Transformational Leadership and Follower's Organizational Commitment: Role of Leader's Gender

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Abstract

This experimental study investigated the impact of the leader's gender (femininity and masculinity) on transformational leadership and the follower's organizational commitment (affective, continuance, and normative) using a sample of 84 managers of a manufacturing company in eastern India. Participants were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (femininity: yes or no) x 2 (masculinity: yes or no) experimental design. Transformational leadership was measured through the five factors: idealized influence attributed; idealized influence behaviour; inspirational motivation; intellectual stimulation; individualized consideration. Results show that masculinity enhances normative commitment and androgyny enhances continuance commitment. The findings of our study also show that the positive effect of masculinity on normative commitment continues to exist even after controlling for the common variance between normative commitment and inspirational motivation. Contrary to our expectations, the findings show that femininity reduces inspirational motivation dimension of transformational leadership. Further, the findings of our study show that transformational leadership enhances continuance commitment only when the leader is androgynous and that transformational leadership enhances affective commitment only for the masculine leader. The managerial and organizational implications of the findings are discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Transformational leadership, organizational commitment, gender, femininity, masculinity, androgyny.

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Leadership is the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute towards the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members. A constant change that has become a part of life for many organizations highlights the increasing importance of transformational leadership. Superior performance or performance beyond normal expectations is possible only by transforming followers' values, attitudes and motives from a lower to a higher plane of arousal and maturity (Bass, 1985).

A number of authors have highlighted differences in feminine and masculine leadership styles. The arena of management has always been considered a masculine domain, the field of leadership being no exception. The traditional belief has been that a masculine form of leadership with its stress on aggression, task orientation, and ambition is a more effective way to lead subordinates. However, recent studies have revealed that contrary to this popular belief, a feminine style of leadership characterized by sensitivity and cooperation may be more transformational in nature (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Engen, 2003). However, due to prevalent gender stereotypes, it is automatically assumed that those who are feminine will be less effective as leaders (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995).

Effects of transformational leadership and gender on outcomes have been separately studied. However, hardly any research has been done on the relationship of both together with organizational commitment. That commitment can be enhanced through transformational leadership is known, but the moderating role of gender in this relationship is not known. Understanding the moderating role of gender in the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment will help in creating committed employees in organizations.

Traditional societies have served to promote gender stereotypes. It has however, been much touted, that this traditional mindset is gradually being replaced or supplemented by more unorthodox and open-minded thinking. This paper reports a study done to see the role of the leader's gender (femininity, masculinity, and androgyny) and transformational leadership in enhancing the follower's commitment to the organization. We wanted to investigate whether femininity combined with masculinity (referred to as androgyny) would positively enhance organizational outcomes. Thus, the study had two goals. The first was to examine the impact of gender-roles on transformational leadership and the follower's commitment to the organization. The second was to see which of the gender-roles would be the most conducive for transformational leadership having the maximum relationship with the follower's organizational commitment.

Theory and Hypotheses

Leadership can be classified as transactional and transformational. According to Bass (1985), transactional leaders decide what their followers should do to realize their personal and organizational aims; they classify these aims and help their followers to achieve their goals. Transactional leadership is a process in which the leader-follower relationship is reduced to a simple exchange of a certain quantity of work for an adequate price. Contrary to this, transformational leadership is a far more complex process, the realization of which requires more visionary and more inspiring figures.

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Transformational Leadership

Burns defined a transformational leader as one who recognizes and exploits an existing need or demand of a potential follower, and looks for potential motives in followers, seeks to satisfy higher needs, and engages the full person of the follower. According to him, transformational leaders are not only visionary change agents; they also "morally uplift" followers to become leaders themselves. He described such leaders as being more concerned with the collective interests of the group, organization, and society as opposed to their own self-interests.

Transformational leaders motivate their followers to do more than they really expect they can do, increase the sense of importance and value of the tasks, stimulate them to surpass their own interests and direct themselves to the interests of the team, organization, or larger community, and raise the level of change (Bass, 1985). 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, which results in a transforming effect on both leaders and followers (Burns, 1978). It is based on leaders shifting the values, beliefs, and needs of the followers. Leaders broaden and change the interests of their followers, and 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.

Transformational leadership consists of five factors—idealized influence attributed, idealized influence behaviour, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1998). Behling and McFillen (1996) identified six attributes of transformational leadership: 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. Singh and Krishnan (2005) used the grounded theory method to show that universal dimension of transformational leadership constitutes 44% of the responses, while culture-specific dimensions in India constitute the rest.

Studies have found significant and 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 (Bass, 1998). 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. A leader's vision and vision implementation through task cues affects performance and many attitudes of subordinates (Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996). Baum, Locke, and Kirkpatrick (1998) found additional support for this in their study. They concluded that vision and vision communication have positive effects upon organizational level performances. Strength of delivery of vision by the leader is an especially important determinant of perceptions of leader charisma and effectiveness (Awamleh & Gardner, 1999). Sosik and Dinger (2007) examined the relationship between a leader's personal attributes,

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leadership style and vision content. They found that charismatic leadership was most positively associated with inspirational vision themes, whereas contingent reward leadership was most positively associated with instrumental vision themes. Leaders' need for social approval, self-monitoring, and need for social power moderated these relationships.

Stewart (2006) did a meta-analysis of 93 studies and found that transformational leadership exhibited a consistently positive relationship with collective performance. Zhu, Chew, and Spangler (2005) found that human-capital-enhancing human resource management fully mediated the relationship between CEO transformational leadership and subjective assessment of organizational outcomes. 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 (Garg & Krishnan, 2003; Shamir & Howell, 1999). Johnson and Dipboye (2008) examined the moderating effect of task type on the effectiveness of charismatic leadership through a laboratory manipulation of the content (visionary, non-visionary) and delivery (expressive, unexpressive) of a leadership speech, along with the charisma conduciveness of performance tasks. As expected, they found that visionary content and expressive delivery resulted in higher attributions of charismatic leadership. In addition, visionary content led to better quality of performance on more charisma-conducive tasks. Transformational leadership is positively related not only to organizational outcomes, but also to personal outcomes of followers like wellbeing (Krishnan, 2012).

Krishnan (2001) found that transformational leaders do have some identifiable patterns in their value systems. They give relatively high priority to "a world at peace" and "responsible" and relatively low priority to "a world of beauty", "national security", "intellectual" and "cheerful". Results also suggest that transformational leaders might give greater importance to values pertaining to others than to values concerning only themselves. Sosik (2005) used multi-source field data collected in five organizations to examine linkages among managers' personal value system (i.e., intensity of openness to change, traditional, collectivistic work, self-transcendent, and self-enhancement values), charismatic leadership of managers, and three outcome measures. Results indicated that traditional, collectivistic work, self-transcendent, and self-enhancement values related positively to charismatic leadership, which predicted managerial performance and followers' extra effort and organizational citizenship behaviour (OCB). Managerial performance moderated the relationships between leaders' values, charismatic leadership, and followers' outcomes.

Hautala (2006) found that the extraverted, intuitive and perceiving preferences favour transformational leadership, according to leaders' self-ratings. Contrary to this, subordinates' ratings indicated that leaders with sensing preference are associated with transformational leadership. Rubin, Munz, and Bommer (2005) showed that leaders' emotion recognition ability, positive affectivity, and agreeableness positively predicted transformational leadership behaviour. In addition, extraversion moderated the relationship between emotion recognition and transformational leadership. Bono and Judge (2004) did a meta-analysis and demonstrated that extraversion was the strongest and most consistent correlate of transformational leadership.

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment is the relative strength of an individual's identification with and involvement in a particular organization. Meyer and Allen (1990) classified organizational commitment into three components: Affective Commitment (AC), Continuance Commitment (CC), and Normative Commitment (NC).

Affective commitment can be defined as a partisan attachment to the goals and values of an organization, to one's role in relation to those goals and values, and to the organization for its own sake, apart from its purely instrumental worth. Employees with a strong affective commitment continue their organizational membership because they want to do so (Meyer & Allen, 1990). The concept of affective commitment was derived from the concept of attitudinal commitment. Attitudinal commitment consists of three components: emotional attachment, identification, and involvement.

Some authors view commitment as a continuation of an action (e.g., remaining with the organization) resulting from a recognition of the costs associated with its termination. Cognitive-continuance commitment occurs when there is a profit associated with continued participation and a cost associated with leaving. Continuance commitment refers to the continued membership in an organization because of two main reasons: first, because of perceived costs of leaving the organization such as reduction in pay, pension, benefits or facilities, and second, due to the lack of alternative job opportunities.

Normative commitment means the internalized pressure or feeling of obligation to continue employment due to the work culture and other socially accepted norms. It is the totality of internalized normative pressures to act in a way that meets organizational goals and interests, and individuals exhibit these behaviours solely because they believe it is the right and moral thing to do.

These three concepts are to some extent interrelated. Affective and normative commitment are substantially correlated, whereas there are only weak relationships between affective and continuance commitment and between normative and continuance commitment.

The antecedents of affective commitment fall generally into four categories: personal characteristics, structural characteristics, job related characteristics and subjective work experiences. Although demographic characteristics such as age, tenure, sex, and education have been linked to commitment, the relations are neither strong nor consistent. Personal dispositions such as need for achievement, affiliation and autonomy, have been found to correlate, albeit modestly, with commitment. There is some evidence that affective commitment is related to decentralization of decision-making and formalization of policy and procedure.

The literature on the development of continuance commitment and normative commitment is more theoretical than empirical. Although it seems reasonable to assume that continuance commitment will develop as a function of a lack of alternative employment opportunities and an accumulation of side bets, the results of existing research findings cannot be interpreted unequivocally as justifications for these predictions. The feeling of obligation to remain with an organization may result from internalization of normative pressures exerted on an

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individual prior to entry into the organization (i.e. familial or cultural socialization) or following entry (i.e. organizational socialization). Normative commitment may also develop when an organization provides the employee with rewards in advance (e.g., paying college tuition), or incurs significant costs in providing employment (e.g., costs associated with job training). Recognition of these investments on the part of the organization may create an imbalance in the employee-organization relationship and cause employees to feel an obligation to reciprocate by committing themselves to the organization until the debt has been repaid.

There is considerable research available suggesting that transformational leadership is positively associated with organizational commitment in a variety of organizational settings and cultures (Khasawneh, Omari, Abu-Tineh, 2012). According to Bass (1985), transformational leaders motivate their followers to transcend their own self-interests for the sake of the group. As a consequence, such leaders are able to bring a deeper understanding and appreciation of input from each member. Bass further argued that such leaders encourage followers to think critically and to seek new ways to approach their jobs. This charge to seek new ways to approach problems and challenges motivates followers to become more involved in their duties, resulting in an increase in the levels of satisfaction with their work and commitment to the organization. By showing respect and confidence in their followers, transformational leaders are able to bring a high degree of trust and loyalty on the part of followers to the extent that followers are willing to identify with the leader and the organization. As a result, followers trust in and emotionally identify with the leader, such that they are willing to stay with the organization—even under very difficult

circumstances. Transformational leaders thus have direct effects on followers' motivation, morality, and empowerment.

Transformational leaders are able to influence followers' organizational commitment by promoting higher levels of intrinsic value associated with goal accomplishment, emphasizing the linkages between follower effort and goal achievement, and by creating a higher level of personal commitment on the part of the leader and followers to a common vision, mission, and organizational goals. Transformational leaders influence followers' organizational commitment by involving followers in decision-making processes and by inspiring loyalty, while recognizing and appreciating the different needs of each follower to develop his or her personal potential. By encouraging followers to seek new ways to approach problems and challenges, and identifying with followers' needs, transformational leaders are able to motivate their followers to get more involved in their work, resulting in higher levels of organizational commitment. This view was supported by prior research that showed organizational commitment was higher for employees whose leaders encouraged participation in decision-making, emphasized consideration, and were supportive and concerned for their followers' development. Walumbwa, Wang, Lawler, and Shi (2004) used data from China and India and found that transformational leadership was positively related to organizational commitment and job satisfaction, and negatively related to job and work withdrawal. They also found that collective efficacy mediated the contribution of transformational leadership to job and work withdrawal and partially mediated the contribution of transformational leadership to organizational commitment and job satisfaction.

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Although transformational leadership has been conceptually and empirically linked to organizational commitment, there has been little empirical research focusing on the processes by which transformational leaders influence followers' level of organizational commitment (Givens, 2011; Korek, Felfe, & Zaepernick-Rothe, 2010). It is also possible that different moderating variables are involved in the effects of transformational leadership (Hughes & Avey, 2009). Krishnan (2005) examined the role of leader-follower relationship duration in the effect of transformational leadership on follower's terminal value system congruence and identification (cognitive outcomes), and on attachment and affective commitment (affective outcomes). He found that the positive effect of transformational leadership on the outcomes is enhanced by the duration of relationship between leader and follower in the case of congruence and identification, but not in the case of attachment and affective commitment. Avolio, Zhu, Koh, and Bhatia (2004) used a sample of staff nurses in Singapore to show that psychological empowerment mediated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Similarly, structural distance between the leader and follower moderated the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Gender could be another moderating variable in the relationship between transformational leadership and follower's organizational commitment.

Gender

The terms sex and gender are often used interchangeably as are the adjectives male and masculine, female and feminine. These terms, however, need clarification. Whereas sex is the term used to indicate biological difference, gender is a social construct, which is used to indicate psychological, social and cultural difference. This is a practice-based theory according to which sexuality is socially constructed; it is the difference (other than biological) between men and women.

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 and expected in the behaviour of men and women. 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.

Genderism is a sex-class linked individual behavioural practice—a practice linked to gender as a class. Gender identity thus emerges from rearing patterns, and is not determined by hormones. Gender-roles may be looked upon as a set of norms prescribing the behaviours and activities of each sex. They are the norms that enable women and men to conduct themselves in a particular way and to play particular roles in the family and society. Gender stereotypes may be seen as shared sets of beliefs about the psychological traits of the different sexes. The social-role theory proposes that, as a general tendency, people are expected to engage in activities that are consistent with their culturally defined gender-roles

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(Eagly et al., 1995). These gender-roles spill over into the work place and become incorporated into the work-roles. Gender-roles affect gender identity and as a consequence of these differing social identities, women and men have somewhat different expectations about their own behaviour in organizational settings.

Masculinity and femininity, or one's gender identity, refers to the degree to which people see themselves 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 created together, out of a complex of dynamic interwoven, cognitive, emotional, and social forces. The feminine and masculine are often seen as mutually exclusive and they are essentially related to the bodies of women and men.

A typical description of masculinity stresses features such as 'hard, dry, impersonal, objective, explicit, outer-focused, action-oriented, analytic, dualistic, quantitative, linear, rationalist, reductionist, and materialist' (Billing & Alvesson, 2001). Femininity is often defined as in complementary and corresponding terms to masculinity. Femininity is a matter of 'the prioritizing of feelings…the importance of the imaginative and creative'. Female values are characterized by interdependence, cooperation, receptivity, merging, acceptance, awareness of patterns, wholes and context, emotional tone, personalistic perception, being, intuition and synthesizing (Billing & Alvesson, 2001).

Both in psychology and in society at large, masculinity and femininity have long been conceptualized as bipolar ends of a single continuum; accordingly a person has to be masculine or feminine but not both. This sex role dichotomy has served to obscure two very possible hypothesis: first, that 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 behaviours; and conversely, that strongly sex-typed individuals might be seriously limited in the range of behaviours available to them as they move from situation to situation (Bem, 1974).

The highly sex-typed individuals are motivated to keep their behaviour consistent with an internalized sex-role standard, a goal that they presumably accomplish by suppressing any behaviour that might be considered undesirable or inappropriate for their sex. Thus, whereas a narrowly masculine self-concept might inhibit behaviours that are stereotyped as feminine, and a narrowly feminine self-concept might inhibit behaviours that are stereotyped as masculine, a mixed or androgynous self-concept might allow an individual to freely engage in both "masculine" and "feminine" behaviours (Bem, 1974).

Aspects of gender roles that are especially relevant to understanding leadership pertain to agentic and communal attributes. Agentic characteristics, which are ascribed more strongly to men than to women, describe primarily an assertive, controlling, and confident tendency—for example, aggressive, ambitious, dominant, forceful, independent, daring, self-confident, and competitive. In employment settings, agentic behaviours might include speaking assertively, competing for attention, influencing others, initiating activity directed to assigned tasks, and making problem-focused suggestions. Communal characteristics, which are ascribed more strongly to

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women than to men, describe primarily a concern with the welfare of other people—for example, affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, nurturing, and gentle. In employment settings, communal behaviours might include speaking tentatively, not drawing attention to oneself, accepting others' direction, supporting and soothing others, and contributing to the solution of relational and interpersonal problems (Eagly et al., 1995).

A lot of research has been done to identify the differences between men and women, in the context of transformational leadership. It has been shown that they both have different styles of leadership. Women adapt easily to leadership that is more democratic and less autocratic (Eagly et al., 2003). Women are people oriented while men are task oriented. Many research initiatives also conclude that women are better transformational leaders than men. Bass and Avolio (1994) showed that women leaders rate higher on transformational behaviours than men leaders. Carless (1998) examined 120 women and 184 men employed as bank managers and found that female managers were more transformational than male managers, when they rated themselves and when they were rated by their superiors. van Engen and Willemsen (2004) did a meta-analysis and showed that women tend to use more democratic and transformational leadership styles than men, whereas no sex differences are found on the other leadership styles. Sex differences in leadership styles are also contingent upon the context in which male and female leaders work, as both the type of organization in which the leader works and the setting of the study turn out to be moderators of sex differences in leadership styles. Mandell and Pherwani (2003) did not find any

significant interaction between gender and emotional intelligence while predicting transformational leadership style. No significant difference was also found in the transformational leadership scores of male and female managers.

As women show more supportive behaviour as compared to men, they would be more identified with and trusted than male transformational leaders (Eagly & Karau, 1991; Gregory, 1990). Though many authors have demonstrated that women are more transformational than men, a few drawbacks make them less effective. Women do not form a part of the informal network of the organization. Hence, network centrality of women is lower than that of men (Lewis & Krishnan, 2004). When women try to influence their subordinates aggressively, the reactions are negative towards them (Eagly et al., 2003). Similarly, men are currently facing problems due to lack of personal care and nurturing. This changing scenario demands any leader to have a mix of the two qualities, which are termed as masculine and feminine. Masculine leadership is characterized by being aggressive and analytical, showing willingness to take a stand, making assertive decisions, being forceful, showing ambition and competitiveness. On the other hand, willingness to help others, caring, listening to and understanding others, group interaction and providing emotional support are the characteristics of feminine leadership.

In order to be transformational, both men and women managers should encourage the expression of the feminine attribute of being nurturing (Poddar & Krishnan, 2004). Just as a perfect family needs both maternal traits and paternal traits within the family, organizations need leaders who have both masculine and feminine qualities.

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Traditionally, leadership and managerial roles were aligned with typically male equalities or with the masculine or task-oriented stereotype (Powell & Butterfield, 1979). However, it has been shown that successful female supervisors were the ones high on masculinity (Baril, Elbert, Maher-Potter, & Reavy, 1989). Androgyny was proposed as a solution (Korabik, 1990). Androgynous management blends the masculine and feminine styles of instrumental and expressive behaviour (Sargent, 1983). 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 (Kark, Waismel-Manor, & Shamir, 2012; Korabik & Ayman, 1989).

Transformational leaders are both tough and caring. Toughness means honesty, fairness, not giving in easily to pressure, and trusting others. Entrepreneurial skills, self-confidence and persuasion powers require toughness. Leaders who command respect become the role model to their subordinates. Masculine characteristics like resilience, energy, inspiration, self-confidence, and determination are traits of a transformational leader. Caring is important to maintain goodwill. When companies stress on total quality management and customer relationship management, the firm has to deal with staff, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. In order to connect to people, caring and nurturing are essential. Studies have shown that feminine leaders are more transformational than masculine leaders. Transformational leadership and femininity would together enhance the relative importance given to achievement orientation and reduce the relative importance given to stability (Kawatra & Krishnan, 2004). Higher levels of nurturance, pragmatism, and feminine attributes will be associated with

transformational leadership (Ross & Offermann, 1997).

Although transformational and transactional styles are not as obviously related to gender roles as the leadership styles investigated by earlier researchers, transformational leadership has communal aspects, especially the dimension of individualized consideration whereby leaders focus on the mentoring and development of their subordinates and pay attention to their individual needs (Eagly et al., 2003). Further, the component of inspirational motivation is another such communal attribute. A meta-analysis of 47 studies conducted by Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) revealed small but significant sex differences on most of these measures of leadership style. Women exceeded men on three transformational scales: the attributes version of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration. These findings suggest that the female managers, more than the male managers, (a) manifested attributes that motivated their followers to feel respect and pride by their association with them, (b) showed optimism and excitement about future goals, and (c) attempted to develop and mentor followers and attend to their individual needs.

Although leadership roles may in general be aligned more strongly with the male gender role than the female gender role, roles within certain occupational categories or certain types of organizations may be defined in more androgynous terms. For example, expectations for clerical or nursing supervisors may be more androgynous than those for military officers or industrial foremen (Eagly et al., 1995). Further, studies have shown that both masculinity and femininity enhance transformational leadership (with the latter

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having a slightly higher impact). Feminine leaders tend to show individualized consideration which involves being attentive, considerate, and nurturing to one's followers. Being encouraging and supportive of followers may foster showing optimism and excitement about the future. It appears that feminine attribute such as these will help foster a sense of loyalty and emotional attachment in subordinates. Further, the considerate and caring approach used by the feminine leader might foster a sense of obligation in the subordinates, encouraging them to remain with the organization, even in adverse times. Further, it can be argued that a leader possessing feminine traits would positively affect organizational commitment. Thus, it is possible that a combination of both femininity and masculinity could enhance transformational leadership and the follower's organizational commitment. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1. The presence of both masculine and feminine traits in the leader enhances transformational leadership and the follower's organizational commitment.

Transformational leadership is known to enhance organizational commitment. Some characteristics of the leader could facilitate this relationship. Leaders who have both communal and agentic qualities will be able to fully capitalize on the effects of their transformational leadership behaviours. Displaying both feminine and masculine qualities will help transformational leaders in getting followers even more committed to their vision. Femininity and masculinity are likely to interact with transformational leadership and affect organizational commitment of followers. Hence, we hypothesized:

Hypothesis 2. The presence of both masculine and feminine traits in the leader enhances the effect of transformational leadership on the follower's organizational commitment.

Method

The sample consisted of 84 managers of a manufacturing company in eastern India. Participants were randomly assigned to the conditions of a 2 (femininity: yes or no) x 2 (masculinity: yes or no) experimental design. Accordingly, four cells emerged—Cell 1: androgyny (femininity-yes and masculinity-yes); Cell 2: masculinity (femininity-no and masculinity-yes); Cell 3: femininity (femininity-yes and masculinity-no); Cell 4: undifferentiated (femininity-no and masculinity-no). Of the participants, 92% were male and 8% were female. Table 1 shows the different experimental conditions.

Table 1. The Four Experimental Cells

Cell Number	Cell Name	Femininity	Masculinity	Cell Size (N)
1	Androgyny	Yes	Yes	22
2	Masculinity	No	Yes	20
3	Femininity	Yes	No	20
4	Undifferentiated	No	No	22

Procedure

The exercise started with the participants being told that they were taking part in a study intended to find out ways and means to 'Improve the Quality of Work-Life'. They were then asked to divide themselves into teams comprising four members each. Each team was assigned a number for the purpose of identification. Participants were then told that for the purpose of the exercise, they were to assume the role of employees of a company called Future Tek. A female participant, Sunita Sharma, was then introduced to them as the

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CEO of the company. They were then given a sheet of instructions to read. The instruction sheet introduced the participants to the company and CEO. The description of the company was common to all four cells and was as follows:

"Future Tek, a consumer electronics company was established in 1985. Its initial product portfolio comprised colour televisions and kitchen appliances. By 1990, it had captured a sizeable share of the colour television market, owing to its colour televisions with a unique picture quality. However, liberalization and the proliferation of foreign players diluted its brand significantly and sales began to slip. By 1998, televisions became a loss-making business, and the company exited this business. While surveying potential opportunities, the company found that there was a growing market for low cost personal computers. Moving into that transformed the company, bolstering its profits. In 2004, with the aim of expansion, the company decided to explore new product opportunities. With the opening of the telecom market, the cellular phone market (handsets) provided an excellent opportunity to fuel its growth. The company wants to distinguish itself from its competitors and has developed a range of models for the purpose namely, F100, F150, F200, F250, and F300."

In all the cells, the participants were then told to assume the role of the brand management team of Future Tek, working under the CEO. With a new product being launched in the market, there was a need to develop a campaign to advertise the new product. Given the design and features of the cell phone model provided to them, they were asked to come up with a slogan that would effectively capture the essence of what the model will provide the

consumer. They were then provided a time of 15 minutes for generating ideas and choosing the best alternative. Upon completion of the group task, they discussed their best slogan with the CEO and submitted the same. While the CEO evaluated their responses, they were asked to fill out questionnaires containing manipulation checks and other measures. Finally, to add a semblance of reality to the exercise, the winning team was then awarded a prize.

However, to manipulate gender, the written description of the CEO (role played by a female participant) varied in each cell. In addition, the participant expressed different behavioural traits. These details have been covered next.

Femininity description (Cells 1 and 3). In the feminine cell, the CEO was described as a cheerful and gentle person by nature. One of her greatest qualities was her intensely loyal attitude towards the company. At board meetings, she gave the impression of being rather shy and soft spoken. She was a confidante to many people, owing to her sensitivity to the needs of others. She always had time to put people at ease and comfort people when they were faced with difficult times. She was affectionate by temperament and doted on children. She was extremely devoted towards her own children and her favourite past time was simply to spend time with them. A compassionate person, she devoted her Sundays to reading to the patients at an old age home.

These qualities were also expressed by the participant through actions and gestures. She spoke softly and never raised her voice. Immediately after the distribution of the instruction sheet, she politely asked the participants if they had any queries. She informed them that she would be most willing to entertain any

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kind of doubts they did have. Further, during the idea generation stage, she went to each team, inquiring about their progress in a concerned manner and offering any sort of help.

Masculinity description (Cells 1 and 2). In the masculine cell, participants were told that the CEO was a woman with an analytical bent of mind that made her excellent at problem solving. She was a competitive person by nature and played to win. It was her sense of ambition that had helped her climb the ladder of success. She had often been described as an aggressive individual owing to her many outbursts at the board meetings. One of her greatest strengths was her ability to make decisions quickly. She was always ready to take a stand, even when faced with the most difficult of decisions. She was independent and self reliant, always wanting to live life according to her terms. She did not depend on anyone but herself. She was a member of the Rotary Club, where she was seen defending her values and beliefs resolutely. A rather athletic person, she loved outdoor sports.

The participant also expressed masculine traits through her mannerisms and behaviour. Immediately after the distribution of the instruction sheets, she told them to start working without asking them if they had any doubts and questions. During the idea generation stage, she initially worked by herself and only later, interacted with other groups. She did so only to tell them that their time was nearly up and they should hasten their progress. During the discussion stage, she questioned their assumptions and offered her own solutions and suggestions.

In the undifferentiated cell (Cell 4, femininity-no and masculinity-no), no written description of any kind was given to the participants. All the relevant instructions

and procedures were provided on paper to the participants, while the participant sat mute throughout the exercise. All queries were answered by a manager who had been briefed about the exercise beforehand.

Measures

Manipulation Checks. Each subject answered a shortened version of the Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) which contained a list of twenty adjectives, ten each which were characteristic of masculinity and femininity. Respondents answered these items on a seven point Likert scale ranging from "never or almost never true" (scale = 1) to "always or almost always true" (scale = 7). Cronbach alpha for the femininity scale was .78 and for the masculinity scale was .87.

Transformational leadership. To measure transformational leadership, the most popular instrument, the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (Bass & Avolio, 1995) was used. It consisted of 20 items, which require the subordinate to rate the leader on a scale of 0 to 4 ranging from 'not at all' (scale = 0) to 'frequently, if not always' (scale = 4). Cronbach alpha for the scale was .92. The Cronbach alpha for the dimensions of transformational leadership were as follows: Idealized Influence Attributed = .52; Idealized Influence Behaviour =.75; Inspirational Motivation = .82; Intellectual Stimulation = .70; Individualized Consideration = .74.

Organizational commitment. To measure organizational commitment, Meyer, Allen, and Smith's (1993) questionnaire was used. The questionnaire measures three components of organizational commitment: affective commitment (six items), normative commitment (six items) and continuance

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commitment (six items). Respondents were asked to rate on a seven point scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (scale = 1) to 'strongly agree' (scale = 7). Cronbach alpha for the scale of affective commitment was .69 (after deleting three items), for the scale of normative commitment was .67 (after deleting three items) and for continuance commitment was .60.

Results

The means and standard deviations of all the variables for each of the four cells are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Cell-Wise Means and Standard Deviations

	Cell	1	Cell	2	Cell	3	Cell	4
	Masculine	-Yes	Masculine	-Yes	Masculine	-No	Masculine	-No
	Feminine	-Yes	Feminine	-No	Feminine	-Yes	Feminine	-No
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
FEM	5.57	0.72	4.94	0.76	5.83	0.52	4.85	0.79
MAS	5.66	0.68	5.66	0.55	4.91	1.20	5.35	0.95
IIA	2.86	0.59	2.94	0.61	2.87	0.83	2.92	0.83
IIB	3.07	0.60	3.02	0.53	2.60	1.16	3.08	0.79
IM	2.91	0.60	3.28	0.51	2.70	1.21	3.20	0.84
IS	2.59	0.72	2.71	0.68	2.66	1.14	2.74	0.86
IC	2.32	0.87	2.65	0.69	2.57	0.86	2.70	0.98
TL	2.75	0.50	2.92	0.49	2.68	0.95	2.93	0.76
AC	4.92	1.75	4.96	1.30	5.13	1.41	4.79	1.49
CC	4.33	0.94	3.69	0.98	3.82	0.83	4.20	1.21
NC	5.58	1.10	5.20	1.00	4.90	1.21	4.91	0.99

N varies from 20 to 22 per cell. FEM=Femininity Scale. MAS=Masculinity Scale. IIA = Idealized Influence Attributed. IIB = Idealized Influence Behaviour. IM = Inspirational Motivation. IS = Intellectual Stimulation. IC = Individualized Consideration. TL = Transformational Leadership. AC = Affective Commitment. CC = Continuance Commitment. NC = Normative Commitment.

Manipulation checks were conducted using a 2 x 2 analysis of variance of the femininity and masculinity scales across the feminine and masculine cells. As expected, there was a significant main effect of feminine cell on femininity measure (F = 28.00, p < .001) and masculine cell on masculinity measure (F = 7.49, p < .01); there was no other effect that was significant. We may thus conclude that our manipulations were successful.

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We did a 2 x 2 analysis of variance of transformational leadership and organizational commitment across the feminine and masculine cells. There was a significant main effect of femininity on inspirational motivation (F = 5.53, p < .05). However, contrary to what we hypothesized, inspirational motivation was significantly lower when the leader was feminine (M = 2.80) than when the leader was not feminine (M = 3.24). There was a significant main effect of masculinity on normative commitment (F = 4.17, p < .05). The follower's normative commitment was significantly higher when the leader was masculine (M = 5.39) than when the leader was not masculine (M = 4.91). There was a significant interactive effect of femininity and masculinity on continuance commitment (F = 5.38, p < .05). The follower's continuance commitment was significantly higher when the leader was androgynous (both feminine and masculine) than when the leader was only feminine or masculine. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was supported only in the case of continuance commitment.

To test our Hypothesis 2 that the effect of transformational leadership on commitment varies by gender, we did regression analyses with commitment as the dependent variable and transformational leadership, cell number, and the product of transformational leadership and cell number as independent variables. Results are presented in Table3.

Table 3. Regression Analysis for Moderating Effect of Gender

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Parameter estimate	t	Model R^2	Model F
Affective commitment	TL	0.67	1.45		
	Cell	0.45	0.87		
	TL*Cell	-0.20	-1.14	.03	0.89
Continuance commitment	TL	-0.79	**-2.70		
	Cell	-0.70	*-2.12		
	TL*Cell	0.30	**2.71	0.12	*3.56
Normative commitment	TL	0.18	0.53		
	Cell	0.01	0.03		
	TL*Cell	0.00	0.02	.02	0.41

* = p < 0.05. ** = p < 0.01. TL = Transformational leadership.

As is seen from Table 3, in the case of continuance commitment, the t-value of the product term was 2.71 (p < .01). This shows that the effect of transformational leadership on continuance commitment varies by gender. To highlight the exact nature of that moderation, we calculated the correlations between transformational leadership and commitment for each of the four experimental cells separately. Table 4 presents the results.

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Table 4. Cell-Wise Correlations between Transformational leadership and Commitment

Commitment	Cell	IIA	IIB	IM	IS	IC	TL
Affective	1 Androgynous	-.02	-.11	-.38	-.13	-.21	-.23
Affective	2 Only Masculine	** .61	* .48	.46	* .51	.21	* .53
Affective	3 Only Feminine	.28	.29	.29	.21	.12	.27
Affective	4 Undifferentiated	.15	.05	.05	-.01	-.24	-.01
Affective	All cells combined	† .21	.13	.07	.11	-.07	.10
Continuance	1 Androgynous	† .45	.18	.38	.30	* .46	* .49
Continuance	2 Only Masculine	.10	-.04	.08	-.07	-.38	-.09
Continuance	3 Only Feminine	*-.44	**-.60	*-.47	*-.45	*-.47	**-.54
Continuance	4 Undifferentiated	.20	.00	.07	.26	.35	.21
Continuance	All cells combined	.05	-.12	-.06	-.01	.03	-.03
Normative	1 Androgynous	.06	-.25	† .41	.15	-.18	.03
Normative	2 Only Masculine	.05	-.03	-.06	-.07	.14	.01
Normative	3 Only Feminine	.20	.13	.25	-.01	.13	.15
Normative	4 Undifferentiated	.36	.03	.09	.15	† .42	.24
Normative	All cells combined	.18	.04	.18	.04	.10	.12

N varies from 18 to 22 per cell. IIA = Idealized Influence Attributed. IIB = Idealized Influence Behaviour. IM = Inspirational Motivation. IS = Intellectual Stimulation. IC = Individualized Consideration.

The effect of transformational leadership on continuance commitment varied significantly across the four cells. The relationship was negative for the feminine leader (r = -0.54, p < .01) and positive for the androgynous leader (r = 0.49, p < .05). This provides some support for our Hypothesis 2. Transformational leadership enhanced affective commitment only for the masculine leader (r = 0.53, p < .05).

We did an analysis of covariance to see if normative commitment varied across genders after controlling for inspirational motivation. Analysis of covariance assumes that the slope of the covariate by independent variable is the same for all levels of the independent variable (Scheffe, 1959). We tested for heterogeneity of slopes by modelling normative commitment against inspirational motivation, gender, and the product of gender and inspirational motivation. There was no significant difference in the gender by inspirational motivation relationship as a function of gender. We therefore did the analysis of covariance. Masculinity had a positive effect on normative commitment even after controlling for inspirational motivation. The least squares means of normative commitment, after controlling for its common variance with inspirational motivation, was 4.92 when the leader was not masculine and 5.34 when the leader was masculine (F = 3.21, p < .10). Masculinity enhanced normative commitment irrespective of the effect of inspirational motivation.

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Discussion

Earlier studies have shown that femininity combined with masculinity explains leadership outcomes better than the traditional masculinity models, owing to the fact that femininity captures many communal attributes that bear similarity to some aspects of leadership. Consequently, we hypothesized that androgyny would enhance transformational leadership and organizational commitment. Consistent with our predictions, the results of the study indicate that androgyny enhances continuance commitment. The findings of our study also show that masculinity enhances normative commitment and that this effect continues to exist even after controlling for the common variance between normative commitment and inspirational motivation. Contrary to our expectations, the findings show that femininity reduces inspirational motivation dimension of transformational leadership. Further, the findings of our study show that transformational leadership enhances continuance commitment only when the leader is androgynous and that transformational leadership enhances affective commitment only for the masculine leader. This indicates that feminine attributes like being attentive, considerate and nurturing one's subordinates play a significant supplemental role to the traditional masculine way of explaining leadership outcomes.

We had also contended that the presence of both masculine and feminine attributes would enhance perceptions of transformational leadership. Given the fact that different management situations require a diverse set of responses (ranging from competitive to collaborative), we believed that an individual possessing both these kind of attributes would effectively meet the demands of every situation. However, the results did not provide support for this hypothesis. Our findings are not in line with the earlier finding that successful female supervisors are high on masculinity (Baril, Elbert, Maher-Potter, & Reavy, 1989). It is possible that the solution of androgyny proposed in the earlier literature (Korabik, 1990) may not necessarily hold for transformational leadership. Both masculine and feminine characteristics may actually be necessary for excellence (Kark, Waismel-Manor, & Shamir, 2012), and it is possible that the methodology used for data collection in this study did not provide a chance to test the hypothesis in an effective manner. Given the limits of an experimental design, it was perhaps not possible to simulate two different types of situations, one in which a masculine form of management and the other in which a feminine style of management may have been appropriate.

Further, we had hypothesized that androgyny would enhance commitment. These results help challenge the traditional belief that only masculine forms of leadership will achieve organizational outcomes. While the results show that androgyny enhances continuance commitment, no support was found for the impact of gender on affective commitment. In this regard, the demographic profile of the candidates deserves examination. Since more than 90% of the participants were male (and assuming males exhibit more masculine characteristics), it is possible that they would have found it difficult to identify with an individual expressing feminine attributes. Thus due to lack of identification, the attachment required for the presence of affective commitment, may not have been created, thus resulting in lack of support for this hypothesis. The study conducted with respondents of a less skewed profile may have revealed different results.

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The results yield several critical implications for practicing managers. With many organizations moving towards the trend of flatter and less hierarchical organizations, it is possible that a purely masculine form of leadership with its stress on a more command and control approach may decrease in relevance. This may be particularly important for the growing number of knowledge-based organizations, which demand a different and more innovative style of management as compared to traditional beliefs. In addition, such organizations face difficulty in retaining their workforce over long periods. Thus, the results of this study may have particular relevance to such organizations. Managers should invest in training employees to embody and utilize a more androgynous style of management. This may go a long way in sensitizing superiors to the needs of their subordinates and thus building a more loyal and committed workforce.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future

The present study was not without its limitations and weaknesses. As mentioned previously, both the sexes were not adequately represented in the study. Further, during the analysis, it was found that the Cronbach alpha of idealized influence attributed (alpha = .52), normative commitment (alpha = .67) and continuance commitment (alpha = .60) were below the acceptable level of 0.7. This raises doubts regarding the reliability of our findings. This study also used the adjectives contained in Bem Sex Role Inventory (Bem, 1974) as the basis for manipulating gender. It is worth noting that the items in this inventory were prepared using responses taken from a sample of American society. It is possible that the perceptions of gender attributes will vary from country to country. The express aim of this study was to study the impact of gender on organizational outcomes in the Indian context. This

would have been better achieved had the study used the attributes considered to be characteristic of masculinity and femininity as perceived by an Indian mindset (Poddar & Krishnan, 2004).

Future studies should aim to conduct similar research in different types of organizations, to investigate the possibility that different forms of management may be required in different types of organizations. This study could be extended beyond manufacturing organizations to understand the dynamics of leadership in service organizations as well. Further, the study could be conducted by using specific attributes considered to be masculine and feminine in the Indian context. This will only serve to improve the reliability of results. Lastly, researchers should also try to examine whether the presence of both masculine and feminine attributes enhances the perceptions of transformational leadership, by using different methods for data collection.

Conclusion

The issue of gender and its impact on leadership has been fodder for much research. This study aimed to extend this body of work, by examining the impact of gender attributes on transformational leadership and organizational commitment. The results indicate that an androgynous style of leadership has a positive impact on the follower's continuance commitment and that transformational leadership enhances continuance commitment only when the leader is androgynous. It is possible that androgynous style of leadership will have positive effects on other such organizational outcomes. Further research will only help to explore androgyny and provide more ground and support for its greater application.

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