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## **EFFECT OF FOLLOWER CHARACTERISTICS ON TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP: ROLE OF FOLLOWER'S GENDER**

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Drawing a sample of 116 employees from three industries in India, the study uses structural equations modeling to show that follower's self-monitoring and social identity enhance follower femininity, and follower femininity enhances transformational leadership, which in turn enhances follower self-efficacy. Followers' femininity partially mediates the relationship between followers' social identity and transformational leadership.

Creating knowledge in the new economy requires developing leadership at all levels. The purpose of the domain of leadership is to establish the direction by developing and communicating a clear vision and strategies needed to achieve it. In contrast to this, the role of management is to plan the processes and organize the structures needed to implement the leaders' vision. Managers therefore serve as a means to leaders' ends (Mannarelli, 2006).

The purpose of this study was to look at the relationship between gender, self-monitoring, social identity, and self-efficacy of the follower and transformational leadership. Only a few studies have looked at the impact of follower characteristics on transformational leadership. Studies on leader-member exchange (LMX) have examined the reciprocal relationships between leaders and followers and focused on relational variables such as, liking, similarity, and expectations. Otherwise, most of the earlier studies have been leader-centric, in the sense that they attribute both the positive and negative consequences of leadership mainly to the leader's personality or behavior (Dvir & Shamir, 2003).

Weierter (1997) looked at self-monitoring and self-concept clarity of followers and their effect on personalized or socialized charismatic leadership. Dvir and Shamir (2003) discussed the importance of follower behavior on transformational leadership. We wanted to extend the line of research in this area by including followers' gender besides other characteristics as predictors of transformational leadership, since followers' relational orientation is expected to facilitate the emergence of transformational leadership (Howell & Shamir, 2005).

In this paper, we have reported a study that looked at the relationships follower self-monitoring, social identity, and femininity have with transformational leadership. We also looked at the relationship between transformational leadership and follower self-efficacy.

### **Theory and Hypotheses**

Leadership could be broadly classified into two categories based on the nature of leader-follower interactions. The first one is transactional leadership and the second is transforming or transformational leadership (Bass, 1985). Transactional leadership involves an exchange of valued things, and it is based on current values and motivations of both leaders and followers. Transformational leadership on the other hand, does not take the current values and motivations to be fixed, but rather seeks to change them.

## **Transformational Leadership**

Burns (1978) identified two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. The more traditional transactional leadership involves an exchange relationship between leaders and followers, but transformational leadership is based on leaders' shifting the values, beliefs, and needs of their followers. It is known to result in superior performance in organizations facing renewal and change. According to Burns (1978), transformational leadership "occurs when one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality" (page 20), and results in a transforming effect on both leaders and followers. Transformational leaders thus serve as an independent force in changing the makeup of followers' motive base through gratifying their motives.

Bass (1985) built on Burns (1978) work and described transformational leadership in terms of the impact that it has on followers; followers feel trust, admiration, and loyalty towards the leader. Transformational leaders motivate followers to do more than the latter originally expected to do. Transformational leadership consists of four factors—charisma or idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Charisma could be further divided into two factors—idealized influence attributed and idealized influence behavior (Bass, 1998). Leaders typically broaden and change the interests of their followers; they also generate awareness and acceptance of the purposes and mission of the group. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate followers in ways that go beyond exchanges and rewards (Ramachandran & Krishnan, 2008).

According to Burns (1978), "the result of transforming leadership is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents" (page 4). Transformational leaders throw themselves into a dynamic relationship with followers who will feel elevated by it and become more active themselves, thereby creating new cadres of leaders. Transformational leadership alters and elevates the motives, values, and goals of followers through the vital teaching role of leadership, enabling leaders and followers to be united in the pursuit of higher goals. Transformational leaders raise their followers up through levels of morality. The issue of moral leadership concerned Burns the most. He considered moral leadership as emerging from, and always returning to, the fundamental wants, needs, aspirations, and values of the followers. Satisfaction of followers' authentic needs is the primary objective of moral leadership. Burns held that transformational leadership "ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus it has a transforming effect on both" (page 20).

Studies have found significant positive relationships between transformational leadership and the amount of effort followers are willing to exert, satisfaction with the leader, ratings of job performance, and perceived effectiveness. A study by Howell and Frost (1989) concluded that individuals working under a charismatic leader had higher task performance (in terms of the number of courses of action suggested and quality of performance), higher task satisfaction and lower role conflict and ambiguity in comparison to individuals working under considerate leaders or under structuring leaders.

Transformational leadership can be defined as motivating followers to achieve organizational goals whilst emphasizing the importance of follower well-being and need fulfillment (Panopoulos, 1999). Transformational leadership has been found to be one of the most effective leadership styles (Bass, 1998). Transformational leaders inspire and empower their followers whereas transactional leaders encourage positive performance through bait of rewards or threat of punishments. Transformational leadership occurs when values like integrity, honor, and justice are adopted by followers thereby producing changes in their attitudes, beliefs, and goals. Transformational leaders distinguish themselves by offering an exciting vision or strategy that followers internalize so that enacting the leader's vision does not merely remain a job but becomes a path towards self-fulfillment (Mannarelli, 2006). Leaders appeal to the minds and hearts of their followers and the leadership goal is to change the beliefs and behaviors of the followers to make them better human beings. This

requires openness on the part of the follower to embrace change. Among the main characteristics of transformational leaders are respect for others and absence of complacency (Krishnan, 2007).

There is no one best way to achieve transformational leadership—it cannot be achieved by simply following a certain style. In order to become transformational leaders, people have to capitalize on their own skills and personality (Mannareli, 2006). Social identity theory or value congruence indicates that people attempt to follow leaders whose values are perceived as representing that of their own (Walumbwa, Lawler, Avolio, Wang & Shi, 2005). The leader who sets an example by taking personal risk is considered most effective (Pillai & Williams, 2004). Leaders who have been rated high on the components of transformational leadership by their followers have been associated with generating higher levels of effort, commitment, satisfaction and work performance (Walumbwa et al., 2005). They are also characterized by displaying empathy, dramatizing the mission, projecting self-assurance, enhancing the leader's image, assuring followers of their competency, and providing followers with opportunities to experience success. Such leaders transform their followers' needs, values, preferences, and aspirations towards reaching their full potential and generating higher levels of performance, as compared to transactional leaders (Dvir & Shamir, 2003).

Leaders who have vibrant personal attributes tend to articulate an exciting vision and engage in personal image-building that gives favorable perceptions of them to their followers. This increases role modeling and produces favorable outcomes for the organization by enhancing performance levels (Jung & Sosik, 2006). Transformational leaders are both tough and caring. Toughness means honesty, fairness, not giving in easily to pressure, and trusting others.

Charismatic or transformational leadership can be understood by dividing it into two kinds i.e. personalized (individual level) and socialized (work-unit level). In a personalized relationship, the followers get self-confidence and self-clarity. A socialized relationship provides a platform for the followers to express their values (Liao & Chuang, 2007; Howell & Shamir, 2005). In addition, the effects of charismatic leadership on subordinates are different if charisma is operationalized as an individual-level phenomenon or as a group-level phenomenon, and charismatic leadership is more effective at increasing group performance than at increasing individual performance. Schyns & Felfe (2006) argued that transformational leadership is more positively related to socialized charisma than personalized charisma.

Howell and Shamir (2005) proposed that followers with collective identity orientation will form a socialized charismatic relationship with the leader, followers with low self-concept clarity will form a personalized charismatic relationship, and followers with high self-concept clarity will form a socialized charismatic relationship with the leader. They also proposed that followers with low self-concept clarity or a relational identity orientation would form a charismatic relationship with the leader.

In addition to this, it takes follower courage for leadership development: Courage to assume responsibility, to serve, to challenge, to participate in transformation and to leave the leader and group when they are detrimental to common purpose (Dvir & Shamir, 2003). These attributes among the followers may encourage the leader to articulate new ideas and to simulate rethinking of old ways of doing things, a central feature of transformational leadership (Hetland, Sandal & Jhonsen, 2008).

Personality characteristics of followers are related to leadership in one of the following two ways: First, followers may form different relationships with their leaders based on their personalities. Second, stable individual differences in perceptual orientation may be related to subjective evaluations of leadership. The inspiration for leadership lies neither solely in the characteristics of the leader nor solely in those of the follower but in the characteristics of both the leader and the follower, and the environment necessary for the development of such a relationship (Hetland et al, 2008). Followers who possess characteristics similar to those of the leader perceive a greater degree of transformational leadership than the followers who don't (Schyns & Felfe, 2006).

Some initial level of leader-follower compatibility also contributes to the emergence of transformational leadership. When encountering such followers (ones who are compatible), leaders will be more encouraged to activate a transformational style because they will perceive their followers

as having the appropriate characteristics for a transformational relationship to flourish (Dvir & Shamir, 2003). Similarly, the decision to follow a particular leader is an active process based on the extent to which the leader is perceived as representing the followers' perception and values (Walumbwa et al., 2005).

Hetland et al. (2008) found that personality traits of followers predicted how they rated their leader. They had hypothesized that high levels of agreeableness, extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness among followers will be positively associated with ratings of transformational leadership. Using a sample of 289 employees, they found that neuroticism of the follower was negatively associated with transformational leadership, and agreeableness of the follower was positively related to transformational leadership. Highly committed followers rate their leaders as more transformational as compared to less committed followers. Wofford, Whittington & Goodwin (2001) found that followers with high growth need strength rated transformational leaders higher than followers with low growth need strength. They also found that followers with high autonomy needs rated transformational leaders as more effective than followers with low autonomy needs. Hautala (2005) characterized followers using the MBTI profiles and found that followers with characteristics such as challenging, extraverted, and feeling rated their leaders as more transformational than followers with characteristics such as introverted and thinking. Followers with a personality type 'feeling' rated the leaders as more enabling. With respect to rewarding and overall transformational profile, extraverted and feeling followers rated their leaders as higher than introverted and thinking followers.

Although transformational leadership is applicable to most organizational situations, the emergence and effectiveness of such leadership may be facilitated by some contexts and inhibited by others. Schyns and Felfe (2006) claimed that the more followers view the leader as prototypical of themselves, the more they will perceive the relationship to be charismatic or transformational. They also asserted that followers who are similar to the leader showing transformational characteristics would consequently perceive more charisma because they are likely to interact more with the leader. They, through a sample of 107 employees, found support for their hypothesis that followers' extraversion and agreeableness had a significant effect on transformational leadership. Lord, Brown and Freiberg (1999) proposed that transformational leadership will be at its best if follower self is defined at a group or collective level.

Bem (1974) characterized femininity as being yielding, soft-spoken, sympathetic and understanding. Hetland et al (2008) found follower agreeableness to be positively related to transformational leadership. We therefore thought that the relationship between follower femininity and transformational leadership should be worth exploring.

## **Femininity**

Gender is etymologically derived from a Latin word, *genus*, meaning 'type', 'kind' or 'sort'. Sex relates to a biological category and refers to visible differences. Gender as a term relates to culture and refers to the assignment of various characteristics to each sex; it refers to what is normative or what is anticipated to be expected in men's and women's behavior. If the appropriate terms for sex are male and female, the corresponding terms for gender are masculine and feminine; thus, gender is the amount of masculinity or femininity found in a person (Balasubramanian & Krishnan, 2007).

Masculinity and femininity, or one's gender identities, refer to the degree to which people see themselves or others as masculine or feminine, given what it means to be a man or woman in the society. Masculinity and femininity are categories defined within culture, not by biological necessity. They are together part of a complex, dynamic, interwoven, cognitive, emotional, and social force.

Masculinity and femininity have long been conceptualized as bipolar ends of a single continuum; therefore, a person can either be masculine or feminine but not both. This gender role dichotomy has served to obscure two very possible hypotheses: (1) many individuals may be "androgynous"; that is, they might be both masculine and feminine, both assertive and yielding, both instrumental and expressive, depending on situational appropriateness of the various behaviors; and

(2) strongly gender-typed individuals might be limited in the range of behaviors available to them as they move from one situation to another (Pahwa & Krishnan, 2008).

Whereas instrumental traits such as independent, competitive, decisive, aggressive and dominant are more likely to be associated with the masculine gender, expressive traits such as helpful, emotional, understanding, compassionate, sensitive and interpersonally oriented are more likely to be associated with the feminine gender (Embry, Padgett & Caldwell, 2008). Feminine people have a greater ability to encode and decode messages through nonverbal channels. They score significantly higher on social skills. They are described to be expressive, socially sensitive, and genuinely interested in other people. Leader roles, which favor task-related traits and feminine roles are seen by many as incompatible. This incongruity leads to a negative evaluation of women's leadership potential and their actual work performance (Moore, Grunberg & Greenberg, 2005).

Nevertheless, women are more likely to demonstrate organizational sensitivity, such as recognizing constraints in their respective organizations (Groves, 2005). Women in organizational settings tend to be democratic and participative, whereas men are more autocratic. Women tend to be more concerned than men are about interpersonal relationships (Bartol, Martin & Kromkowski, 2003). Women are more likely to display consistency between views they espouse (Carless, 1998). Women integrate others' evaluations into their self-image (Schyns & Sanders, 2005). Women have higher perceived effectiveness on management skills like coaching, developing, and communicating. They also have more developmental opportunities than do their male counterparts. Since women are more used to multi-tasking, they are known to be more accessible to others. This also enables them to take up more responsibilities at the same time (Burke & Collins, 2001).

Superiors rate female managers as more transformational than male managers whereas subordinates rate them as equally transformational (Barbuto, Fritz, Matkin & Marx, 2007). Male leaders are viewed as more transactional and female leaders as more transformational. While use of gender inconsistent leadership by women is not appreciated, men may be rewarded for using a gender inconsistent style of leadership (Embry et al., 2008). Self-reports by managerial men and women indicated that women reported a significantly higher level of "individualized consideration", "enabling others to act" and "encouraging the heart" (Moore et al., 2005). Women's exceptional social and emotional competencies that facilitate transformational leadership behaviors have important implications for the advancement of women in leadership roles (Groves, 2005).

Traditionally, leadership and managerial roles were aligned with typically male qualities or with the masculine or task-oriented stereotype. Therefore, androgyny was proposed as a solution. Androgynous management blends the masculine and feminine styles of instrumental and expressive behavior. High managerial achievers integrated their concerns for task and people. Further, in today's business environment, both masculine and feminine characteristics are necessary for excellence. Therefore, a combination of masculine and feminine styles of leadership is considered the best form of leadership (Balasubramanian & Krishnan, 2007).

Femininity involves being agreeable, soft-spoken, sympathetic and understanding (Bem, 1974). Follower agreeableness is positively related to transformational leadership (Hetland et al., 2008). Followers with a relational orientation are likely to form a charismatic relationship with the leader (Howell & Shamir, 2005). Therefore, it is likely that follower femininity would enhance transformational leadership.

### **Self-monitoring**

Self-monitoring is the inclination for an individual to base behavior on either internal or external behavioral cues. High self-monitors are more likely to process the argument of an expert source heuristically, whereas low self-monitors process the message systematically (Weierter, 1997). High self-monitors closely observe social cues and use them as guides in presenting themselves. They may possess an advantage in social and organizational environments in which strong norms are developed, and adherence to them is highly rewarded. Whereas, low self-monitors tend to remain consistent in their behavior from one situation to the next no matter how incongruent their expressions maybe with others' expectations (Flynn & Ames, 2006). While low self-monitors express any thought

as they feel it, high self-monitors are skilled at communicating socially appropriate impressions both verbally and non-verbally. This greater effort on the part of high self-monitors, relative to low self-monitors, at making social interactions go well is illustrated by research showing that in unstructured social interactions between strangers, high self-monitors tend to speak first and to use conversational overtures to break periods of silence. Apart from this, high self-monitors also inject positive affect in their presentations through use of humor to lift the spirit of others (Toegel, Anand & Martin, 2007).

The goals of self-monitoring with respect to expressive behavior could be stated as: (a) to communicate accurately one's true emotional state by means of an intensified expressive presentation; (b) to communicate accurately an arbitrary emotional state which need not be congruent with actual emotional experience; (c) to conceal adaptively an inappropriate emotional state and appear unresponsive and unexpressive; (d) to conceal adaptively an inappropriate emotional state and appear to be experiencing an appropriate one; (e) to appear to be experiencing some emotion when one experiences nothing and a non-response is inappropriate (Snyder, 1974).

Past research has shown that individuals high in self-monitoring are not only more highly skilled at controlling their expressive behaviors to suit a given situation, but are also more skilled at posing emotions than those individuals low in self-monitoring (Levine & Feldman, 1997). High self-monitors are more likely to occupy central positions in organizations than are low self-monitors. Self-monitoring has been identified as an important antecedent of leadership emergence and effectiveness, and followers' acceptance of the leader's vision (Sosik & Dinger, 2007).

Women are more responsive to behavioral expectations than are men. They are found to have greater emotional expressivity and a greater ability to decode others' emotions. It has been shown that even at a young age girls are better than boys at matching their expressions to suit the situation (Flynn & Ames, 2006). High self-monitors, when demanded or in response to task-situations, produce more humorous cartoon captions and monologues. The high self-monitors also display less negative emotion than the low self-monitors. When high self-monitors elicit a desired response they will experience a sense of validation in the form of positive self-affect and vice versa. Low self-monitors are insensitive to the apparent effectiveness of their own self-presentations. High self-monitors not only evoke more positive affect in others but also express more positive affect in their social self-presentations (Ickes, Holloway, Stinson & Hoodenpyle, 2006). Femininity involves being agreeable, sympathetic and understanding (Bem, 1974). Self-monitoring is the extent to which individuals adapt themselves to different situations. Therefore, it is likely that self-monitoring would be positively related to femininity.

*Hypothesis 1.* Follower femininity mediates the relationship between follower self-monitoring and transformational leadership.

## **Social Identity**

Social identity refers to that part of individuals' self-concept that is associated with their membership in social groups. Group behavior is underpinned by an individual's social identity. When an individual's social identity becomes prominent, other individuals who have the same social identity perceive their motivations and perspectives to be psychologically interchangeable with those of the former individual. Self-categorization theory makes detailed predictions both about when a particular social identity will become prominent and about the psychological and behavioral impact of social identity prominence. Social identity salience can be seen to provide the psychological foundations for a range of key organizational phenomena.

For followers to be motivated and to contribute to the achievement of group goals, it is essential for leaders and followers to define themselves in terms of a shared social identity (Haslam & Platow, 2001). Social identities locate the self in socially recognizable categories such as nations and organizations, thus enabling people to derive meaning from being linked to social collectives.

Social identification leads to activities that are congruent with the identity. We do things to affirm our self-identity. An individual's motivation to do a task would be enhanced to the extent that (a) job related identities are salient in the person's self-concept, (b) actions required in the job are

consistent, or can be performed in a manner consistent with the person's self-concept and, (c) career opportunities on the job are congruent with the person's possible selves (Sharma & Krishnan, 2005).

Individuals seek to define themselves in terms of their immersion in relationships with others and with larger collectives (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). Self-concept clarity is the extent to which individuals have knowledge of aspects of the self such as values and beliefs. Some specific characteristics of individuals with low self-concept clarity are conflict of beliefs, inconsistent and erratic belief and value system, and inability to define and confidently express their self-characteristics (Weierter, 1997).

For the leaders' message to have a lasting impact, leaders' self-concepts must be congruent with those of their followers (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Ruderman and Ernst (2004) pointed out that awareness about social identities is essential for leaders because it helps them know how people see them and react to them. It also helps them understand why other people lead or live the way they do, and that they might have a different worldview because of different life experiences. This understanding is essential because it forms the environment for leadership to emerge.

Leadership is conditional upon a social identity that leaders share with their followers. For leaders to be influential and effective, they need to represent and define their social identity in context (Reicher, Haslam & Hopkins, 2005). Women are known to work well in groups and multitask between many responsibilities. They project a favorable image in the social context. They can more easily project a face that is congruent with their leader to make it ambient for a transformational relationship.

*Hypothesis 2.* Follower femininity mediates the relationship between followers' social identity and transformational leadership.

### **Self-efficacy**

Self-efficacy refers to the strength of belief that one can achieve one's goals or desires (Weierter, 1997). It influences an individual's choice, effort and persistence (Walumbwa et al., 2005). The leaders' genuineness, empathy, respect, and warmth contribute to the followers' self-efficacy beliefs (Liao & Chuang, 2007). Leadership is the mechanism through which managers raise expectations, and enhanced self-efficacy is the mechanism by which they raise performance. If transformational leaders enhance their followers' self-efficacy, it in turn results in higher performance and commitment (Pillai & Williams, 2004). Gardner and Pierce (1998) showed that self-efficacy affected organization based self-esteem.

Self-efficacy has also been defined as individuals' momentary belief in their capability to perform a specific task at a specific level of performance. It is a judgment that organizational members form of themselves that has significant organizational implications. Specific self-efficacy is a state based expectation, i.e. a judgment regarding the likelihood of the success or failure of a task before any effort is expended on the task. Generalized self-efficacy is the reflection of the expectation that people possess in their ability to perform in a variety of achievement situations (Gardner & Pierce, 1998).

The four categories of determinants of self-efficacy are enactive mastery (actual performance or beliefs about performance), modeling (vicarious experience), verbal persuasion, and physiological (emotional) arousal. Employees who are high on self-efficacy when working with transformational leaders, are more committed, motivated, satisfied and perform much better (Walumbwa et al., 2005).

Self-efficacy has been empirically linked to work performance. Self-efficacy mediates the effect of charismatic leadership-task feedback interaction on task performance over time. It is possible for individuals to review and reflect on their self-efficacy to address performance challenges. Means efficacy indicates that individuals not only regulate their behavior based on their feelings about themselves but also based on the adequacy of resources provided to them. External efficacy is based on one's beliefs about the quality of resources available to get the job done. Walumbwa, Avolio, and Zhu (2008) examined how transformational leadership directly and indirectly relates to supervisory-rated performance collected over time. Results revealed that one's identification with his or her work

unit, self-efficacy, and means efficacy were related to supervisor-rated performance. The effect of transformational leadership on rated performance was also mediated by the interaction of identification and means efficacy, as well as partially mediated by the interaction of self-efficacy and means efficacy.

People who underestimate their leadership abilities may accurately diagnose their strengths and weaknesses as leaders but may take relatively few actions to improve their performance due to low self-efficacy regarding their leadership capabilities. Similarly, people who over-estimate their leadership abilities may discount or ignore suggestions because of their inflated or inaccurate self-appraisals of their own leadership behavior (Tekleab, Sims, Yun, Tesluk & Cox, 2008).

Shamir et al (1993) were among the first authors who linked self-efficacy to transformational leadership in their self-concept based motivational theory of leadership. They suggested that the transformational leader enhances followers' perception of self-efficacy by communicating high performance expectations and expressing confidence in followers' abilities to contribute to the mission and goals of their organization. Kirkpatrick and Locke (1996) have also suggested that the transformational leaders who set high goals and communicate their confidence to their followers are more likely to build followers who believe in the leaders' goals. They then try to identify with and emulate the leaders' values and thus their self-efficacy increases.

*Hypothesis 3.* Transformational leadership is positively related to follower self-efficacy.

## Method

Data were collected from 116 employees of various organizations in India. Of the respondents, 38 were from the banking sector, 37 from information technology, 26 from consulting, and 15 from other sectors; 23 were female and 93 male; 4 were PhD's, 68 were post-graduates, and 44 were graduates. The median work-experience of the respondents was 18 months, the range being from 2 to 372 months. The age of the respondents ranged from 22 to 60 years with a median of 27 years. Respondents were assured of data confidentiality.

The scale used to measure transformational leadership was a slightly modified version of Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) of Krishnan (2007). It comprises 30 items and is scored on a five-point Likert scale (1=not at all; 2=once in a while; 3=sometimes; 4=fairly often; 5=frequently, if not always). The questionnaire is included in the appendix. Femininity was measured using the 20 items from Bem's (1974) Sex Role Inventory (BSRI). The 20-item questionnaire has been scored on a seven-point scale (1=never or almost never; 2=rarely; 3=once in a while; 4=sometimes; 5=fairly often; 6=mostly; 7=almost or almost always true). We used the 13-item revised self-monitoring scale of Lennox and Wolfe (1984). This scale measures only sensitivity to the expressive behavior of others and ability to modify self-presentation. This avoids the drawbacks of Snyder's (1974) scale by focusing on a narrower definition of the construct. Responses were recorded on a six-point scale: 1=certainly always false; 2=generally false; 3=somewhat false, but with exceptions; 4=somewhat true, but with exceptions; 5=generally true; 6=certainly always true.

Social identity was measured through the seven items taken from the Aspects of Identity Questionnaire III (Cheek, 1989). This version of the questionnaire was adapted from Cheek's 1982-83 questionnaire, which has been used with a high reported reliability by several researchers. Responses were recorded on a scale of 1-5 (1=not important to my sense of who I am, 2=slightly important to my sense of who I am, 3=somewhat important to my sense of who I am, 4=very important to my sense of who I am, and 5=extremely important to my sense of who I am). Self-efficacy was measured using a part of general self-efficacy developed by Bosscher and Smit (1998). This is a five-item questionnaire, with responses recorded on a five-point scale (1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=neither agree nor disagree; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree).

The standardized Cronbach coefficient alphas for the five factors of transformational leadership ranged from 0.83 to 0.88. The five transformational leadership factors were significantly



positively related to each other. We took the mean of the five factors as the score for transformational leadership.

We conducted an analysis of variance (ANOVA) of all variables across the four industry groups. None of the variables significantly differed across the industries. We then ran another ANOVA of all variables across sex. The results of this ANOVA are given in Table 1. We found that both transformational leadership and femininity were significantly higher for women than for men. We also checked for the effect of interaction between sex and each of the three predictors (femininity, self-monitoring, and social identity) on transformational leadership and found that all the three interaction effects were non-significant.

**Table 1. Analysis of Variance across Sex**

	Male		Female		Model F
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Transformational leadership	3.30	0.86	3.81	0.58	**7.67
Femininity	4.68	0.78	5.04	0.58	*4.60
Self-monitoring	4.67	0.58	4.46	0.56	2.53
Social identity	3.52	0.80	3.34	0.66	0.32
Self-efficacy	3.59	0.67	3.40	0.71	0.07

\* =  $p < .05$ . \*\* =  $p < .01$ .

## Results

The means, standard deviations, cronbach alphas of all variables and correlations between all variables are given in Table 2.

**Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations**

	M	S.D.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Transformational leadership	3.41	0.84	(.85)				
2. Femininity	4.76	0.75	** .29	(.85)			
3. Self-monitoring	4.62	0.58	.10	** .31	(.78)		
4. Social identity	3.54	0.77	** .28	* .23	** .29	(.86)	
5. Self-efficacy	3.73	0.69	* .21	† .18	*** .47	** .27	(.78)

Figures in parentheses are standardized Cronbach coefficient alphas; N=116.

† =  $p < .10$ . \* =  $p < .05$ . \*\* =  $p < .01$ . \*\*\* =  $p < .001$

The correlation matrix indicated that social identity was significantly positively related to all the other four variables, self-monitoring was significantly positively related to social identity and femininity, femininity was significantly positively related to transformational leadership, and transformational leadership was significantly positively related to self-efficacy.

We followed Baron and Kenny (1986) to test Hypothesis 1 (“Follower femininity mediates the relationship between follower self-monitoring and transformational leadership”). To test for mediation, one should estimate the three following regression equations: first, regressing the mediator on the independent variable; second, regressing the dependent variable on the independent variable;

and third, regressing the dependent variable on both the independent variable and on the mediator. To establish mediation, the following conditions must hold: First, the independent variable must affect the mediator in the first equation; second, the independent variable must be shown to affect the dependent variable in the second equation; and third, the mediator must affect the dependent variable in the third equation. If these conditions all hold in the predicted direction, then the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable must be less in the third equation than in the second. Perfect mediation holds if the independent variable has no effect when the mediator is controlled.

The regression results are presented in Tables 3(a)-3(c). First, self-monitoring affected femininity in the first equation; second, self-monitoring did not affect transformational leadership in the second equation; and third, femininity affected transformational leadership in the third equation. Thus, the second of the three conditions of mediation did not hold. Thus, follower femininity did not mediate the relationship between follower self-monitoring and transformational. Our Hypothesis 1 did not get support. Instead of the mediating relationship we hypothesized, there was a two-part relationship sequence. Self-monitoring was significantly positively related to femininity, and femininity was significantly positively related to transformational leadership.

**Table 3(a). Regression of Femininity on Self-Monitoring**

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Parameter estimate	t Value	Model R <sup>2</sup>	Model F
Femininity	Self-monitoring	0.40	***3.52	0.10	***12.40

**Table 3(b). Regression of Transformational Leadership on Self-Monitoring**

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Parameter estimate	t Value	Model R <sup>2</sup>	Model F
Transformational leadership	Self-monitoring	0.14	1.08	0.01	1.16

**Table 3(c). Regression of Transformational Leadership on Femininity and Self-Monitoring**

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Parameter estimate	t Value	Model R <sup>2</sup>	Model F
Transformational leadership	Femininity	0.32	**3.00	0.08	**5.11
	Self-monitoring	0.02	0.12		

\*\* =  $p < .01$ . \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ .

We repeated the above procedure to test Hypothesis 2 (“Follower femininity mediates the relationship between followers’ social identity and transformational leadership”). The regression results are presented in Tables 4(a)-4(c). First, social identity affected femininity in the first equation; second, social identity affected transformational leadership in the second equation; and third, femininity affected transformational leadership in the third equation. Thus, all the three conditions of mediation held in the predicted direction. Moreover, the effect of social identity on transformational leadership was less in the third equation than in the second. We did Sobel’s test, which showed that this decrease in the effect of social identity was marginally significant ( $t = 1.82$ ,  $p < 0.10$ ). Thus, follower’s femininity partially mediated the relationship between social identity and transformational leadership, supporting Hypothesis 2.

**Table 4(a). Regression of Femininity on Social Identity**

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Parameter Estimate	t Value	Model R <sup>2</sup>	Model F
Femininity	Social identity	0.22	*2.53	0.05	*6.38

**Table 4(b). Regression of Transformational Leadership on Social Identity**

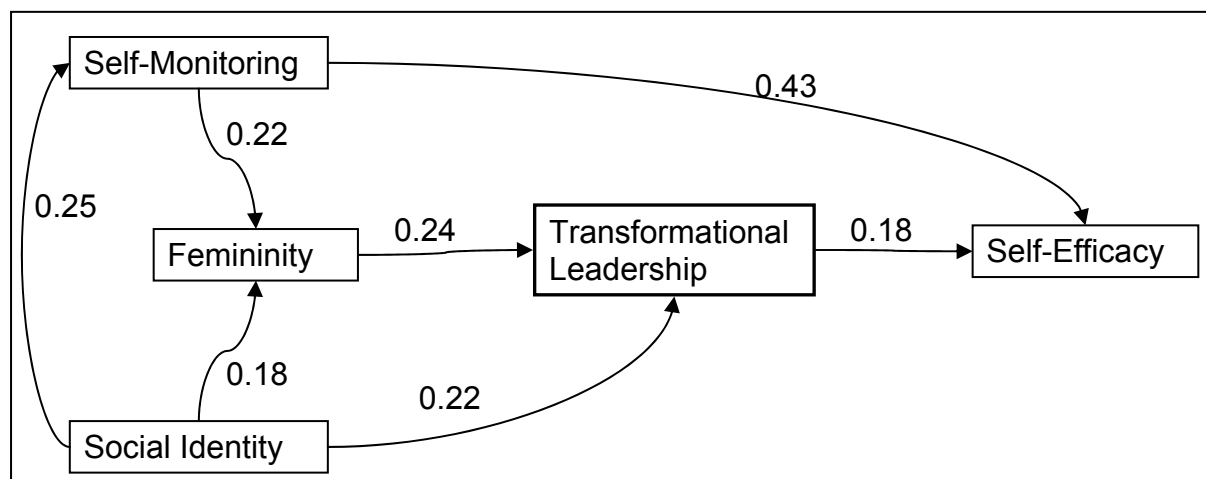
Dependent variable	Independent variable	Parameter Estimate	t Value	Model R <sup>2</sup>	Model F
Transformational leadership	Social identity	0.29	**3.06	0.08	**9.37

**Table 4(c). Regression of Transformational Leadership on Social Identity and Femininity**

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Parameter estimate	t Value	Model R <sup>2</sup>	Model F
Transformational leadership	Femininity	0.26	**2.63	0.13	***8.37
	Social identity	0.24	*2.45		

\* =  $p < .05$ . \*\* =  $p < .01$ . \*\*\* =  $p < .001$ .

We used structural equations modelling to test the goodness of fit of the following model: self-monitoring and social identity affect femininity, femininity affects transformational leadership, which in turn affects self-efficacy. The model that best fitted the data is given in Figure 1.

**Figure 1. Structural Equations Analysis**

*The numbers mentioned above are standardized estimates in the manifest variable equations under maximum likelihood estimation (covariance structure analysis).*

Covariance structure analysis using maximum likelihood estimation yielded Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) of 0.9920, GFI Adjusted for Degrees of Freedom (AGFI) of 0.9600, and Root Mean Square Residual (RMR) of 0.0165 (Chi-Square = 2.3488; Chi-Square DF = 3;  $Pr > Chi-Square = 0.5032$ ). Transformational leadership was positively related to follower self-efficacy, thus supporting

our Hypothesis 3. In addition, besides the median results presented above, social identity enhanced self-monitoring, and self-monitoring enhanced self-efficacy.

## Discussion

The objective of this study was to understand the impact of followers' characteristics on transformational leadership. This study shows that femininity of the follower has a significant impact on transformational leadership, which in turn has a positive effect on followers' self-efficacy. Although follower self-monitoring has a significant effect on follower femininity, femininity does not mediate the relationship between self-monitoring and transformational leadership. However, follower femininity mediates the relationship between follower social identity and transformational leadership.

While a number of previous researchers have studied the impact of the leaders' characteristics on leadership, some like Weierter (1997) have studied follower characteristics such as self-monitoring and self-concept clarity and their effect on leadership. Our attempt in this paper is to extend this body of knowledge by studying more follower characteristics that can affect transformational leadership. Burns (1978) argued that transformational leadership is a mutually elevating relationship between leader and follower that results in transforming both of them. Transformational leadership is a relationship in which it is as much the followers' onus to make the relationship transformational as much as it is the leaders'. However, the follower side of the relationship has been a largely neglected area of research. Therefore, we have tried to understand what follower characteristics foster transformational leadership. One of the most important findings of this study is that followers' femininity enhances transformational leadership. Femininity implies characteristics such as nurturing and caring.

Here we are looking at the effect femininity, self-monitoring and social identity of the follower have on transformational leadership, and results show that femininity is the strongest predictor of transformational leadership. It has been shown in many studies in the past that gender of the leader has a significant impact on transformational leadership. This study adds to our understanding of transformational leadership by showing that the nature of relationship between leader and follower can also be affected by enhancing some characteristics of followers like femininity.

Another important finding of this study is that self-monitoring and social identity are highly correlated. Social identity enhances self-monitoring and self-monitoring has a greater impact on femininity than does social identity. Self-monitoring is the ability to base behavior on either internal or external cues. Social identity forms part of individual's group behavior. Focusing on enhancing social identity would be a good means for enhancing femininity. Results of further data analysis show that self-monitoring mediates the relationship between social identity and femininity. Therefore, according to our findings, increasing follower self-monitoring achieves an increase in femininity of the follower, which in turn has a positive impact on transformational leadership, which further has an impact on follower self-efficacy.

This study confirms the findings of earlier studies that transformational leadership enhances followers' self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to individuals' belief in their capability to perform a specific task. Transformational leadership results in performance beyond expectations by enhancing followers' beliefs in their own capabilities. Pygmalion effect or self-fulfilling prophecy is known to be one of the biggest miracles in human behavior.

While we did get support for our argument that femininity mediates the relationship between social identity and transformational leadership, Sharma & Krishnan (2005) did not find any relationship between social identity and transformational leadership. Thus, this study adds to our understanding of follower self-concept and transformational leadership, and perhaps suggests looking at some moderating factors that may have an effect on this relationship.

Findings also show that follower self-monitoring is strongly positively related to self-efficacy, without any mediating role of transformational leadership. Self-monitoring is the extent to which an individual can adapt to the demands of different situations and different role expectations. Trying to play different roles would serve the self-efficacy function of enactive mastery.

### **Organizational Implications**

Subordinates must make sure they develop their ability to control the way they come across to their managers, depending on the impression they wish to give them in order to enhance their self-monitoring, which will enhance their femininity, and which in turn will enhance transformational leadership. They should be able change to a different image if they feel that an image that they are portraying is not working, and alter their behavior depending on the situation in which they find themselves. This will also effectively enhance the quality of their relationship with others and make it mutually more elevating.

Given the findings of this study, organizations must include a module in their training programs in order to enhance the femininity of the employees. This will definitely have an effect on their superiors and make them more transformational. Transformational leadership in turn will enhance self-efficacy of followers. This would improve leader-follower relationships within organizations, which will in turn improve the amount of work done and the quality of the deliverables.

The findings of this study can be used when creating reporting relationships in organizations, such that people who have the most compatible attributes can report to each other, at least in those cases where a choice exists. These findings can be used by organizations to improve relationships between their employees, which will eventually lower attrition among employees.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

The first limitation of this study is that about 50 percent of the respondents had less than 24 months of work experience, with the median being 18 months. This gives rise to the possibility that they may not have understood their supervisors well enough to rate them. Another important limitation is that the respondents of this study happened to be more than 75 percent male. This could have biased the results of the study.

It was also surprising to find that although femininity is related to both transformational leadership and self-monitoring, it does not mediate the relationship between the two. A future study could explore this further. In this study, we have found that self-monitoring of the follower is highly correlated with social identity of the follower and self-efficacy of the follower. We also found that self-monitoring mediates the relationship between social identity and femininity. These can be further explored in future studies along with their combined impact on transformational leadership.

Our findings indicate a positive relationship between social identity and transformational leadership while a previous study did not find such a relationship. This could be another avenue for further research to sort out the discrepancy in findings.

### **Conclusion**

Most authors have focused on the leader for understanding the intricacies of leadership. In this study, we have shown that we can understand leadership even better if we focus on followers also. After all, leadership is a relationship between leader and follower. Transformational leadership—the leadership that results in performance beyond expectations—is not something that can be affected only by leaders; it can be affected by followers also. Our study shows that followers' femininity enhances transformational leadership. We have also shown that followers' social identity and self-monitoring enhance followers' femininity, and that transformational leadership enhances followers' self-efficacy. With a multifaceted understanding of transformational leadership, we will be able to help organizations excel in today's competitive world.

## **Appendix**

### **Transformational Leadership Questionnaire (TLQ) Items**

#### **Idealized Influence Attributed (Heroism)**

1. Makes others feel that they are important members of his/her group.
2. Is the epitome of confidence, whatever the situation.
3. Leads from the front.
4. Shows tremendous amount of faith in others' ability.
5. Has the courage to take bold decisions and stick to them.
6. Works for the group's common goal, even at the cost of foregoing personal benefits.

#### **Idealized Influence Behavior (Ideology)**

1. Exhibits consistency in behavior when it comes to his/her set of core values.
2. Coordinates well between multiple factions or subgroups.
3. Leads by example, by practising what he/she preaches.
4. Is clear in his/her thoughts and actions.
5. Lives up to his/her commitments, no matter what.
6. Influences each person not to be selfish, but to think about the comfort of others.

#### **Inspirational Motivation**

1. Involves each member of his/her group in striving toward the group's common goal.
2. Is hardworking and enthusiastic about assignments.
3. Is charged with energy to do more.
4. Does not miss any opportunity to talk about the vision of the group or organization.
5. Is persistent in achieving the targets.
6. Has a fantastic sense of visualization of future outcomes.

#### **Intellectual Stimulation**

1. Encourages others to solve problems independently.
2. Listens to others with patience.
3. Makes others question the assumptions they make, for even the simplest of things.
4. Promotes free and radical thinking.
5. Asks others to think in non-technical ways to arrive at solutions.
6. Nurtures creativity by not imposing too many processes.

#### **Individualized Consideration**

1. Recognizes the fact that different people need to be treated differently.
2. Recognizes competence in others and encourages them to build on the same.
3. Not only develops others, but brings the best out of them in pressure situations.
4. Is sensitive to others' personal needs.
5. Encourages others to discuss professional as well as personal issues with him/her.
6. Ensures that others get all possible support so that they can pursue other interests of life.

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