Gender and Leadership Style among School Students in Jaffna

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Abstract- The present study aimed at finding out the gender difference in leadership style among school students. The study was conducted using simple random sample of 200 male and female (N=100 each) school students from the population of 980 school students from Jaffna. The tool used in the study was the Revised Version of Leadership Behaviour Description Questionnaire (Sergiovanni, Metzues and Burden, 1969). The Questionnaire was administered to the students by uniform instructions. The data was analyzed using mean, SD, and 't' ratio statistics. The findings of the study reveal that male school students have more 'concern for task' leadership style and the female school students have more 'concern for people' leadership style compared to their counterparts.

I. INTRODUCTION

Leadership can be defined as the process through which one member of a group (its leader) influences other group members towards attainment of shared group goals. In other words, being a leader involves influencing the group members more than being influenced by them towards achievement of group goals. The social construction of leadership functions to reinforce existing social beliefs and structures about the necessity of hierarchy and leaders in the organizations. Besides influence, leadership has been defined in terms of group processes, personality, compliance, particular behaviours, persuasion, power, goal, achievement, interaction, role differentiation, initiation of structure and combinations of two or more of these(Luthans. 2001).

Leadership studies have revealed the wealth of information which an individual can put into practice, to improve the working of an organization. Thus the appropriate behaviour of a person in the leader role is called leadership. A good leader has the functions of establishing and communicating vision; installing and instilling pride. Leadership becomes most effective when there are structured tasks; strong leaders, acceptance power; and member acceptance of the leader in that group (Luthans, 2001).

Studies show that gender influences on leadership in different ways. There is a masculine mode of management characterized by qualities such as competitiveness, hierarchical authority, high control for the leader and unemotional and analytical problem solving. Women prefer and tend to behave in terms of an alternative feminine leadership model characterized by cooperativeness, collaboration of managers and subordinates, lower control for the leader, and problem solving based on situations and empathy as well as rationality (Loden, 1985). Males are found to have more autocratic leadership style compared to females (Luthar, 1996). Consistent with sex stereotypic expectation about a different aspect of leadership style, the tendency to lead democratically or autocratically, women tend to adopt a more democratic or participative style and a less autocratic or directive style than men did (Eagly and Johnson, 1990). But contrary to the notions about sex specialization in leadership style, women leaders appear to behave in similar fashion to their male colleagues (Nivea and Gutek, 1981). The preponderance of available evidence is that no consistently clear pattern of difference can be discerned in the supervisory syle of female as compared to male leaders (Bass, 1981). In view of the above considerations the present investigation sets the following objectives for the present study.

1. To assess the leadership styles among school students.
2. To find out the gender difference in leadership dimensions viz., 'concern for task' and 'concern for people' among school students.
3. To identify Different types of leaderships

Hypotheses of the study
1. Male and female students will significantly differ in 'concern for task' leadership style.
2. Male and female students will significantly differ in 'concern for people' leadership style.

II. METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study was conducted using a random sample of 200 school students (N=100 male and female each) from Jaffna schools. Equal representation was given to male and female sample in the study. The age range of the subjects was 16 to 18 years.

Tool

The Revised Version of Leadership Behaviour Description Questionnaire (Sergiovanni, Metzues and Burden, 1969) consisting of 35 items with five point scale answer format was adopted and the same was individually administered to the subjects.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The collected data was analyzed using mean, Standard Deviation, and 't' ratio and the results are shown in the table 1 and table 2.

Table 1 show the male and female differences in concern for task leadership style

Sex	No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	Standard Error	't' Ratio
Male	100	11..24	2.82	0.76	0.08	8.5**
Female	100	13.48	2.86			

** Significant at <0.01 level

Table 2 Show the male and female differences in concern for people leadership style

Sex	No.	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	Standard Error	't' Ratio
Male	100	6.32	1.81	0.64	0.05	11.8**
Female	100	6.96	2.24			

** Significant at <0.01 level

Results from the above Table 1 show that school males compared to females generally are found to have more 'concern for task' leadership style. Results from table 2 show that school females have more 'concern for people' leadership style compared to their counterparts. The findings confirm the hypotheses of the present study. Also the findings confirm the conclusions of previous studies (Sargent, 1981; Henning and Jardin, 1977; London, 1985) on gender and leadership concerns and reject the findings that conclude that there is no gender difference in leadership styles (Bass, 1981; Nieva and Gutek 1981). The findings of the present study support the view that there is a gender stereotype operating among males that they should have more concern for task and among females that they should have more concern for people, typical of Indian culture. These differences may be ascribed to personality traits acquired in early socializations, particularly through differing male and female resolution of the Oedipus complex (Hennig and Jardin, 1977). The differences of the individuals may also play an important role in their leadership style. Further studies are needed to identify the role of masculinity femininity and androgyny their influence on leadership dimension of 'concern for task' and 'concern for people' among school students.

IV. CONCLUSION

Males show more tendencies towards 'concern for task' type of leadership; and school females show 'concern for people' type of leadership.

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