

Effect of Gender of the Head Teachers on the Academic Success of the School Students in Bangladesh

M Shamsuddin Elias *

Department of Psychology, University of Rajshahi, Rajshahi, Bangladesh

*Corresponding author: elias_psy@yahoo.com

Received June 04, 2013; Revised June 24, 2013; Accepted June 28, 2013

Abstract The present investigation was conducted to see the effect of gender of head teachers on the academic success of the school students in Bangladesh. A total of 60 head teachers (male = 37, female = 23) and 3776 students (boys = 2142, girls = 1634) were randomly selected from the schools in a divisional town in Bangladesh to serve as sample. Academic success records of the students in their Primary School Completion Examination and Secondary School Certificate Examination were collected from the results published by the 'Rajshahi Education Board'. The results indicate that the gender of the school head teachers has significant effect on the academic success of the students. The result also revealed that the students in primary schools under the leadership of female head teachers performed significantly better than those led under male head teachers, whereas the students in secondary schools obtained significantly better grades in the examinations under the leadership of male head teachers than the students led by female head teachers.

Keywords: gender, head teacher, academic success, school students

Cite This Article: Elias, M Shamsuddin, "Effect of Gender of the Head Teachers on the Academic Success of the School Students in Bangladesh." *American Journal of Educational Research* 1, no. 6 (2013): 205-207. doi: 10.12691/education-1-6-6.

1. Introduction

Leadership research provides an excellent opportunity to determine whether the behavior of leaders is gender stereotypic, generating interested debates in the literature [2,14,15,26,27,28]. Men are generally considered more autocratic and task-oriented because of their characteristic aspects such as aggressiveness, enterprising, independence, self-reliance, dominance, competence, and rationality. In contrast, women tend to be considered more democratic and relationship-oriented, because they are characterized by aspects such as being concerned with others, being generous, sensitive, understanding, affectionate, or compassionate [5]. Studies carried out by Cann and Siegfried [3] offer empirical support to this relation between gender stereotypes and leadership styles. Therefore, in view of the above, the autocratic and task-oriented leadership styles are stereotypically male, whereas the democratic and relationship-oriented styles, with individualized consideration of team members are considered stereotypically female [4,5].

Research that has relied on more empirically-based methodologies has pointed to a lack of significant differences in the effectiveness of male and female leaders [1,6,7,8,9,17,21,23] and in some cases male and female leaders were found to be equally effective [12].

Eagly and Johnson's [9] meta-analysis of gender differences in leadership effectiveness revealed mixed findings. An analysis of task-oriented style and

interpersonal oriented style showed that women and men did not differ on these dimensions in organizational studies. On the other hand, significant gender differences were reported in the use of democratic leadership in organizational, experimental and assessment studies. Women used a more participative and inclusive style of leadership and men were more likely to use a directive, controlling style. In another meta-analysis of gender and leadership style among school principals [10], results indicated that female principals were more likely to adopt a more democratic style of leadership, while males adopted a more autocratic style of leadership. The recent meta-analysis conducted by Eagly et al. [13] shows small differences between men and women in leadership effectiveness. They concluded that, 'the data attest to the ability of women to perform well in leadership roles in contemporary organizations' [13].

Thompson [25] conducted a study to the differences in gender between orientation of leadership, leadership characteristics, and the perceived effectiveness of educational leaders through subordinate responses taken from lower, middle, and upper management levels in secondary and postsecondary institutions. The findings suggest that any differences in the perceived effectiveness of educational leaders in the three leadership type groups are equally true for male and female leaders, and that male and female educational leaders were perceived to be equally effective in their respective organizations. In addition, no significant differences were found between men and women in their leadership characteristics.

The above researches show mixed findings regarding the role of gender on the effectiveness of the organizations; but no such studies have so far been conducted in the context of Bangladesh. So, the present study was aimed at investigating the effect of gender of the head teachers on the academic success of the school students in Bangladesh.

1.1. Objectives of the Study

The specific objective of the study was to compare the academic success of the students of different schools run under the leadership of male and female head teachers.

1.2. Significance of the Study

Women of our country are increasingly being involved in the workforce at different levels. A substantive number of women are working as head teachers of primary and secondary schools in Bangladesh. Effective leadership of the head teachers can bring about changes in the academic atmosphere and can help improving the overall position of the school. It is a matter of debate whether the behavior of head teachers is gender stereotypic. So, it is necessary to explore the effectiveness of gender of the head teachers for smooth running and academic success of the school. It will ultimately help the concerned authority to hire effective head teachers for effective learning.

2. Methods

2.1. Sample

All head teachers and the students of class-V and class-X of the primary and secondary schools respectively, located within the Rajshahi City Corporation area, were taken into consideration for selecting sample. Primary and secondary school students were the ones who appeared at the final examination of class-V in 2012 and the Secondary School Certificate Examination of 2013 respectively. The sample of the present study was consisted of 60 (male = 37, female = 23) head teachers and 3776 (boys = 2142, girls = 1634) students. Of the 60

head teachers, 30 were from primary schools and the remaining 30 from secondary schools selected at random from two lists of 67 primary schools and 49 secondary schools respectively; and out of 3776 students, 1742 and 2034 students respectively were from primary and secondary schools. All the students of class-V and class-X of those schools were considered as students' portion of the sample and were taken from the schools run under the leadership of those 60 head teachers.

2.2. Process of Data Collection

Document survey method was used to collect the data.

2.2.1. Documents Survey

For collecting the information regarding academic success of the huge number of students, who were included in the sample, documents survey technique was applied. The researcher went through the final examination result sheets for class-v, which were preserved in each primary school, and collected the success record in terms of Grade Point Average (GPA). The number of students who have failed to achieve minimum GPA was also recorded from the result sheets. Academic success and failure records of the secondary school students were collected from the gazette published by the 'Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education, Rajshahi'.

2.3. Statistical Treatment

To see the effect of gender of the head teachers, on the academic success of the students of primary and secondary schools, tests of difference between means were computed through t-tests.

3. Results

Findings of the statistical analyses of data are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Difference between the success levels of the students of primary and secondary schools run under the leadership of male and female head teachers.

Type of Schools	Gender of Head Teachers	Number of Students	Mean Score of Grades	Standard Deviation	Degrees of Freedom	Test of Difference Between Means (t-value)	Level of Significance
Primary	Male	958	3.62	.27	1606	1.67	.05
	Female	650	3.66	.42			
Secondary	Male	1112	3.61	.71	1462	5.25	.001
	Female	352	3.34	.31			
All (Primary + Secondary)	Male	2070	3.72	.68	3070	1.57	.05
	Female	1002	3.55	.59			

The result in the above table revealed that the students in primary schools under the leadership of female head teachers performed significantly better in the examination than those led under male head teachers. Significant difference was also found between the success levels of the secondary school students under the leadership of male and female head teachers. But the result indicates that the students of secondary schools led by male head teachers obtained better grades in the examinations than the students led by female head teachers. Taking both the primary and secondary school students' together, significant difference between the success levels of

students was also found under the leadership of male and female head teachers. Students under male head teachers obtained significantly higher grades than the students under the leadership of female head teachers.

4. Discussion

The results, regarding the effect of gender on the academic success of the students of primary schools, revealed that female head teachers exert significant positive effect ($p < 0.05$) on the academic success of the

students than the male head teachers. In case of secondary schools, it was found that the students under male head teachers performed significantly ($p < .001$) better in the final examinations than the students under female head teachers. Significant ($p < .05$) effect of gender on the academic success of the students was also observed taken all the schools together regardless of the school type, where students under male head teachers performed significantly ($p < .05$) better than they did under female head teachers. From the analyses of results one thing is clear that gender of the head teachers, whether the head teachers are working in the primary schools or in the secondary schools have distinctive significant effect on the academic achievement of the students. Here, male head teachers are predominantly playing the vital role in influencing the students achieve their goals in the secondary schools. On the other hand, female head teachers are more effective in the primary schools in achieving students' success.

Results of the present investigation revealed mixed findings and consistent with the results of the previous researchers. Researchers [16,23] posit that there are definite behavioral and psychological differences between men and women that lead them to attain distinct and unique leadership styles. Men have traditionally being perceived to possess characteristics such as aggressiveness, high self-confidence and low emotionality, while women have been assigned characteristics such as emotionality, kindness and nurturance [11,22]. Researches on gender differences purport that men possess stronger leadership skills because of their early socialization experiences and involvement in team works, which leads them to become effective leaders [18,20,24]. The results of the present investigation are also consistent with the findings of the study by Thompson [25], who suggested that any differences in the perceived effectiveness of educational leaders are equally true for male and female leaders and male and female educational leaders were perceived to be equally effective in their respective organizations. The recent meta-analysis conducted by Eagly et al. [13] shows small differences between men and women in leadership effectiveness. Eagly emphasized that in some positions, particularly elementary education and nursing, leadership is defined in more feminine ways and could be described as congenial to women. Eagly's view is in line with the result of the present study, particularly it is true for primary schools, where students under female leadership performed significantly ($p < .05$) better than they did under male leadership. Therefore, differences in leadership between men and women are not so much due to the fact that they act differently but to differential reactions to the behavior of both the sexes. The findings gave a clear indication of the effect of gender on the academic success of the students of both primary and secondary schools.

References

- [1] Bass, B. M., & Stogdill R. M. 1990. Bass and Stogdill's handbook of leadership theory, research, and managerial applications (3rd ed.). New York: Free Press.
- [2] Barbuto Jr, J.E., Fritz, S.M., Matkin G.S. & Marx D.B. 2007. Effects of Gender, Education, and Age upon Leaders' Use of Influence Tactics and Full Range Leadership Behaviors. *Sex Roles*, 56, 71-83.
- [3] Cann, A., & Siegfried, W.D. 1990. Gender stereotypes and dimensions of effective leader behavior. *Sex Roles*, 23, 413-419.
- [4] Cuadrado, I. 2003. Emplean hombres y mujeres diferentes estilos de liderazgo? Análisis de la influencia de los estilos de liderazgo en el acceso a los puestos de dirección. *Revista de Psicología Social*, 18, 283-307.
- [5] Cuadrado, I., Navas, M. & Molero, F. 2006. *Mujeres y liderazgo: claves psicosociales del techo de cristal*. Madrid: Sanz y Torres.
- [6] Day, D. R., & Stogdill, R. M. 1972. Leader behavior of male and female supervisors: A comparative study. *Personnel Psychology*, 25, 353-360.
- [7] Dobbins, G. H., & Platz, S. J. 1986. Sex differences in leadership: How real are they? *Academy of Management Review*, 11, 118-127.
- [8] Donnell, S. M., & Hall, J. 1980. Spring. Men and women as managers: A significant case of no significant difference. *Organizational Dynamics*, pp. 60-77.
- [9] Eagly, A.H. & Johnson, B.T. 1990. 'Gender and leadership style: A meta-analysis', *Psychological Bulletin*, 108, pp. 233-256.
- [10] Eagly, A. H., Karau, S. J., & Johnson, B. T. 1992. Gender and leadership style among school principals: A meta-analysis. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 28, 76-102.
- [11] Eagly, A.H., Makhijani, M.G. & Klonsky, B.G. 1992. 'Gender and the Evaluation of Leaders: A meta-analysis', *Psychological Bulletin*, 111, pp. 3-22.
- [12] Eagly, Alice H., Steven J. Karau, and Mona G. Makhijani, 1995. "Gender and the Effectiveness of Leaders: A Meta-Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin*, vol.117, no.1, 125-145.
- [13] Eagly A.H., Johannesen-Schmidt, M.C., & van Engen, M.L. 2003. Transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles: A meta-analysis comparing women and men. *Psychological Bulletin*, 129(4), 569-591.
- [14] Eagly, A.H., & Carli, L.L. 2003a. Finding gender advantage and disadvantage: Systematic research integration is the solution. *Leadership Quarterly*, 14, 851-859.
- [15] Eagly, A.H., & Carli, L.L. 2003b. The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence. *Leadership Quarterly*, 14, 807-834.
- [16] Fagenson, E. A. 1990a. Perceived masculine and feminine attributes examined as a function of individuals' sex and level in the organizational power hierarchy: A test of four theoretical perspectives. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 204-211.
- [17] Gordon, F.E., & Strober, M.H. 1975. Bringing women into management. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [18] Hay, C. D. (1980). Women in management: The obstacles and opportunities they face. *Personnel Administrator*, 25, 31-39.
- [19] Helgeson, Sally. 1990. *The Female Advantage—Women's Ways of Leadership*, New York: Bantam Doubleday Publishing Group.
- [20] Hennig, M., & Jardin, A. 1977. The managerial woman. Garden City: Anchor Press, Doubleday.
- [21] Maccoby E. E., & Jacklin, C. N. 1974. The psychology of sex differences. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- [22] Powell, G. N. 1988. Women and men in management. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- [23] Riger, S., & Galligan, P. 1980. Women in management. An exploration of competing paradigms. *American Psychologist*, 35, 902-910.
- [24] Rosener, J. B. 1990. Ways women lead: The command-and-control leadership style association with men is not the only way to succeed. *Harvard Business Review*, 68, 119-125.
- [25] Thompson, M. D. 2000. Gender, leadership orientation, and effectiveness: Testing the theoretical model of Bolman & Deal and Quinn. *Sex Roles*, 42(11/12), 969-992.
- [26] Van Engen, M.L., & Willemssen, T.M. 2004. Sex and leadership styles: A meta-analysis of research published in the 1990s. *Psychological Reports*, 94, 3-18.
- [27] Vecchio, R.P. 2002. Leadership and gender advantage. *Leadership Quarterly*, 13, 643-671.
- [28] Vecchio, R.P. 2003. In search of gender advantage. *Leadership Quarterly*, 14, 835-850.