

Transformational Leadership of a Manager –Is it gender Sensitive?

Sudatta Ranasinghe^a and Ananda Wickramasinghe^b and Nalin Abeysekera^c

Prof. of Management, Open University of Sri Lanka, Nawala, Nugegoda^a and Senior Lecturer, University of Central Queensland, Australia^b and PhD Candidate ,Faculty of Graduate Studies, University of Colombo^c

Introduction

Transformational Leadership can be considered as important in the world of management. Even different researchers have identified the transformational leadership as the most important variable across broader perspective. Chen and Barnes (2006) has found that there is a significant relationship between transformational leadership and knowledge sharing as Boemer et al,(2007) observes the relationship between transformational leadership and follower performance. Furthermore Richardson and Vandenberg (2005) discuss transformational leadership and climate of employee involvement and according to them there is highly significant positive relationship between these two variables.

In this context some researchers show interest in studying transformational leadership in the case of gender perspective. Scholars in psychology and organizational behavior have found that women (compared to men) have a tendency to be nurturing, interpersonally concerned, relationship oriented, and highly involved (Bass, 1990); are friendly, pleasant, interested in other people, socially sensitive, and expressive (Eagly, 1987). Interestingly Several studies focusing on transformational leadership indicated that women are perceived, and perceive themselves, as using transformational leadership styles more than men (Bass et al., 1996; Druskat, 1994). This sheds light into the current study and following research problem has been advanced. "Is female managers are more transformational leadership oriented than their male counterparts?" Hence the objective of this study is, "To examine the transformational leadership orientation of male-female managers."

Research methodology

The study is based on the Sri Lanka banking sector, which is considered competitive in despite of the global and local macro economic downturns as the local financial sector has still maintained an 8.8% contribution to GDP in 2011. Six major private commercial banks were selected to make the sample representative because of the growing competition in the sector. From these six banks, a random sample of 180 respondents (Bank Managers) was selected. Finally 146 managers responded. But only 130 questionnaires were selected due to incompleteness of questionnaires. The analysis was performed by SPSS 13.0 ®.

Items of multifactor leadership questionnaire accounting for four dimensions namely Idealized influence or charisma, Inspirational motivation, Intellectual stimulation and

Individualized consideration, (Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), developed by Bass and Avolio (1990)) were taken with some modifications as indicators of transformational leadership.

Findings and Discussion

It was decided to examine whether the differences are significant or not. For this purpose independent sample t-Test was performed. This test is used when there are two experimental conditions and different subjects were assigned to each condition. In the case of this study male-female scenario has been taken as two experiential conditions. According to independent sample t-Test it is has observed a significant difference between Male and Female managers in transformational leadership in banks .Hence it can infer that women managers are more transformational leadership oriented than male managers in the banking sector. This finding is in line with previous studies. The study can be considered important as the competitive nature of banking sector in Sri Lanka. The findings can be used for future decision making in recruitments, managerial skills development as well as promotions in the context of services like banking. Furthermore this research can be expanded to other sectors also like insurance, leasing etc.

References

- Bass, B.M. (1990), Bass & Stogdill's Handbook of Leadership: Theory, Research & Managerial Applications, The Free Press, New York, NY
- Bass, B.M., Avolio, B.J., Atwater, L. (1996), "The transformational and transactional leadership of men and women", *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, Vol. 45 pp.5-34.
- Boerner, S., Eisenbeiss, S., Griesser, D. (2007), "Follower behaviour and organizational performance: the impact of transformational leaders", *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, Vol. 13 No.3, pp.15-26.
- Chen, L.Y., Barnes, F.B. (2006), "Leadership behaviors and knowledge sharing in professional service firms engaged in strategic alliances", *The Journal of Applied Management and Entrepreneurship*, Vol. 11 No.2, pp.51-69.
- Druskat, V.U. (1994), "Gender and leadership style: transformational and transactional leadership in the Roman Catholic Church", *Leadership Quarterly*, Vol. 5, pp. 99-199.
- Eagly, A.H. (1987), *Sex Differences in Social Behavior*, Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ
- Richardson, H.A., Vandenberg, R.J. (2005), "Integrating managerial perceptions and transformational leadership into a work-unit level model of employee involvement", *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Vol. 26 pp. 561-89.