

## **GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDE TOWARD LEADERSHIP STYLE OF MALE AND FEMALE MANAGERS**

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This study examined gender differences in leadership qualities by four subordinate-manager gender combinations. A total of 160 employees working in four international banks were studied under following work combinations: male employees working under male managers, male employees working under female managers, female employees working with female manager, and finally female employees working under female managers. Perception of subordinates about their managers' leadership was obtained on the modified Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). Satisfaction with managers was also assessed by a single-item 10-point scale. Subordinates rated their women managers as practicing more of transformational and lesser of passive-avoidant leadership skills than their men counterparts. Also they reported greater satisfaction for their women leaders. Men subordinates, however, rated their women leaders higher on both transformational and satisfaction scales. Scores on transformational scale were highly correlated with those for satisfaction. The results are discussed in the light of previous global findings as well as the socio-cultural environment in Pakistan.

The question whether there is any difference in the leadership styles of men and women has always been surrounded with much controversy. Widely speaking, gender of a leader has an important impact on the workers. Two opposing positions are generally taken in this debate. The position that men and women differ fundamentally in how they lead others is most prominent in popular manage-

ment literature (Helgesen, 1990; Rosener, 1990). The other group of researchers feels that although there may be gender differences in leadership styles, but many of the reported differences are due to the existence of sex role stereotypes. Traditional sex role stereotypes are those of the dominating, aggressive, achievement-oriented men and the passive, emotional, interpersonally oriented women (Petzel, Johnson, & Bresolin, 1990).

Gender differences, whether real or due to sex-role stereotypes, are consistently reported in literature. Generally men are considered to be competent, rational and assertive and women sensitive, charming and expressive. Similarly, the interpersonally oriented and task oriented styles

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closely match constructs like communion and agency (Bakan, 1996) or intimacy and independence (Tanen, 1990) that refer to respectively feminine and masculine modes of relating to others. The feminine modes are characterized by strivings for intimacy and union reflected in agreeable behaviors, whereas the masculine modes imply striving for mastery and dominance. Because the predominantly agentic qualities, that people generally believe are necessary to succeed as a leader (e.g., assertive, masterful, task-oriented), are associated more with men than women; people generally end-up believing “think manager, think male” (Schein, 1993; p. 676). This perceived incongruity between the women gender role and typical leader roles tends to create bias against women leaders, which results into less favorable evaluation of women’s potential as leaders (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Over the years various forms of leadership have been studied in both men and women leaders. A greater number of studies have investigated gender differences in transformational and transactional leadership styles. Although both leadership styles are displayed by effective leaders, those practicing the former type of leadership establish themselves as a role model by gaining the trust and confidence of the followers, while the later manage in the more conventional sense of clarifying subordinate responsibilities, rewarding them for meeting objectives, and correcting them for failing to meet objectives.

Contemporary research has focused more on transformational aspect of leadership, emphasizing that leaders displaying this form of leadership are more effective by inspiring their followers and nurturing their ability to contribute to the organization (Bass, 1998).

The most widely used measure of transformational and transactional leadership is the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire, known as the MLQ. Studies employing the MLQ have revealed controversial findings (Bass & Avolio, 1994). While many studies have considered transformational leadership more of a feminine trait (Bass, Avolio, & Atwater, 1996; Yammarino, Dubinsky, Comer, & Jolson, 1997). Some other researchers have found both genders equally transformational (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Maher, 1997). In another study, Carless (1998) showed that women managers themselves and their supervisors rated them as being more transformational than men managers. However, their subordinates evaluated their male and female leaders equally.

Although gender differences have been well explored in leadership literature (Eagly & Johnson, 1990), not many studies have looked at perceived leadership style as a result of an interaction between the subordinate and manager gender. In fact, effective management does not work in isolation from their subordinates (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2005). Brower, Schoorman, and Tan (2000) point out that managers work with their subordinates in what is often referred to as

dyadic relationships of management-subordinate. In another study (McColl-Kennedy, & Anderson, 2005), the lack of a direct relationship between gender and leadership style also provided some support that management outcomes are not related to gender alone. It may be inferred that leadership style and management outcomes may largely be product of mutual exchange and reciprocity in manager-subordinate relationships. The leader-member exchange theory claims that both parties bring something of value to the exchange and also that the two individuals become interrelated (Brower et al., 2000).

While the leadership style may largely be determined by the gender of a manager, some of the variation may well be expected by the interaction of subordinate-manager gender. McColl and Kennedy (2005) showed different management outcomes as a result of different subordinate-manager gender combinations. Similarly, Eagly, Makhijani, and Klonsky (1992) found that female leaders were evaluated slightly more negative than male leaders, but male subjects had a stronger tendency to devalue women in leadership roles than did female subjects. With an aim to fill these gaps in the available literature on leadership, the current work was conceived to investigate whether subordinates' perception of their managers' leadership style differs as a result of different gender combinations of subordinates and managers.

Although there has been a notable lack of evidence regarding the practice

of transformational leadership style by one gender, transformational leadership has been generally attributed as a feminine trait (Yammarino, Dubinsky, Comer, & Jolson, 1997). A few researchers maintain that the feminist model of leadership includes typical transformational leadership behavior, for instance, participatory decision-making, mutuality, interdependence and collectivity (Eagly, Karau, Miner, & Johnson, 1994; Fletcher, Jordan, & Baker-Miller, 2000). We hypothesized, therefore, that subordinates would view their women managers as displaying more of a transformational leadership style. However, considering the male dominance in Pakistani culture, it was hypothesized that men subordinates will also rate women managers higher on passive-avoidant leadership style.

## Method

### *Sample*

The sample for this study consisted of equal number of male and female employees (80 each), volunteered to participate in the study, working in 4 private international banks, with different job designations and qualification. The male and female workers were roughly matched on their job categories. Despite more women entering into organizational sector, banking and finance industry are still male dominant industries. However, a special attention was paid to include only those banks that had sufficient number of both women managers and workers to reduce the

chances of grossly over-sampling and under-sampling one sex versus another. Sample was obtained in this way that half of each gender of employees was working under either men or women middle-level managers. As middle-manager positions vary within the organizational hierarchy, an attempt was made to recruit men and women managers with similar levels. The resulting groups with different manager-subordinate combinations were as follows: 40 men subordinates working under men managers, 40 men subordinates working with women managers, 40 women subordinates working under women managers, and finally 40 women subordinates working with men managers. A total of 189 workers were approached indicating a response rate of 84.66%. Refusal rate between different subgroups was not noticeably different.

### *Instruments*

1. *Demographic data* were obtained from the subordinate separately about age, gender, education, marital status and job designation.

2. A modified version (Den Hartog, Van Muijen, & Koopman, 1997) of *Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire* (MLQ, Bass & Avolio, 1989) was used in this study. Over just the last four years, the MLQ has been used in nearly 200 research programs, doctoral dissertations and Master's theses around the globe. Its translations are available in French, Norwegian, Hebrew, Arabic, Chinese, Thai and Ko-

rean languages. The original Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) was developed to measure two higher order (Transformational and Transactional) and one laissez faire factor. While the transactional leader motivates to perform as expected, the transformational leader typically inspires followers to do more than originally expected. Four sub-dimensions of charisma, inspiration, individual consideration and intellectual stimulation make the transformational leadership scale consisting of 24 items. Three factors constitute transactional leadership: contingent reward, and two forms of management-by-exception, active and passive. When practicing management-by-exception, a leader only takes action when things go wrong and standards are not met. The active form characterizes a leader who actively seeks deviations from standard procedures and takes actions when irregularities occur. The passive form characterizes leaders who only take action after deviations and irregularities have occurred. Each subscale of transactional scale consists of 3 items, making a total of 12 items. The laissez-faire leaders are not leaders at all and they avoid supervisory decision-making and supervisory responsibility. This scale consists of only 4 items.

Although the MLQ has been extensively used in the studies addressing leadership issues, the factor structure of the scale has been criticized by a number of researchers pointing toward a considerable overlap between the items measuring laissez-faire and

passive management-by-exception along with other subscales (Bryman, 1992, Den Hartog et al., 1997; Yammarino, & Bass, 1990). On the basis of their factor analysis study, Den Hartog et al. (1997) recommended a three-factor scale with a total of 34 items consisting of Inspirational, rational and Passive-avoidant subscales.

The final scale suggested by Den Hartog et al. (1997) was employed in the current study. However, in order to assess the meaningfulness of the MLQ with the current population, factor analysis was performed on 34 items of the modified version of the MLQ (see Table 1). Items included in defining a factor were those with a factor loading of at least 0.40. The results of principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation showed a similar factor structure to that suggested by Den Hartog et al. (1997). The highest similarity emerged on the transformational subscale (called inspirational leadership by Den Hartog) except items No. 9 and 35. Item 9, which was loaded on this factor in Den Hartog study, was not loaded on any factor with current sample, hence was excluded from the analysis. Item 35 was loaded heavily on transactional leadership factor in Den Hartog study (called rational-objective by them), however with the current sample it loaded only on transformational leadership factor. As this item did not deviate much from the main theme of transformational scale, it was retained in this category. By excluding item 9, the transformational scale was left with 18 items with a score range of 0-

72. The other two subscales also showed considerable similarity with those suggested by Den Hartog, except that item number 15, which was loaded on laissez-faire (called passive-avoidant) in their study was not loaded on any factor in our study, hence this item was also excluded from the current analysis. The final analysis showed three factors consisting of 18, 8 and 6 items for transformational, transactional and laissez-faire respectively. We preferred to use the original names for all subscales used by Bass and Avolio (1989) considering the greater familiarity of researchers with them. The score range for transactional and laissez-faire scales was 0-32 and 0-24 respectively. The scoring format of the original MLQ was retained where the followers describe their supervisor's leadership on each of the items rated on a Likert scale ranging from 0 (Not at all) to 4 (frequently if not always). The total scoring range considering the number of items used in this study was 0-128. The current factor analysis found 32 valid items for using with this sample.

To assist factor analysis findings as well as to determine the internal consistency of the scales, Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients were calculated for the three subscales. The alpha coefficient was quite high ( $\alpha = .93$ ) for transformational subscale showing its cohesiveness, whereas alpha coefficients were reasonably high ( $\alpha = .75$  and  $\alpha = .71$ ) for the transactional and laissez-faire subscales respectively. This analysis also

**Table 1***Loadings and Item-total Correlations of the Items on the MLQ (N=180)*

Item No	Items loading on Transformational Leadership ( $\alpha = .93$ )	Factor loading	Item-sub-scale $r$
2	Talks optimistically about the future .....	.58	.59
3	Treats me as an individual rather than just the member of the group ...	.48	.59
10	Listens to my concerns .....	.50	.56
16	Provides advice when it is needed .....	.72	.63
17	Serves as a role model for me .....	.67	.74
19	Introduces new projects and new challenges .....	.68	.69
23	Shows how to look at problems from new angles .....	.68	.63
28	Mobilizes a collective sense of mission .....	.43	.42
32	Instills pride in being associated with him/her .....	.65	.76
33	Engages in words and deeds which enhances his/her image of competence	.53	.65
34	Makes me aware of strongly held values, ideals and aspirations which are shared in common .....	.73	.61
35	Demonstrates a strong conviction in his/her beliefs and values .....	.65	.52
36	Projects a powerful, dynamic and magnetic presence ....	.55	.61
37	I am ready to trust him/her to overcome any obstacle ....	.85	.76
38	I have complete confidence in him/her .....	.79	.63
39	In my mind, he/she is a symbol of success and accomplishment .....	.74	.74
40	Displays extraordinary talent and competence in whatever he/she decides ...	.70	.69
Items loading on Transactional Leadership ( $\alpha = .75$ )			
6	Works out agreements with me on what I will receive if I do what needs...	.72	.73
7	Is alert for failure to meet standards .....	.69	.51
12	Talks about special rewards for good work .....	.62	.49
14	Focuses attention on irregularities, mistakes, expectations and deviations from what is expected of me .....	.62	.63
20	Monitors performance for errors needing corrections	.47	.53
25	Tells me what to be rewarded for my efforts .....	.40	.41
29	Points out what I will receive if I do what is required ....	.49	.55
Items loading on Laissez-Faire Leadership ( $\alpha = .71$ )			
4	Things have to go wrong for him/her to take action.....	.74	.71
13	Shows he/she is a firm believer that if it ain't broken, don't fix it .....	.47	.51
21	As long as work meets minimal standards, he/she avoids trying to make .....	.43	.45
22	Avoids getting involved when important issues arise ....	.62	.56
26	Avoids making decisions .....	.54	.51
27	Problems have to be chronic before he/she will take action .....	.46	.40

confirmed factor analysis findings as the two items mentioned above, 9 and 15, showed the lowest correlations

with the rest of the items; hence they were dropped from the final scale. The item-subscale correlations were re-

sonable for the transformational (from .44 to .76), transactional (from .41 to .73) and laissez-faire (from .40 to .71) showing moderate reliabilities of the three subscales.

### 3. *Satisfaction with managers*

Satisfaction with managers was obtained through a single item-scale asking "All things considered please rate your satisfaction with the leadership of your current manager". These ratings were obtained on a 10-point scale with a score of 1 indicating not satisfied at all to very satisfied scored as 10.

Both data collection tools were administered in English, as all the survey respondents were educated on at least at the graduate level.

### *Procedure*

In the initial phase, top-level management of four banks was contacted to obtain permission to carry out research in their organizations. From each bank, a list was obtained of middle-level managers and subordinates working under them. Men and women managers with comparable organizational level were selected from these lists. Moreover, the number of staff they were supervising was not very different (with a range of 7-10 subordinates working under women managers, and a range of 8-12 working with men managers). The concerned subordinates were first asked if they would be interested in taking part in a study on leadership styles of their managers.

No mention was made about the managerial style of men and women to avoid the hyper-awareness of gender differences. The study subjects were assured that their identity would not be disclosed. As many workers were concerned that their responses may reach to the management, the questionnaires were kept anonymous. They were also assured that their management had nothing to do with this survey, which was entirely an academic work. Those volunteering to participate in the study were requested to fill the questionnaire at their convenient times. They were instructed that no item should remain unfilled. Sixty three percent of the total subjects filled the questionnaires on the spot, while from the remaining subjects the questionnaires were collected later. Majority of the participants returned the questionnaire after two visits. However those who did not return their questionnaires after two visits were excluded (5 men and 3 women). To have an equal number of respondents in each subgroup, more people with same gender and group membership were contacted.

## **Results**

The data were analyzed using the SPSS for Windows, Version 10.00. Two-tail tests of significance were employed. Comparison on demographic indices showed that the four sub-groups were not significantly different from each other on education and age variables. However, a significant difference on marital status

showed a greater number of unmarried subordinates working under women managers,  $\chi(3)^2 = 16.97$ ,  $p < .001$ .

A multivariate analysis was carried out to ascertain the effect of gen-

der of subordinates and managers on three scales of modified version of the MLQ (transformational, transactional and laissez-faire) as well as on the satisfaction scale. Wilks' Lambda

**Table 2**

*Multivariate Analysis Showing Gender Effects of Subordinates and Managers on the Ratings of Managers on Scales of MLQ and Satisfaction (N= 160)*

Source	Dependent variables	SS	df	MS	F
Gender of manager	Transformational	1005.82	1	1005.82	9.83**
	Transactional	9.68	1	9.68	0.49
	Passive-avoidant	380.38	1	380.38	57.54***
	Satisfaction	8.95	1	8.95	5.69*
Gender of employee	Transformational	54.06	1	54.06	0.53
	Transactional	45.64	1	45.64	2.33
	Passive-avoidant	25.98	1	25.98	3.93*
	Satisfaction	0.10	1	0.10	0.06
Manager * Subordinate	Transformational	628.75	1	628.75	6.14*
	Transactional	43.42	1	43.42	2.21
	Passive-avoidant	12.80	1	12.80	1.94
	Satisfaction	10.94	1	10.94	6.96**
Error	Transformational	15967.88	156	102.36	
	Transactional	3060.79	156	19.62	
	Passive-avoidant	1031.21	156	6.61	
	Satisfaction	245.45	156	1.57	
Total	Transformational	403986.00	160		
	Transactional	108891.00	160		
	Passive-avoidant	16643.00	160		
	Satisfaction	11673.00	160		

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .001$ . \*\*\* $p < .0001$ .



statistics showed a highly significant effect of the gender of the managers,  $F(1, 156) = 14.86, p < .0001$ , but not of the employees, indicating that subordinates rated their men and women managers differently irrespective of their own gender. A significant interaction between the gender of subordinate and manager,  $F(1, 156) = 2.91, p < .05$ , showed that subordinate-manager gender combinations also contributed to differences in ratings of managers.

Between-subjects multivariate results shown in Table 2 indicate a significant impact of the gender of manager on the ratings of transformational and laissez-faire leadership styles. Inspection of their mean values indicated that women managers were rated higher on transformational leadership (51.70 versus 46.68), while men managers were perceived as practicing more of a laissez-faire leadership style (11.27 versus 8.19). Gender of the employee only contributed to the rating of laissez-faire leadership with men subordinates rating their all managers higher on this dimension of leadership than their women counterparts. Significant interactions were only observed on transformational form of leadership, but not on transactional and passive-avoidant scales. On the performance scale, the main effect of gender of the manager, but not of the employee, as well as the interaction appeared to be significant. Inspection of the individual means showed that the subordinates reported greater satisfaction for their women managers, while men subordinates reported

higher satisfaction for their women managers.

Significant interactions on both transformational and satisfaction scales showed that the ratings of the managers were partly influenced by the subordinate-manager gender pairing. Tukey's post-hoc comparisons computed to assess these interactions revealed that only men workers rated their women managers significantly higher on transformational scale (Mean difference = 9.45,  $SE = 2.25, p < .0001$ ) and also reported significantly greater satisfaction with their women managers (Mean difference = 1.02,  $SE = .28, p < .001$ ). Although women subordinates had also rated their same gender managers higher on transformational leadership, the difference did not reach to statistical significance. A non-significant interaction between subordinate and manager on laissez-faire scale showed that both gender employees perceived their men manager higher on this dimension of leadership.

Effect sizes were also calculated for global multivariate analysis as well as for all subscales. A moderate effect was found for the gender of manager (0.48), while the effect size for interaction between the genders of subordinate and manager appeared to be small (.21). The same analysis for the individual subscales also showed a small effect of the gender of managers on the transformational scale (.25), whereas the same effect was moderate on the laissez-faire scale (.27). All other effect sizes were negligible.

To ascertain the link between all

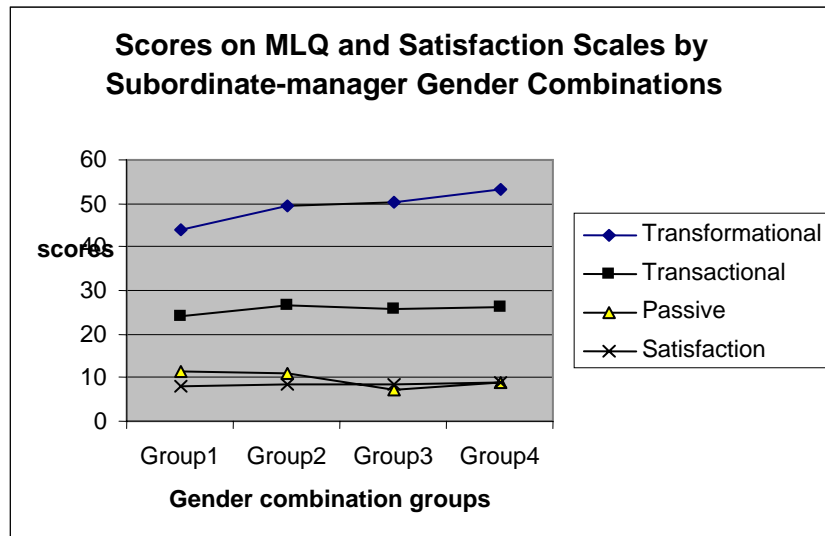
subscales of the MLQ and satisfaction reported by the subordinates, inter-correlations between all variables were computed. The highest correlation emerged between the scores on transformational type of leadership and those on satisfaction scale ( $r = 0.79, p < .0001$ ). Correlation between transactional leadership and subordinates' satisfaction was moderate ( $r = 0.56, p < .0001$ ), while satisfaction scores were negatively correlated with those on laissez-faire scale scores indicating that those managers who were perceived higher on laissez-faire leadership style also got the lesser satisfaction scores by their subordinates ( $r = -0.24, p < .01$ ). Both transformational and transactional scales were positively correlated with each other ( $r = 0.64, p < .0001$ ), but negatively with the passive-avoidant scale scores. However, significant inverse correla-

tion was found only between transformational and laissez-faire scales ( $r = -0.28, p < .0001$ ).

Figure 1 more clearly shows the main and interaction effects as a result of different subordinate-manager gender combinations on different components of leadership style and satisfaction with the management.

## Discussion

In Pakistan, not many studies have been conducted in organizational setting. Out of the limited literature available in this area, to the best of our knowledge no attempt has been made to examine the attitude of employees for their leaders according to different subordinate-manager gender combinations. Studies focusing on gender and leadership generally suffer from methodological weaknesses that serio-



Note: Group1 = Male manager/male employee; Group2 = Male manager/female employee; Group3 = Female manager/female employee; Group 4 = Female manager/ male employee

usly impair their usefulness or generalizability. Some of these limitations are use of small sample sizes, reliance on self-reports of managers regarding their own leadership style, etc. Moreover, many studies focused on academic rather than business organizations. Gender differences in leadership styles found in majority of the previous work merely reflect the perceptions of either managers or subordinates neglecting their interaction with their workers or leaders. The major strength of the current study is that it set out to investigate gender differences in leadership style, if any, as the result of worker-management interaction. Moreover, the sample of individuals consisted of actual role incumbents as employees working under different gender managers.

The main findings of this study was that women managers were seen as practicing more of a transformational, while their respective counterparts were rated higher on the laissez-faire leadership style. The subordinates also reported greater satisfaction with the women leadership, which is well consistent with the contemporary claim that women have superior leadership skills (e.g., Sharpe, 2000). Transformational leadership in managers has been widely linked to positive individual and organizational consequences. However, past literature on gender differences in transformational leadership skills have revealed mixed results. One group of researchers did not find any notable difference in men and women managers on transformational type of leader-

ship. These researchers failed to see significant gender differences on transformational leadership between real male and female managers (Maher, 1997) and whether leadership was self-rated or observer-rated (Manning, 2002). They, therefore, concluded that transformational leadership is a more androgynous, feminine-role-compatible leadership style, and also that leadership role demands override gender-role expectations for women in managerial role.

The other group of researchers demonstrates that women managers practice more of a transformational leadership, which supposedly permits them to simultaneously carry out leadership and gender roles. It has been argued that some behaviors associated with transformational type leadership fit more closely to feminine model of leadership, for example, encouraging individual development, providing regular feedback, using participative decision-making, promoting a cooperative and trusting environment as well as quality interpersonal relationships between leaders and subordinates (Eagly et al., 1994; McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2005). Fletcher and colleagues (2000) pointed out that women leaders particularly endeavor to develop mutually rewarding relationship with their workers, and put a high value on relational aspects. Consistent with this, in a study of subordinates' perception about school-based administrators, women scored higher than men on the transformational factors of charisma and individualized consideration (Rice, 1998). Similar

findings were obtained from some other reports (Bass et al., 1996). In another study conducted with employees of a large international bank in Australia (Carless, 1998), however, subordinates ( $n = 588$ ) evaluated their female and male leaders equally on transformational leadership, but the superiors ( $n = 32$ ) evaluated their female branch managers ( $n = 120$ ) as more transformational than their male counterparts ( $n = 184$ ). The female managers also rated themselves as more transformational than males. Robustness of these findings can be well documented by the meta-analysis of Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and Engen (2003) conducted on 45 published and unpublished studies. On the basis of their meta-analysis and calculated effect sizes, they concluded that women's typical leadership styles tend to be more transformational than those of men and are thus more focused on those aspects of leadership that predict effectiveness, while the less effective leadership styles (active and passive management by exception as well as *laissez faire*) are more common in men. These findings were maintained in different work placements, as the effect sizes in this meta-analysis did not differ ( $p < .29$ ) between (a) the studies that assessed leaders who had the same specific role description (e.g., college hall directors) and (b) the studies that assessed leaders in a broad category (e.g., managers of government research organizations).

It may be argued that the subordinates might have used different criteria for judging the performance of

their different gender managers. However, Foschi, Enns, and Lapointe (2001) showed that the employer required stronger evidence of poor performance for the male employees as compared to their respective counterparts before they concluded that the employees lacked ability. Consistent with this, Biernat and Kobrynowicz (1997) found the decisions to fire a poorly performing employee are more readily done in case of female employees. Moreover, the current findings of women being higher on more effective form of leadership is consistent with their men counterparts being higher on the opposite leadership style predicting less effective organizational outcomes.

The higher rating of women managers on transformational or the effective leadership style is also congruent with the subordinates' greater reported satisfaction with their women managers, although only the men workers significantly reported this. In a recent study (McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2005), women managers produced the highest levels of optimism in their subordinates (irrespective of the gender of the subordinate), while the highest levels of frustration were experienced when men subordinates were teamed up with men managers. Somewhat similar to these findings, our study showed that men subordinates, who were teamed up with women managers, found their leaders more transformational and reported greater satisfaction for their leadership. On the other hand, irrespective of their own gender, subordinates per-

ceived their men managers practicing more of a laissez-faire leadership style.

The highest correlation between the transformational and satisfaction scales also indicated that the higher degree of transformational leadership skills in the managers is able to generate greater satisfaction from their subordinates. On the other hand, laissez-faire scale appeared to be negatively related with other two scales of the MLQ as well as with the satisfaction scale. Eagly and co-workers (2003) found a substantial evidence for the effectiveness of transformational leadership as a meta-analysis of 39 studies showed positive correlations between leaders' effectiveness and all components of transformational leadership. The laissez-faire leaders are not considered leaders at all as they avoid supervisory decision-making and supervisory responsibility, and the placing of more men managers in that category unanimously by both gender subordinates is thought-provoking. It also suggests that men managers should not assume the role of leaders for granted.

The higher rating of male managers on the laissez-faire type of leadership by their subordinates is an unexpected finding in a male-dominant society, although this has been shown before in studies conducted at other places. Eagly et al. (2003) found in their meta-analysis that male leaders were generally more likely to manifest active and passive management by exception sub-types of transactional as well as the laissez-faire leadership. In

the current study, laissez-faire and passive management by exception were combined on the basis of factor analysis results, hence the results reported by Eagly et al. (2003) are reasonably consistent with ours. Although women are still underrepresented in the top government and organizational roles around the world, the American Psychological President, Dr Sharon Stephens Brehm (2007) points out that in numerous countries, women's opportunities have greatly expanded over the last generation, and an increase can be expected in women's participation in high-profile, high-prestige leadership positions. Consistent with this profile, in the previous few years more females than ever before are inclined toward getting higher education in Pakistan. Previously, women were mainly employed in specific fields, e.g., medical profession, teaching, hairdressing, etc. However, now women are stepping into nearly every discipline including primarily male-dominated industries, e.g., automotive industry, information technology, armed forces, traffic police, management, accounting, etc. It may be inferred that with more women entering into these fields, gender-associated stereotypes are being abolished. There is some evidence that as men and women spend time working for a woman manager, their negative perception of her weakens (Eagly, Ashmore, Makhijani, & Longo, 1991). Church and Wacławski (1998) also noted that due to increased exposure to women in managerial positions people rely less on "sex role stereo-

types". Another explanation to this finding is that women often face discrimination in attaining leadership positions or, as noted by Powell and Butterfield (1994), hesitate to become candidates, perhaps because of expected discrimination. To the extent that these incidents happen, those women who seek to rise in hierarchies of power and influence would on the average be more competent than their male counterparts. Although women are still less in male-dominated professions as compared to men, these limited in number may have been a different female population with some special characteristics to survive in a male-leading environment. Moreover, in many cases, individual variation outweighs gender differences, so it is usually more accurate to attribute behavior to the individual and not to his or her gender (Brehm, 2007).

Maher (1997) explains the similar situations by indicating that female leaders might have been expected to do poorly because women do not fit well with a leadership stereotype, but then were perceived as competent leaders by their actual performance (contrary to gender stereotype), and so were judged more leniently by subordinates. And consistent with stereotypes of effective leadership, male leaders may have been expected to do well, but then were seen as not living up to their followers' expectations. It may be speculated that women managers in a male-dominant society, like Pakistan, are under greater pressure to prove their competencies and to make them accepted by their men subordi-

nates, which may have caused them to struggle hard and hence perform better.

The validity of past literature on this issue suffers from by simply looking at the gender of the manager in isolation from the gender of the subordinate. The current work also showed a higher rating for women managers in the use of transformational leadership, but this was largely determined by the rating of men subordinates. The same was true for the rating on satisfaction scale. As both gender subordinate samples were working under same managers (both men and women manager had both gender workers in their team), this finding cannot be simply attributed to the effect of men workers having more transformational women leaders.

The higher rating of women managers on transformational type of leadership by their men subordinates suggests the involvement of some gender role stereotypes as well as some nonspecific variables. Several interpretations can be presented to explain this effect. Firstly, men subordinates may have liked to see their women managers as using traditional feminine behaviors when managing their staff. This also implies that men workers may have relied on stereotypic expectations when rating their women leaders. This interpretation lends some support from another observation of this study where both men and women subordinates perceived their both gender managers equally transactional. However, the higher rating of men managers on the

laissez-faire leadership style by both men and women subordinates negates this speculation as men in Pakistan are certainly not perceived accordingly. Secondly, men workers may have been more lenient while rating their women managers. Thirdly, different socio-cultural environment in Pakistan compared to Western countries may have played some role in these differences. As men and women in Pakistan do not have many chances of having direct exposure of each other, men workers may have found it more interesting to work under a women leader. This interpretation gets some evidence from the fact that in the current study there were more unmarried men working under women leaders, which may have accounted for the higher rating for women managers. Fourthly, women attaining a managerial position in a male dominant industry must be very talented and as these women are rather rare in Pakistan, men subordinates would have felt genuine admiration for them as compared to their men managers who are supposed to fit well into such an industry. Generally, bank and finance industry have been regarded as a masculine career all over the world, so women who reach to a managerial position are better leaders than men and this is partly why they have been promoted to management in a male-dominated industry (Ballaby & Ramsay, 1994). This explanation may be more plausible in the context of Pakistan, where many women have started joining such professions rather recently. Another explanation to explain

these results is that the perception of subordinates may actually be a reflection of their managers' attitudes towards them. For example, women managers may have been dealing their opposite-gender subordinates rather leniently or empathetically as they may have been scared of the criticism of their men subordinates on their management, which may have affected the perception of those employees. Lastly, men subordinates would have felt greater professional jealousy for their same-gender leaders, which may have attributed to their lesser reported satisfaction as well as lower ratings on transformational leadership.

The findings of this work have important implications for the future of women leaders as they suggest that even in bank industry where the role of branch manager is more gender congenial for men than women (Carless, 1998), women may be more likely than men counterparts to have a repertoire of the leadership behaviors that are particularly related with effective outcomes. Even if the greater display of transformational skills in women is not considered a valid finding of this study due to a smaller effect size, the current findings nevertheless show that the subordinates evaluate equally the leadership capabilities of men and women managers. At a practical level, these results should help facilitate the entry of more women in leadership roles. The findings also suggest that teaming up different subordinate-manager gender combinations can be related to different outcomes in work settings.

The findings of this study need to be interpreted considering a few methodological limitations: the leadership and perceived power data were based on subjects' self-reports rather than on some actual measurement or observation; this study only measured employees' perception about their managers and did not take into account the ratings of superiors about these managers, which could have been used as an independent source to validate the current findings. The present findings, however, suggest that cross-gender pairing and arrangements may be helpful for securing a more favourable work environment in organizations.

### Conclusions

The present work looked at the gender differences in leadership style as a result of manager-subordinate combinations. The findings indicate that the practice of a particular leadership style is not only established by the gender of the manager, it is partly determined by the leader-subordinate gender combination. The current work has important implications for the future of women in leadership positions as it implies that men workers not only acknowledge their abilities as leaders, but also evaluate them equally to men leadership. The higher rating of men managers on less effective type of leadership is nevertheless thought provoking.

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