

**PERCEIVED LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS, INFLUENCE
TACTICS AND ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH:
A CROSS-GENDER STUDY**

**Thesis submitted for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Social Identity Theory of leadership (Hogg, 2001) states that leadership is a process that is enacted in a group context, where leader characteristics as group members and leader's ability to speak to followers as group members, play a pivotal role in the effectiveness of a leader. Furthering this theory of leadership is the Social Identity Model of leadership by van Knippenberg and Hogg (2003) with an emphasis on the follower-centric perspective on leadership. The present study is an attempt to understand the process of leadership from the follower perceptions. The Goolsby Leadership Model (Quick, Macik-Frey, and Cooper, 2007) in addition places importance on characteristics of healthy leaders and healthy organizations. In an attempt to understand the role of leadership to organizational health, this study also assesses organizational health from the follower perceptions. Finally, effective leadership is determined by the ability to match the leadership style to a given context (The contingency Theory of Leadership by Fiedler and Chemers, 1974) and the congruence/incongruence between leader role and gender role (The Role Congruity Theory by Eagly and Karau, 2002). Drawing from these theoretical assumptions, the present study aims to understand leadership across varied organizational sectors that are assumed to be gender congenial to either males or to females.

On the backdrop of these theories and models of leadership effectiveness, the present study attempts to testify relationships among follower perceptions of leadership effectiveness, organizational health, downward influence tactics, and gender stereotypes of effective male and female leaders across varied organizational sectors.

OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate whether there is a significant difference in the effectiveness of male and female leaders.
2. To investigate whether there is a significant difference in the use of downward influence tactics of male and female leaders.

3. To investigate whether there is any significant difference between male and female employees, in their perception of leadership effectiveness, downward influence tactics, and organizational health.
4. To investigate whether there is any significant difference in the stereotypes of effective male and female leaders, by male and female employees, across different sectors, i.e. Corporate, Education, Developmental, and Law Enforcement Sector.
5. To find out whether there is a relationship between dimensions of perceived organizational health and parameters of perceived leadership effectiveness.
6. To find out whether there is a relationship between dimensions of perceived organizational health and leadership effectiveness dimensions.
7. To find out whether there is a relationship between parameters of perceived leadership effectiveness and perceived use of downward influence tactics.
8. To understand whether male and female leaders differ in their perceived use of influence tactics toward male and female employees.
9. To study whether the organizational context affects the perceptions of leadership effectiveness, organizational health and downward influence tactics.
10. To study whether the demographic variables of the leader (age, gender, years of work experience) have an effect on the employee's perception of leadership effectiveness and downward influence tactics.

1.8 HYPOTHESIS

1. There will be no significant difference in the perceived leadership effectiveness of male and female leaders.
2. There will be no significant difference in the perceived use of downward influence tactics of male and female leaders.
3. Gender of the employees will not significantly affect the perception of
 - a. Organizational Health
 - b. Leadership Effectiveness
 - c. Downward Influence Tactics.
4. There will be a significant effect of organizational sectors on
 - a. Perceived organizational health

- b. Perceived leadership effectiveness
 - c. Perceived use of downward influence tactics.
5. There will be no significant interaction effect of gender of the employee and organizational sectors on perception of
 - a. Organizational health
 - b. Leadership effectiveness
 - c. Downward influence tactics
 6. There will be no significant interaction effect of gender of the leader and organizational sectors on perception of
 - a. Organizational health
 - b. Leadership effectiveness
 - c. Downward influence tactics
 7. Age of the leader will have a significant effect on
 - a. Perceived leadership effectiveness
 - b. Perceived use of downward influence tactics
 8. Work experience of the leader will have a significant effect on
 - a. Perceived leadership effectiveness
 - b. Perceived use of downward influence tactics
 9. There will be no significant interaction effect of age and work experience of leaders, in perception of
 - a. Organizational health
 - b. Leadership effectiveness
 - c. Downward influence tactics
 10. There will be no significant difference between male and female leaders, in their perceived use of influence tactics on
 - a. Male employees
 - b. Female employee
 11. The high and low effective leaders will differ in their perceived use of downward influence tactics.
 12. There will be a significant and positive correlation between perception of leadership effectiveness and organizational health.

13. There will be no significant correlation between perception of organizational health and downward influence tactics.
14. There will be a significant correlation between perception of leadership effectiveness and downward influence tactics.
15. Leadership effectiveness will significantly predict dimensions of organizational health.
16. Downward influence tactics will significantly predict dimensions of leadership effectiveness.
17. Downward influence tactics will not significantly predict the perceived organizational health dimensions.
18. There will be a significant difference in the stereotypes held for male and female leaders.
19. Organizational sectors will have a significant effect on the stereotypes held for male and female leaders.
20. There will be a significant difference in the stereotypes held for male leaders by
 - a. Male employees
 - b. Female employees
21. There will be a significant difference in the stereotypes held for female leaders by
 - a. Male employees
 - b. Female employees.

METHODOLOGY

1. Sample

1.1 Sample Characteristics- Irrespective of age, gender, educational qualification, work experience and specialization, the sample requirement for the study was five employees from each organization. The criterion for the sample employees was that they should be reporting to the same leader. Employing the technique of 'ad hoc quota' non-probability sampling, five employees reporting to a common leader were selected as sample for the study.

Five employees each were selected from 80 organizations, thereby making the total sample size of 400 employees.

1.2 The Sample Organizations- The organizational sample for the study comprised of a total of 80 organizations. The organizational sample can be broadly classified into four sectors-

- (i) The Corporate Sector
- (ii) The Education Sector
- (iii) The Development Sector
- (iv) The Law Enforcement Sector

Since the focus of the study was to understand the gender congeniality of organizations, the sampling technique of ‘quota sampling’ was employed to select two organizational sectors (the corporate sector and the law enforcement sector) that are male-dominated, that is, having a greater occupancy of male employees as compared to their female counterparts; and two organizational sectors (the education sector and the development sector) that have an equal or greater occupancy of female employees as compared to their male counterparts. Under each sector, 20 organizations were selected as sample organizations for the study.

1.3 The Sample Respondents

A total sample of 400 employees, out of which 277 male employees and 123 female employees served as employee respondents of the study. A sector-wise break-up of male and female employees is shown below:

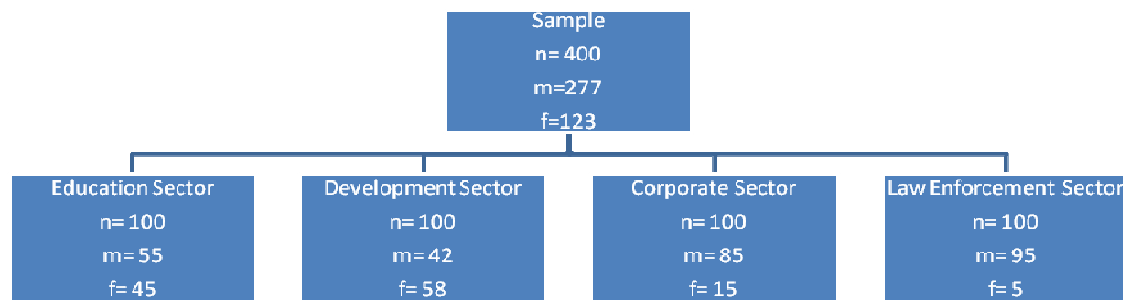


Figure: 1 Sector-wise break-up of male and female employees

2. Measures

The questionnaire comprises of five sections, presenting the selected tools to be used. The tools used for the study are standardized instruments that have been further modified to suit the purpose of the study.

2.1 Demographic Information: Data was procured on demographic characteristics of age, gender, educational qualification, occupational position and specialization, work experience (in years), number of years in current organization and current position, and gender and designation of the leader. Each respondent was assured of the confidentiality of the results.

2.2 Organizational Health Description Questionnaire (Haseen Taj, 2000). The tool measures three dimensions, namely (1). Task centered dimensions, (2). Maintenance needs dimensions, and (3). Growth & changefulness dimensions. The three task centered dimensions are (i). Goal focus, (ii). Communication adequacy and (iii). Optimal power equalization; three maintenance needs dimensions are (iv). Resource utilization (v). Cohesiveness and (vi). Morale; and the four growth and changefulness dimensions are (vii). Innovativeness (viii). Autonomy (ix). Adaptation (x). Problem solving adequacy. The questionnaire contains 40 statements, and responses are made on a 5-point scale ranging from Completely agree (5), Great extent (4), Some extent (3), Very little extent (2), to Disagree (1). The test-retest reliability coefficient of OHDQ is .73 and split-half reliability coefficient is .89. In order to make the respondent's task less cumbersome, few items have been eliminated from the original scale, and reduced to a total of 30 items in the OHDQ.

2.3 Leadership Effectiveness Scale (Haseen Taj, 2010). The scale provides a technique by which the group members are able to describe the effectiveness of the designated leader in formal organizations. The six major aspects of leadership effectiveness that are measured are: (i). Interpersonal Relations (ii). Intellectual Operations (iii). Behavioral and Emotional Stability (iv). Ethical and Moral Strength (v). Adequacy of Communications and (vi). Operation as a Citizen. With a total of 79 items, the scale contains both positive and negative items. The respondents are asked to indicate the behavior of their group leader against five points, ranging from Always (5), Often (4), Occasionally (3), Rarely (2), to Never (1). Reliability for the scale was established on a population of group members from different organizations such as educational and industrial organizations from the city of Bangalore. The test-retest reliability coefficient was .77, and split-half reliability for odd and even method was .78 and for the first half vs. second half method, it was .80.

2.4 Downward Influence Strategies (DIS) Scale (Sudipa Nag, Sonia Nongmaithem, & Nachiketa Tripathi, 2008). The scale comprises of 38 items measuring the downward influence strategies of rationality, assertiveness, ingratiation, use of sanctions- both positive and negative, showing expertise, personalized relations, and exchange of benefits. Reliability Coefficient obtained from sample under male boss ranges from .51 to .81 and under female bosses ranges from .54 to .82. In order to make the respondent's task less cumbersome, few items have been eliminated from the original scale, and reduced to a total of 33 items in the DIS Scale. Also, the scoring categories have been reduced from a 7-point scale to a 5-point scale, from Always (5), Usually (4), Sometimes (3), Seldom (2), to Never (1).

2.5 The Adjective Checklist: For the present study, in order to measure gender stereotypes existing in the workplace, items were selected from the BSRI. The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), as constructed by Sandra Ben (1974) contains 60 items in form of traits; 20 masculine, 20 Feminine, and 20 Neutral items. 9 masculine traits, 9 feminine traits, and 12 neutral traits were selected and a random list of 30 adjectives was prepared. Below the adjective checklist, two tables are drawn, one for adjectives to describe a typical male leader and another to describe a typical female leader. Respondents were required to select any five adjectives from the list of 30 adjectives, to describe a typical male leader and any five

adjectives to describe a typical female leader. Once selected, the adjectives were to be rank ordered in the table given, in terms of their appropriateness.

3. Procedure

Adopting the technique of stratified quota sampling, the population of the study was divided into four sectors- Corporate, Education, Development, and Law Enforcement. Using ‘ad hoc quota’ sampling technique of non-probability sampling, five employees reporting to a single leader, were selected as respondents of the study from each organization. Following are the sub-steps involved in carrying out the data collection from all the four sector organizations:

- i. An official letter seeking permission to carry out research and explaining the purpose of the research study was prepared.
- ii. A prior appointment was sought with the highest authority of the organizations, to hand over the official letter of permission and to explain the requirements of the study.
- iii. Once the consent was sought, a second meeting was fixed where the researcher met the respondents of the study and explained the purpose of the visit. Not revealing the nature of the study, the researcher handed over a copy of the questionnaire to each employee and gave general standardized instructions on how to complete each section of the questionnaire. Clearing any further doubts and queries, the researcher assured the confidentiality of the employee’s identity and responses to the questionnaire and encouraged on completing the questionnaire as honestly as possible. Providing duration of two days, the researcher left the employees to fill up the questionnaire at their leisure time.
- iv. On the assigned date and time, the researcher came to collect the questionnaires from the employees. The set of five questionnaires were thoroughly checked for any mistakes or for any items left un-attempted.

4. Statistical Analysis

The analysis comprises of descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, which included t-test, One-way ANOVA, Two-way ANOVA, Correlation, and Regression Analysis. The data was subjected to SPSS 13 Package for statistical analysis.

Independent t-test was performed to find out differences between male and female leaders, in their effectiveness to lead and use of downward influence tactics. One-way ANOVA was carried out for multiple comparisons means of organizational variables across the four organizational sectors. Two-way ANOVA was carried out to find out main effects of gender of leader, age of leader, work experience of leader (in years) on perceptions of organizational variables; and interaction effects of gender of the employee and gender of the leader, gender of the employee and organizational sector, and age and work experience of the leader.

Bivariate correlation was performed to determine relation between perceived leadership effectiveness and organizational health; perceived use of downward influence tactics and leadership effectiveness; and perceived use of downward influence tactics and organizational health. Regression analysis was performed to find out leadership effectiveness as predictors of organizational health dimensions; and downward influence tactics as predictors of dimensions of leadership effectiveness and organizational health.

The data was also subjected to Multiple Set Analysis, to find out variations in attributes of effective male leaders and effective female leaders across varied organizational sectors.

MAJOR FINDINGS

1. Organizations assumed to be gender congenial to males (i.e. law enforcement and corporate sector) have been conceived as true, as indicated by a dearth of female leaders and female employees of both the sectors in the study sample. However, organizations assumed to be gender congenial to females (i.e. education and development sector) finds an equal or greater number of males in leadership and subordinate positions. Therefore, we can say that Higher Educational Institutions indicate toward gender neutral and not toward female congenial organizations. And as of the development sector, it demonstrates the concept of ‘the glass escalator’, which indicates that men are rapidly advancing into female dominated workplaces.

2. The organizational context has emerged as significant predictor of organizational variables. The study findings indicate that organizational context has a profound effect on the perceptions of organizational health, leadership effectiveness, downward influence tactics and gender stereotypes of leaders.
3. Male and female leaders do not differ in terms of their perceived effectiveness. However, perceptions of leadership effectiveness are affected by organizational context, gender of the employee and age of the leader.
4. Leadership effectiveness has emerged as a significant predictor of dimensions of organizational health. Perceived leadership effectiveness is also found to be significantly correlated with leader's use of downward influence tactics and employees' perceptions of organizational health.
5. Gender of the leader as well as that of the employee, age of the leader and the organizational context have a significant effect on leader's perceived use of downward influence tactics. Rationality and ingratiation have emerged as strong predictors of perceived organizational health and leadership effectiveness dimensions. Use of sanctions-negative, has emerged as a negative predictor of perceived organizational health and leadership effectiveness.
6. High and low effective leaders are found to differ in their use of downward influence tactics. High effective leaders are perceived as using rational and soft tactics to a greater degree as compared to low effective leaders, who engage in a greater use of hard and direct tactics.
7. Organizational health is found to be significantly correlated with perceived leadership effectiveness and downward influence tactics. The perceptions of organizational health are affected by gender of the employee and the organizational sectors.
8. Effective leader, in general, and effective male leaders in particular, are predominantly perceived in masculine attributes. In attributions of both effective male and female leaders, the feminine attribute of 'understanding' has been perceived as a pre-requisite to leader's effectiveness.
8. There is a difference in the stereotypes attributed to effective male and female leaders. However, effective male leaders are uniformly and consistently perceived across organizational sectors, by both male and female employees. Differences are observed in

attributions toward effective female leaders, by male and female employees, and also across organizational sectors.

9. Age and work experience of the leaders, has emerged as a significant predictor of leadership effectiveness and downward influence tactics. Young leaders are perceived as more effective and engaging in more influence behaviors as compared to their older counterparts. Young leaders are also, uniformly and consistently perceived on the dimensions of leadership effectiveness and use of influence tactics across varied work experience groups.

CONCLUSION

The Organizational context is found to have a profound effect on organizational variables, though differences are not observed across 'gender congenial' workplaces. There is a rapid advancement of men in traditional female dominated occupations of social work. But the same cannot be said for women in traditionally male dominated occupations. Stereotypes for effective leaders are gradually becoming less masculine or feminine in nature. The trend indicates toward the development of an androgynous nature of leadership. Demographic details of the leader (such as age, gender, and work experience) have emerged as significant predictors of leadership effectiveness and influence behaviors. The leader's effectiveness is found to have a proactive effect on perceptions of organizational health. The organizations under law enforcement sector have emerged as healthy organizations, and the organizations in education sector are perceived at a lower end on dimensions of organizational health. However, it is necessary to understand that a healthy organization may or may not be effective in its functioning; and an effective organization may or may not be perceived as healthy.

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