
Inspirational Motivation assumed	Equal Variances	1.841	.177	-.864	130	.389
All Dimensions assumed	Equal Variances	1.628	.204	-1.525	130	.130

Table III indicated that there was a significant difference between female and male transactional leaders` behaviors only on intellectual simulation, where male leaders scored higher on that dimension. No significant differences were shown between male and female transformational leaders regarding the other dimensions: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, or individual consideration.

As shown in Table III, the independent sample t-test by gender revealed that the only significant difference in ratings was in the intellectual simulation. Levene`s test for equality of variances returns a F value of (2.980) and significance of (.087) which indicated that the implicit null hypothesis of homogeneity of variances has been met. As such, the t test for intellectual simulation (-2.348) and significance of (.020) opposite to variances are assumed should be considered.

Although, the study indicated that there was significant difference between female and male transformational leaders` behaviors on intellectual simulation, the results did not support gender differences in the overall transformational leaders` behaviors, since the calculated t value for all dimensions (-1.525) which was smaller than the tabulated t value, and at the same time the t significance value (.130) which was bigger than the significance level of the study (.05).

5. Summary and Conclusions

The current study examined the gender differences in transformational leaders` behaviors from the standpoint of both self and subordinates` ratings. Some researchers studied the transitional–transformational leadership styles in Jordan, and founded that Jordanian managers practiced both leadership behaviors (Abu-Tayeh and Al- Khawaldeh, 2004; Awamleh and Al-Dmour, 2005). Other research in Jordan (Sabri, 2007) concluded that there was no clear preference for transactional or transformational style as both were being used. But when compared with IATA

managers Jordanian managers showed more inclination towards transactional than transformational behaviors

The findings were consistent with prior research (Manning, 2002) which found that no significant differences in transformational leadership between male and female managers at equivalent levels, whether leadership was self-rated or observer-rated. Some other results (Eagly et al, 2003) reported that female leaders were rated by followers as being more transformational leaders than male leaders. Specifically, female managers displayed three components of transformational leadership more frequently than men: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration.

The findings of Rohmann and Rowold (2009) revealed gender differences concerning leadership styles. The researcher added that female managers were described with behaviors such as; they manifested more behavior that instilled pride and respect for them, presented a more trustworthy role model for their followers, were stronger at communicating a vision and showed more enthusiasm.

The study was conducted on Jordanian private universities, thus, continued research is needed to generalize findings to include governmental public universities in Jordan. Researchers are recommended to investigate the potential influence of other variables, such as organizational culture, personality traits, and teamwork on transformational leaders` behaviors.

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