GENDER AND LEADERSHIP

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Abstract: Achieving a shared goal has triggered humanity to establish groups, such as families and various social groups. Recent studies have indicated that humans highly appreciate the leadership potential in each other; consequently, whenever groups are established, the need for leadership develops naturally and instantly. A not long time ago, scientific discussions on leaders and leadership focused on men, with minimal focus on women. The unprecedented development in social, cultural, and political spheres has emphasized that being a successful leader does not depend exclusively on biological sex (male and female). Many studies have indicated a variation in the leadership stereotypes, whether embraced by men and women. It has been noticed that Gender has a strong influence over leadership practices and stereotypes. Thus, plenty of studies have been conducted by various scholars all over the globe. Such studies are supposed to provide clear explanations on a set of questions, such as: Are there intrinsic and variations in males and females approach whenever be leaders, and if yes, are such variations gender-related?

The studies have concluded several contradictory findings, in which several authors have concluded no differences between leadership stereotypes and Gender (e.g., Statham et al. 1987; Winther and Green 1987). In contrast, some researchers have concluded that there are significant variations in leadership styles that gender-dependent (e.g., Powell et al.1990; and Donnell and Hall 1980). Such variation could be explained partly because of biological changes and variations in an individual's behavior. It has been noticed that organizations with more women's representation at the highest administrative levels have enhanced their organization's financial and organizational excellence status. Finally, considering males and females competence, character, charisma, among other factors., instead of considering only the biological sex (male and female) most likely could provide deeper and accurate information for a decent understanding of men's and women's leadership styles.

Keywords: Leadership, Gender, Male, Female, Organizations

Brief Background

Over centuries, achieving a public goal has triggered humanity to establish groups, such as families and various social groups (Eklund et al., 2017). Recent studies have indicated that humans highly appreciate the leadership potential in each other. Consequently, whenever groups are established, the need for leadership develops naturally and instantly (Vugt & Cremer, 1999). Even though not all leadership cases in societies have shown success, people have innately owned a desire towards a leader-follower relation (Van Vugt et al., 2008). Leadership is then depicted as a vital element of human experience and development, and administration also controls them in various aspects. Also, leadership has been deemed a process of social influence. The individual or a person has such group-responsibility to others' support and assistance to accomplish a mutual interest (Gaytan et al. 2014; Zheng 2014).

In the past few decades, scientific Discussion on leaders and leadership stereotypes did not focus on both men and women evenly; however, most studies have mainly focused on men, with almost nothing Discussion regarding females and leadership. The unprecedented development in social, cultural, and political spheres has emphasized that being a successful leader does not depend on the biological sex exclusively; instead, it is the gender-dependent relationship (male and female).

The reports have shown that there are apparent variations and disparities in leadership stereotypes. Whether they embraced by men and women, they have given that Gender is such an inherent characteristic of an individual. They have substantially impacted people's thinking (on themselves and others) and how they behave in different situations. Thereby, understanding such a relationship between gender and leadership stereotypes is a timely and highly important subject in leadership.

Such studies are highly needed to provide up-to-date and scientific-sounds explanations on a crucial observation. that "even though women have become an increasingly large proportion of the work-force, however, they still do not hold a proportionate share of the top administrative positions."

These studies are supposed to provide clear explanations on a set of questions, such as; Are there intrinsic and a variation in male's and female's approaches as leaders? If yes, is such variations gender-related?

Considering males and females competence, character, charisma, among other factors, and if gender impacts on leadership styles instead of only considering the biological sex (male and female), most likely would provide deeper and accurate information better to understand men's and women's leadership styles. In this context, Gender considers as one of the most critical factors that significantly affect leadership styles. Thereby, such relationships need to be further studied and assessed because this topic has gained mindful and thoughtful considerations and debates, particularly in the 21st century.

Historical Perspective of Leadership and Gender Differences

The leadership and gender differences Discussion did not gain enough concerns and support during past centuries. Even though, leadership concept has appeared in several ancient literatures, particularly in some spiritual scripts (e.g., the Old Testament, New Testament, and Koran) (Eklund et al. 2017). The scholarly study of leadership and Gender had flourished for approximately 80 years, mainly when the social psychologist (Kurt Lewin) started studying cluster dynamics and noticed the differences among several leadership stereotypes, such as authoritarian, democratic. Laissez-faire leadership styles, after that, leadership and gender concept have been a topic of severe discussions among research avenues (Callahan et al.2016).

Leadership has been perceived as a research avenue and practical skill that covering the capability of an individual, group, or entity to either lead, influence, or guide other individuals, teams, or entire organizations.

Leadership involves several issues varying from inspiring, supervising, and collaborating with the assistants to implement a given task effectively and on time.

The corporates, either public, private, non-governmental organizations, NGOs…etc. are responsible for developing effective policies and strategies for a rich leadership environment. The progress towards achieving such an approach relies mainly on leaders' ability and capability in motivating and promoting their employees.

In general, the prevailing attitudes and perceptions regarding leadership may be categorized into three main leadership stereotypes; 1. Transformational: this stereotype is a bright, trust-based, and innovative stereotype, where the leader highly positive and gains the trust of the followers; 2. Transactional: this stereotype depends on either granting rewards for innovative and brilliant performance or punishment for poor performance; 3. Laissez-faire: the leader is careless and uninvolved in the organization's activities.

Understanding modern thinking on Gender and leadership is helpful to review the changes and developments that have taken place by scholars regarding leadership and Gender during the last decades over notably that the concept of leadership has grown and developed overtimes.

Initially, gender differences, unfortunately, were absent in the relevant theories, and the view of leadership was built assuming that leaders have unique and outstanding characteristics (leaders born, not made), and such traits or characteristics were inborn and person-inbuilt traits (Hollander & Offermann, 1990). Additionally, this view of leadership considers as "Great Man Theory of Leadership, traits theory." However, unfortunately, the gender differences aspect was not included, not a subject of great interest. As a result, women's ideas as leaders would have been an extraordinary idea during such period (the period of trait theory).

In 1940, the trait theory was replaced by an updated theory that aims to emphasize one leader's trait further and consider the working environment in which leaders are operating. Therefore, different working environments (settings) and tasks would need other leadership stereotypes.In this new concept, gender differences still did not seriously take into consideration. In 1974, gender differences were a valid subject for future researchers (Bass 1981). However, Stogdill's mammoth Handbook of Leadership did not completely mention the gender differences concept in his handbook.

Recently, many studies on gender differences and leadership were carried out in psychology by addressing the relationship between women's characteristics and job behaviors (Roger & Galligan 1980; Hennig and Jardim (1977). Besides, Callahan et al. (2016) defined leadership as the process of enhancement of behaviors (actions), cognitions (thoughts and beliefs), and motivations (reasons for actions and thoughts) to achieve goals that benefit individuals and groups. The contemporary definition has further emphasized, "what leader does" instead of "who is the leader" (Callahan et al., 2016).

Women Participation and Representation in Leadership Role

Traditionally, leadership opportunities have been most likely allocated for males, with few exceptions in females-based administrations such as unions and female educational-based institutions (Bass, 1981). Nowadays, many women have been engaging in leadership roles, and a substantial percentage of women at the highest senior level has increased notably. Recently, several proactive measures have been developed and introduced aiming to enhance women's participation and representation in leadership roles and positions (e.g., various legal measures). In April 2013, women on the board of trustees of publicly listed corporates in 27 states of the European Union EU represented around 16.6%, compared with 11.8% by 2010 (European Commission, 2012). Currently, all relevant stakeholders worldwide and particularly in the European Union countries, have been working collectively to break down the social barriers that hinder the full engagement of talented, skilled, and well-educated women in leadership roles. Politically, it has been reported that women represent 19.1% of parliamentary seats globally (Samantha, Walker, and Woehr, 2014).

Despite such measures used to enhance women's participation and representation in leadership roles, unfortunately, the prevailing stereotypes have not changed significantly. Any attempt to change the perception is difficult to accomplish due to firmly entrenched traditional norms such as leaders customarily been males. A significant number of women have been actively engaged in leadership roles at various levels. The complete integration of women into higher-level management roles in such a highly diverse work-force environment is one of the biggest challenges (Morrison & Von Glinow, 1990). Also, there is still an invisible barrier so-called "glass ceiling," that unfortunately hinders and prevents talented and well-skilled women from moving up in the organizational structure.

These stereotypes have been creating powerful pressure and hinder women's attaining and representation in leadership; consequently, women are still underrepresented in leadership positions regardless of sectors. Underutilization and of skilled, experienced, and well-educated women yield substantial losses of economic growth. It has been reported that corporates with a more women's representation at top-senior levels have enhanced substantially organizational, financial, and governance performance. "Leader and gender stereotypes put aspiring female leaders at a distinct disadvantage by forcing them to deal with the perceived incongruity between the leader role and their gender role." (Powell, pp. 132). The graph below shows gender gap in leadership in the 21st century by leading women.
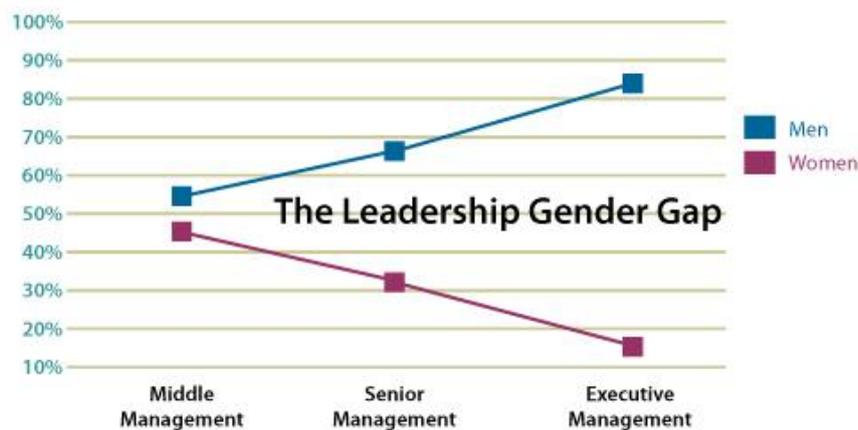
Source: "http://www.iu.qs.com/who-runs-our-education"

Gender Versus Sex

Several types of research have concluded that leadership styles vary from men to women. Such differences come from the distinctive biological characteristics of males and females. The classical school of thought depicted that men's leadership stereotype different from women's leadership stereotype.

Several academics have noticed that women own better characters, such as advanced intermediary skills, effective communication skills, and distinguished interpersonal skills, particularly in conflict resolution. These skills have given women an advantage over men in leadership. Further research also has concluded that women are much sympathetic than men regarding people's needs. Unlike men, women have shown better capability in developing and maintaining efficient relationships with assistants.

The entrenched perceptions towards women as weak members in societies have emphasized that, unlike men, women are weak in leadership (e.g. organizational or political leadership). However, the newly emerged perceptions such as self-identity and recognition of gender roles (regardless of biological sex) among other socio-economic factors have turned such a classical view to be a topic worthy of Discussion.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO): " 'Sex' "refers to the biological and physiological characteristics that define men and women." In contrast, Gender "refers to the social traits of men and women that vary from norms and relationships to roles that a given society considers appropriate for men and women." Furthermore, West and Zimmerman 1987 reported that Gender is not something being born with and must, but something being performed (Butler 1990).

Bem et al. (1972) and Spence et al. (1975) have defined sex as a biological characteristic that includes an anatomical, physiological, genetic, and hormonal variation in species. However, Gender is a multidimensional construct that refers to various roles, responsibilities, limitations, and individual experiences. Thus, Gender, however, is more complex than psychosocial impacts of biological sex (Korabik et al. 1999) and includes different sides such as gender schemas and stereotypes, gender-role identity, and gender-role traits, attitudes, and values (Bem et al. 1993).

Gender Differences in Leadership

Generally, and regardless of sex, both men and women have shown the capability of creating successful changes in their organizations. Furthermore, men and women also have a relatively strong capacity to guide their employees in accomplishing a mutual organizational objective. However, it has been noticed that gender influences leadership practices and stereotypes. Thus, plenty of studies have been conducted by various scholars all over the globe. These studies aim to understand further the correlation between Gender and different leadership stereotypes and how organizational performance is affected by Gender(Sultan & Noor, 2017).

The studies have concluded several contradictory findings, in which several authors have concluded no differences between leadership stereotypes and Gender (e.g., Statham et al. 1987; Winther and Green 1987). In contrast, some researchers have concluded that there are significant variations in leadership styles that gender-dependent (e.g., Powell et al.1990; and Donnell and Hall 1980). Such variation could be explained partly because of biological changes and variations in an individual's behavior (see table 1).

Table 1: Men and women's leadership stereotypes (Hadeel et al. 2014).

Men	Women
Transactional	Transformational
Autocratic	Participative
Business-oriented	People-oriented
Instruction-giving	Self-expressive

In general, Zheng (2014) has reported that women tend to adopt more transformational and democratic/participative leadership stereotypes than men (Sultan, Noor, & Nasirun, 2018). Furthermore, he has noticed that women's leadership stereotype is very useful in terms of organizational effectiveness, mainly adopting a rewards-based approach, motivation, expectation, and enthusiasm (Zheng 2014). Furthermore, many research types have indicated that they tend to some extent most likely to engage in laissez-faire leadership (Eagly et al.,

2003; Haslam et al., 2010; Hyde, 2013). McKinsey & Company (2007) have noticed that corporates' financial performance and organizational excellence have enhanced by increasing women's participation and representation at top senior-level leadership and management positions (Alfaiza, Abed, Sultan, & Riyadh, 2021; Sultan, Alfaiza, & Riyadh, 2021).

Eagly and Johnson 2003 have conducted meta-analysis-based research on how Gender affects leadership stereotypes. The authors have selected approximately 162 studies based on a set of criteria. The results have shown that there are two distinctive schools of thought. The classical one believes there are no differences between men and women leadership styles; a modern school of thought claims significant differences in gender and leadership stereotypes. In spite, Eagly and Johnson 2003 argue that both schools of thought need to be further revised and assessed.

Psychologist Janet Shibley Hyde discovered in her research The Gender Similarities Hypothesis (2015) that males and females are more similar to each other than different from childhood to adulthood on most psychological variables, which resulted in what she called a gender similarities hypothesis: she concludes that "the gender similarities hypothesis stands in stark contrast to the differences model, which holds that men and women, and boys and girls, are vastly different psychologically. The gender similarities hypothesis states, instead, that males and females are alike on most—but not all—psychological variables." (Hyde, pp, 589).

Her analysis on prior gender differences research was aimed at assessing the impact on many psychological traits and abilities gender can have. Those traits include cognitive abilities, verbal and nonverbal communication, moral reasoning, self-esteem, aggression, and leadership. She observed across the various studies and researches that gender differences had either no or very little impact on the psychological variables, which is consistent with the gender similarities hypothesis. The only exceptions in her analysis were "A few notable exceptions are some motor behaviors (e.g., throwing distance) and some aspects of sexuality, which show large gender differences. Aggression shows a gender difference that is moderate in magnitude." (Hyde, pp. 590).

Interestingly, Hyde found that gender differences seemed to be influenced by the context in which they were measured. In studies that were designed to eliminate gender norms, it was shown that the person's actions were heavily influenced by the assignment of gender roles and social context. For instance, in one experiment that the participants were informed that they would not be identified as a male or female, none conformed to the stereotypes about their gender. Furthermore, when given the chance to be aggressive, women were more aggressive and men were more passive, which was the opposite of the expected behaviors.

What she also observed was that children get influenced and suffer from the idea of gender differences such as exposing them to the widespread belief that boys are better than girls in mathematics. Her meta-analysis, on the other hand, shows that boys and girls perform equally well in mathematics until they reach high school, which is the point where boys perform better than girls. However, she and other psychologists believe that this does not reflect the biological composition of boys and girls as much as it does reflect social expectations caused by the idea of gender differences. This is supported by research she analyzed that showed that parents' expectations of their children's success in mathematics strongly influence children's self-confidence and performance.

Conclusion

Unlike sex, Gender "refers to the social traits of men and women that vary from norms and relationships to roles that a given society considers appropriate for men and women." It is not something being born with and must, but something being performed. Several research pieces have concluded that leadership styles vary from men to women due to the distinctive biological characteristics of males and females. A not long time ago, scientific discussions on leaders and leadership focused on men, with minimal focus on women. The unprecedented development in social, cultural, and political spheres has emphasized that being a successful leader does not depend exclusively on biological sex (male and female). Despite such measures used to enhance women's participation and representation in leadership roles, unfortunately, the prevailing stereotypes have not changed significantly. Any attempt to change the perception is difficult to accomplish due to firmly entrenched traditional norms such as leaders have customarily been males. These stereotypes still create intense pressure and hinder women's attaining and representation in leadership, and the glass ceiling concept even existed.

In general, the studies have found two distinctive schools of thought; the classical one believes there are no differences between men and women leadership styles. A modern school of thought claims there are significant differences in gender and leadership stereotypes. In spite, Eagly and Johnson 2003 argue that both schools of thought need to be further revised and assessed. It could be claimed that women prefer to adopt a more

transformational and democratic/ participative leadership style. However, they prefer to adopt autocratic and punishment-oriented leadership styles in many instances.

Finally, considering males' and females' competence, character, charisma, and other factors, instead of considering only the biological sex (male and female), they most likely could provide deeper and accurate information for a better understanding of men's and women's leadership styles.

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