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The Relationships Among Gender, Work Experience, and Leadership Experience in Transformational Leadership

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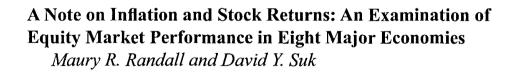
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THE RELATIONSHIPS AMONG GENDER, WORK EXPERIENCE, AND LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE IN TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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INTRODUCTION

Transformational leadership is an organizational leadership theory centered around "the ability to inspire and motivate followers to achieve results greater than originally planned and for internal reward" (Gibson, Ivancevich, & Donnelly, 2000). The investigation into transformational leadership began in the mid-1980s with a number of influential publications by Bass (1985), Bennis and Nanus (1985), Kouzes and Posner (1987) and Tichy and Devanna (1986). In the 1980s, the study of transformational leadership was focused on case-based research (Conger, 1999). By the late 1990s, a substantial body of empirical investigations on transformational leadership had been conducted (Conger, 1999).

A transformational leader "articulates a vision, uses lateral or nontraditional thinking, encourages individual development, gives regular feedback, uses participative decision-making and promotes a cooperative and trusting work environment" (Carless, 1998: 888). This leadership style is often "depicted as a feminine leadership style because of its emphasis on the manager's intellectual stimulation of, and the individual consideration given to employees" (van Engen, van der Leeden & Willemsen, 2001: 582). The handling of employees in this manner seems to be more passive and relationship oriented. Such management attributes seem to "resemble those stereotypically attributed to women." (van Engen et al., 2001). Numerous authors have speculated on possible gender differences in transformational leadership (Avolio & Bass, 1988; Bycio, Hackett, & Allen, 1995; Carless, 1998). However, some other results could be conflicting (Eagly and Johnson, 1990). The purpose of this study is to examine the web of relationships among gender, working experience, supervisor experience, and transformational leadership.

THEORETICAL RATIONALE FOR EXAMINING GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LEADERSHIP STYLE

Individuals behave according to societal gender-role expectations (Eagly, 1987). Under the gender-role spillover concept (Eagly & Johnson, 1990), gender-based expectations for behavior would carry over into the workplace (Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Gutek & Morasch, 1982). "The spillover concept suggests that gender roles may contaminate organizational roles to some extent and cause participants to have different expectations for female and male managers" (Eagly & Johnson, 1990: 235).

On the other hand, Kanter (1977) and Eagly, Karau & Makhijani (1995) disagreed on gender differences in leadership style. Kanter (1977) argued that organizational roles should override gender roles under a structural interpretation of organizational behavior. Male and female managers who occupied the same organizational role, went through the same socialization process into their leadership roles, and were selected under the same set of organizational criteria, should manifest no significant differences in leadership style (Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Eagly et al. (1995) further argued that if women and men were at the same hierarchy level within the organizations they should have comparable positions and their defining roles would be the same.

With a gender-centered approach toward the transformational theory, studies have tried to prove that individual attributes vary by gender (Carless, 1998). This approach proposed that charisma, caring, and nurturance characterized a feminine leadership style, while a male leadership style was associated with instrumental, dominating, and task-oriented qualities (Carless, 1998; Klenke, 1996; van Engen et al., 2001). Rosener (1990) stated that the feminine leadership style has developed beyond the command-and-control style of managing that may have influenced the first female leaders. Today, female leaders have drifted away from styles and habits that have traditionally proven effective for men. Females demonstrate gender differences in their leadership styles by making use of skills and abilities they have developed through interacting and sharing with other females. Female leaders are using their unique socialization attributes as a means of leading. Women are succeeding with the aid of their feminine characteristics, the same characteristics that were considered to be inappropriate for leaders. The success of women leaders has proven that their nontraditional style functions well in many different organizational environments. Rosener (1990) specifically stated that women encourage participation, share power and information, enhance other participants' self-worth and get others excited about their works. Yoder (2001) further supported that the transformational leadership style and characteristics establish a congenial atmosphere that allows women to actualize their leadership effectiveness.

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) determined that women exceeded men in three transformational attributes: idealized influence, inspiration motivation, and individualized consideration. Their findings suggested that female managers are more able than male managers to:

1. display attributes that motivated their subordinates to feel respect and pride;
2. show enthusiasm about future goals;

3. develop and mentor subordinates according to individual needs.

A survey in 2000, sponsored by the International Women's Forum, demonstrated that men and women differ in how they describe their leadership performance and how they influence those with whom they work. Men were found to describe themselves in terms corresponding with the transactional leadership style; they utilized the power that came from their positions and formal authority. In contrast, women would use characteristics that were more in line with the transformational leadership style; they were able to influence their subordinates to transform their own self-interest into the group interest, and their power came from personal characteristics such as charisma, interpersonal skills, hard work, or personal contacts rather than organizational status (Rosener, 1999).

Research on gender differences in transformational leadership showed divergent findings. Carless (1998), Komives (1991a, 1991b) and Maher (1997) found no difference between male and female in transformational leadership, whereas Doherty (1997) and Druskat (1994) reported significant differences in the expected gender stereotypic direction. Bass, Avolio and Atwater (1996) noted inconsistent findings for gender differences in transformational leadership in three studies with different samples of managers.

HYPOTHESIS

In summary, the investigators suggest that transformational leadership theory is a feminine leadership style. Therefore, females score higher in transformational leadership and its indicators than males. The investigators also agree that working and supervising experiences will enhance the transformational leadership skills. Thus,

Hypothesis 1: Females score higher than males in transformational leadership.
Hypothesis 2: People with working experience score higher than people without working experience in transformational leadership.
Hypothesis 3: People with supervising experience score higher than people without supervising experience in transformational leadership.

METHODS

Procedures and measures

Stratified random sampling and the Salant & Dillman (1994) survey methodology were adopted for data collection. The Transformational Leadership Scale (Hellriegel & Slocum 2004) was used as the instrument to measure the variables. Part I of the survey instrument consisted of twenty-four questions related to transformational leadership. It was designed and scaled to elicit responses on the six transformational leadership indicators:

1. Management of attention – Paying special "attention to outcomes" through a clear vision conveyed to coworkers (Gaillour, 2002). This idea stresses the importance of detail to the successful leader.
2. Management of meaning – This concept alludes to an ability to "take the abstract and convey what it means

experientially" (Gaillour, 2002). Defining meanings will require the leader to communicate effectively with followers.
3. Management of trust – How high is your trust rating among employees and colleagues? Followers will base their decisions on the leader's track record such as commitments and clear business stances. A good leader must gain the trust and respect of his/her followers to be successful (Hellriegel, & Slocum 2004).
4. Management of self – Related to "general attitudes toward yourself" and regard for the well being of others. Specifically, the ability to place positive value on how the leader and coworkers feel about themselves (Hellriegel & Slocum 2004).
5. Management of risk – This type of manager would assume risks, but only after assessing alternatives and consequences from several angles. A transformational leader would certainly "not spend excessive time or energy on plans to 'protect' themselves against failure". Actions such as this are negative in nature, and would waste the time of the transformational leader (Hellriegel & Slocum 2004).
6. Management of feelings – The placing of importance on making coworkers feel more "competent" about their performances, and making their subsequent works more "meaningful." This skill would have a great impact on morale and efficiency (Hellriegel & Slocum 2004).

Each indicator consisted of 4 questions and was based on a 5-point Likert-type scale with the following options: "5" – to a very great extent; "4" – to a considerable extent "3" – to a moderate extent; "2" – to a slight extent; and "1" – to little or no extent. Part II of the survey instrument consisted of participants' demographic characteristics such as gender, age, race, and education, etc. The pilot instrument was tested on 91 participants from Mid-Atlantic Area, consisting of 30 males and 59 females, mainly graduate students (56%), white (85.7%), and between the ages of 18-24 (56%). The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was 0.91 and it was concluded that the Transformational Leadership Scale was internally consistent and reliable.

Analysis of data

Upon completion of the pilot study, the Salant & Dillman (1994) survey methodology was implemented. First, in late March a personalized advance-notice letter was sent to the faculty members who administer the data collection. About one week later, another personalized cover letter, a package of questionnaires and study information sheets were mailed to faculty members. Eight days after these mailings, follow-up postcards were sent to the faculty. The follow-up postcards expressed thanks to those who had responded and requested a response from those who had not yet responded. Three weeks after the first questionnaire package was mailed, another personalized cover letter, a package of questionnaires, and study information sheets were sent to those who had not responded. The entire procedure yielded a total of 992 valid and usable questionnaires.

Table 1 *Demographic Information to Participants*

Demographic	n	%
Gender		
Male	495	50.1
Female	493	49.9
Total	988	100.0
Missing	4	
Race		
Caucasian	839	86.9
Other	126	13.1
Total	965	100.0
Missing	27	
College		
College of Business	576	58.1
College of Education and Human Service	416	41.9
Total	992	100.0
Full-Time Working Experience		
No Full-time working experience	434	43.8
1-5 years Full-time working experience	372	37.5
More than 5 years Full time working experience	186	18.8
Total	992	100.0
Supervising Experience		
Yes	334	33.7
No	658	66.3
Total	992	100.0

Table 2 *Descriptive Information of the Six Indicators of Transformational Leadership*

Indicators	Mean	SD
Management of Trust	17.07	1.80
Management of Self	17.02	2.02
Management of Attention	16.66	1.93
Management of Feelings	16.37	2.30
Management of Meaning	16.10	2.26
Management of Risk	15.03	2.38
Transformational Leadership Total	98.28	9.69

[a] N = 992.

Table 3 *Factorial (2X2X3) ANOVA of Transformational Leadership*

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p
Main Effects					
Gender	1009.30	1	1009.30	10.92	.00*
Supervising Experience	555.67	1	555.67	6.01	.01*
Working Experience	109.59	2	54.80	0.59	.55
2 Way Interactions					
Gender/Supervising Experience	33.73	1	33.73	0.37	.55
Gender/Working Experience	17.04	2	8.52	0.09	.91
Supervising Experience/Working Experience	418.88	2	209.44	2.27	.10
3 Way Interactions					
Gender/Supervising Experience/ Working Experience	169.34	2	84.67	.92	.40
Residual	86529.99	936	92.45		
Total	89087.14	947			

[a] N = 992.
*p <.05

The data were analyzed using three statistical techniques. An analysis of frequency distribution was used to describe the participants' demographic information and the indicators of transformational leadership. The Cronbach Coefficient Alpha test was used to establish reliability and internal consistency for the questionnaire. Factorial Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to identify significant relationships among gender, supervising experience, working experience, and transformational leadership.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Participants
Data were collected from undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the College of Business and College of Education and Human Services. A total of nine hundred ninety two (992) usable responses—which consisted of 495 males and 493 females students, mainly white (86.9%), and between the ages of 18-22 (51.6%)—were collected from a Mid-Atlantic University (See table 1). More than half of the participants (56.3%; n=541) with full-time working experience and over one-third of participants have supervising experience (34.5%; n=320) (See table 1). The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was 0.87, indicating that the Transformational Leadership Scale was internally consistent and reliable.

Transformational leadership
The descriptive information of the six transformational leadership indicators is presented in Table 2. The six indicator means ranged from 15.03 to 17.07 out of a possible score of 20 with standard deviations ranged from 1.80 to 2.38. Five out of six indicator means were higher than 16. This suggests that almost all participants responded with a "4—to a considerable extent," thus illustrating the importance of these indicators to participants. These results support the notion that participants focus on key issues and are able to prioritize those issues. On the other hand, the management of risk indicator had the lowest mean of 15.03, which suggested the participants are moderate risk takers and tend to take more calculated risks (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2004).

Factorial (2X2X3) ANOVA of transformational leadership
The Factorial (2X2X3) ANOVA was used to identify the differences among gender, supervising experience, working experience and transformational leadership (see table 3). Hypothesis 1 stated that females score higher than males in transformational leadership and Hypothesis 3 stated that people with supervising experience score higher than people without supervising experience in transformational leadership. Results indicate that there were significant differences in transformational leadership based on gender [F (948) = 10.92, p<.05; power = .91; R^2 = .012], and supervising experience [F (948) = 6.01, p<.05; power = .69; R^2 = .006] (see table 3), thus, Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 3 are supported. Females (M=99.19) received significantly higher score than males (M=97.34) in transformational leadership (see table 4). These findings are consistent with earlier studies (Bass et al., 1996; Druskat, 1994). In addition, participants with supervising experience (M=99.21) scored significantly higher than

participants without supervising experience (M=97.80) in transformational leadership (see table 5). Hypothesis 2 stated that people with working experience score higher than people without working experience in transformational leadership. However, results indicate that there was no significant difference in transformational leadership based on working experience [F (948) = 0.59, $p<.05$; power = .15; R^2 = .001], thus, Hypothesis 2 is rejected.

Factorial (2X2X3) ANOVA of transformational leadership indicators

Significant differences were found between males and females across five indicators: management of trust; management of self; management of attention; management of feelings; and management of meaning (see table 4). On the other hand, management of risk was the only indicator that showed no significant difference between males and females [F (948) = 0.21, $p<.05$] (see table 4).

Significant differences were found between participants with supervising experience and without supervising experience in three indicators: management of trust; management of attention; and management of risk (see table 5). On the other hand, management of self, management of feelings, and management of meaning revealed no significant difference between participants with supervising experience and those without supervising experience (see table 5). Moreover, there were no significant differences in the six transformational leadership indicators based on working experience.

Table 4 *Descriptive Information of the Six Indicators of Transformational Leadership between Male and Female* [a]

Indicators	Male		Female	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Transformational Leadership*	97.34	9.17	99.19	10.11
Management of Trust*	16.89	1.81	17.24	1.77
Management of Self*	16.83	1.96	17.21	2.07
Management of Attention*	16.49	1.88	16.82	1.98
Management of Feelings*	16.13	2.28	16.60	2.30
Management of Meaning*	15.75	2.26	16.46	2.20
Management of Risk	15.22	2.19	14.84	2.57

[a] N = 992.
*$p <.05$

Table 5 *Descriptive Information of the Six Indicators of Transformational Leadership between with supervising and without supervising experience* [a]

Indicators	Supervising		Non-Supervising	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Transformational Leadership*	99.21	9.08	97.80	9.97
Management of Trust*	17.28	1.62	16.95	1.87
Management of Self	17.17	1.88	16.94	2.09
Management of Attention*	16.84	1.91	16.56	1.94
Management of Feelings	16.45	2.16	16.32	2.37
Management of Meaning	16.14	2.23	16.07	2.28
Management of Risk*	15.38	2.17	14.85	2.47

[a] N = 992.
*$p <.05$

Management of trust
Females (M=17.24) received significantly higher scores than males (M=16.89) in the management of trust (see table 4). These findings supported the Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) research findings that female leaders motivate their followers to feel respect and pride. Moreover, participants with supervising experience (M=17.28) scored significantly higher than participants without supervising experience (M=16.95) in management of trust. On the other hand, there was no significant difference in transformational leadership based on working experience [F (948) = 0.59, $p<.05$].

Management of self
Females (M=17.21) received significantly higher scores than males (M=16.83) in the management of self (see table 4). Females sought to develop and mentor followers and attend to their individual needs more than men (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). However, there were no significant differences in transformational leadership based on working experience and supervising experience.

Management of attention
Females (M=16.82) received significantly higher scores than males (M=16.49) in the management of attention (see table 4). This finding is consistent with the literature; females are more focused on task accomplishment than males and show more optimism and excitement regarding future goals (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999). Participants with supervising experience (M=16.84) scored significantly higher than participants without supervising experience (M=16.56) in management of attention. However, there was no significant difference in transformational leadership based on working experience [F (982) = 0.14, $p<.05$].

Management of feelings
Females (M=16.60) received significantly higher scores than males (M=16.13) in the management of feelings (see table 4). This finding is consistent with findings by Gardiner and Tiggemann (1999), Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001), and Eagly and Johnson, (1990). Females are interpersonally oriented (Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999) and place more importance on interpersonal relations than males (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly & Johnson, 1990). Nonetheless, there were no significant differences in transformational leadership based on working experience and supervising experience.

Management of meaning and management of risk
Regarding the management of meaning, females (M=16.49) have a higher ability to convey messages and better overall communication skills than males (M=15.75) (see table 4). The findings of this study support prior research (Carless, 1998; Davidson & Burke, 2000; Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999; Helgesen, 1990; Panopoulos, 1998; Rosener, 1990; van Engen et al., 2001; Yammarino & Bass, 1990; Yammarino, Dubinsky, Comer & Jolson, 1997; Yoder, 2001). Compared to men, women are more inclined to collectively distribute credit for success, ask questions, offer feedback with tact by incorporating praise into criticism, and indirectly give others orders. Whereas men are prone to boastfulness, offering

bluntly critical feedback, withholding compliments, and asking fewer questions (Kinicki & Kreitner, 2003). However, there were no significant differences in transformational leadership based on working experience and supervising experience (see table 5). Participants with supervising experience (M=15.38) received significantly higher score than participants without supervising experience (M=14.85) in management of risk (see table 5). Conversely, there were no significant differences in management of risk based on gender and working experience.

CONCLUSION

Numerous researchers (Carless, 1998; Gardiner & Tiggemann, 1999; Helgesen, 1990; Yammarino et al., 1997) refer to transformational leadership as a specifically 'feminine' leadership style. The results of the factorial ANOVA showed that differences in leadership style existed between males and females. Females rated themselves significantly higher than males in the transformational leadership style. Under close inspection, females are more interpersonally oriented than males. For instance, females have better communication skills: they possess a superior ability to communicate ideas and get their message across to coworkers. Females attempt to develop and mentor followers more than men; they display high levels of trust and respect on the part of their subordinates and have a higher ability to instill positive attitude in coworkers. In addition, females are more task-oriented and have a clearer vision of goals and higher attention to outcomes than males. These finding are supported by the results of past studies (Bass et al., 1996; Doherty, 1997; Druskat, 1994; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

The effect size of the significant gender differences is very small (R^2 = .012). Some researchers have argued that there is no practical difference between female and male leaders (Carless, 1998; Yammarino et al., 1997). On the other hand, the investigators agree with other scholars (e.g. Martell, Lane & Emrich, 1996) that small but frequently recurring differences across numerous individuals and occasions could produce large consequences.

The investigators are aware of the limitations of this study and interpret the results with caution. Some readers may argue that participants in this study are students rather than leaders. Also, the adoption of the self-ratings method may elicit mere gender-stereotypic expectations. However, a high percentage of participants with full-time working experience (56.3%; n=541) and supervising experience (34.5%; n=320) might regulate some of the effects.

This study discovers a very interesting relationship in transformational leadership based on working experience and supervising experience. No significant differences in the transformational leadership skills were established based on working experience. There were no differences among someone without working experience, someone with one to four years working experience, and someone with more than four years working experience. Working experience is therefore not a factor that affects transformational leadership skills.

Interestingly, supervising experience was found to affect transformational leadership skills. Someone with supervising experience had better transformational leadership skills than someone without supervising experience. Leadership opportunity and leadership experience are therefore important for acquiring transformational leadership skills. In addition, leadership skills are obtained through leadership experience and not through working experience. This indicates the leadership opportunity is a key factor in nurturing leaders, whereas working experience is not. If we believe that leadership skills might be imparted through training, then we need to provide leadership opportunities to future leaders. In other words, we need to allow future leaders to lead.

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