

# The Role of Biological Sex in Student Evaluation of Influential Educators' Transformational Leadership, Emotional Intelligence, and Charisma.

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## ABSTRACT

Prior research shows a positive correlation between emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership (TL) (Duckett & Macfarlane, 2003) and TL and charisma (Prati, Douglas, Ferris, Ammeter & Buckley, 2003). TL has also been positively correlated with women (Stempel, Rigotti & Mohr, 2015). However, studies have shown that the relationships vary based on sex of the rater. Student perceptions of professors of the same sex have been shown to be more favorable (Levine, Muenchen, & Brooks, 2010). Social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) would suggest that people choose to identify with leaders of the same sex, however it also says that people may identify with a primary caregiver, regardless of gender. This study tests previous findings on variables in perceptions based on sex and examines the role that TL, EI and charisma play in relationships. Results of this study will increase understanding of the role that sex of raters and leaders play in perceptions of leaders' TL, EI, and charisma.

## TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

- Transformational leadership has been seen as the most effective style of leadership in many studies, because it focuses on how leaders transform their followers.
- The leader-follower aspect is critical because the better a leader communicates and the more transformational the leader is, the more the follower will respond in an organizational setting, allowing the follower able to thrive in various settings (Duta, 2005).
- Women employ transformational leadership more often than men (Kark, Shamir, Waismel-Manor, 2012).

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

- Emotional intelligence reflects the ability to read and understand others in social contexts, detect emotional reactions, and hold the power to influence others (Prati, Douglas, Ferris, Ammeter & Buckley, 2003).
- Leaders who have a higher rate of emotional intelligence are perceived to have a higher level of job effectiveness by their subordinates (Palmer, Walls, Burgess & Stough, 2001).
- Emotionally intelligent individuals exhibit more team qualities and it has been shown that emotional intelligence in particular is essential to effective team interaction and productivity (Prati, 2003).

## CHARISMA

- Transformational leadership and charismatic traits lead students to foster a positive and trusting relationship with teachers (Bolkan & Goodboy, 2011).
- Teachers who are able to use their charismatic dimensions who have been shown to help their students learn in a productive and positive way (Verčič, 2014).

## METHODS AND PROCEDURES

### Sample

A Qualtrics Survey was created and distributed to college students or recent graduates (75 men, 171 women, and one didn't report) who rated an influential educator in their college careers on multiple scales. Forty-one percent of participants reported their age between 19 and 21 (n=103), 44% ages 22 through 25 (n=110), 15% reporting 25 years or over (n=37), and 1% reported below 19 years old (n=2).

### Procedure

Participants were asked to think of an educator who had the most influence on them during their college education, and answer 34 questions measuring three different variables: Transformational leadership, charisma, and emotional intelligence. All three of these variables were measured using three separate scales, each scale measuring the participant's perceptions of their influential educator. The survey also asks participants to record the biological sex of both themselves and the educator they chose. The survey included baseline questions regarding participants' feelings on gender roles in their lives up to this point, and general demographic questions.

### Instruments

**Transformational Leadership:** 15 questions from Conger-Kanungo (1998) Leadership Scale (CKS) was used to assess the level of Transformational Leadership (TL) the participants perceived that their influential educators had. The scale was reliable,  $\alpha=.88$ ,  $M=4.38$ ,  $SD=.88$ .

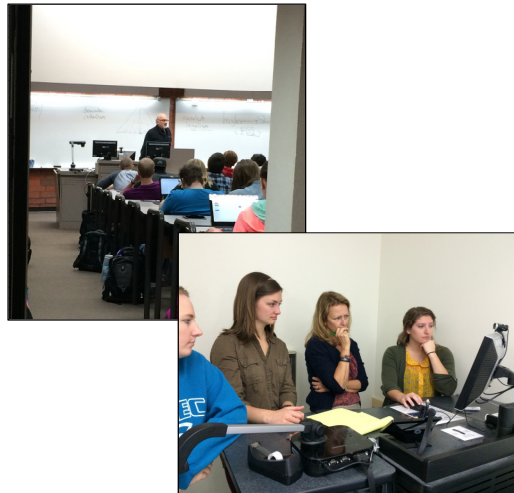
**Sample Item:** *The Educator I am thinking of uses non-traditional teaching methods to reach the learning outcomes of the classroom.*

**Emotional Intelligence:** Participants' perceptions of educator emotional intelligence was assessed using ten questions from the Schutte Emotional Intelligence Scale (1998). The scale was reliable,  $\alpha=.83$ ,  $M=4.17$ ,  $SD=.92$ .

**Sample Item:** *The Educator knows what other people are feeling just by looking at them.*

**Charisma:** Charisma was assessed using nine specific questions pulled from the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) (1989) regarding charisma assessment used in transformational leadership. The scale was reliable,  $\alpha=.82$ ,  $M=4.56$ ,  $SD=.69$ .

**Sample Item:** *The Educator projects a powerful magnetic presence.*



## RESEARCH QUESTIONS & RESULTS

### RQ1: Is sex of student associated with the perception of professors'

- Transformational Leadership
- Charisma
- Emotional Intelligence

Sex of the student was positively correlated with all three variables:

- Transformational Leadership ( $r = .14$ ,  $p < .05$ ).
- Charisma ( $r = .15$ ,  $p < .05$ ).
- Emotional intelligence ( $r = .21$ ,  $p < .05$ ).

An independent samples t-test showed that females rated professors higher on all three variables:

- Transformational Leadership [  $t(241) = -2.34$ ,  $p < .05$  ]
- Emotional intelligence [  $t(244) = -3.49$ ,  $p < .05$  ]
- Charisma [  $t(244) = -2.67$ ,  $p < .05$  ]

| Sex of Respondents | Transformational Leadership |                    | Charisma |                    | Emotional Intelligence |                    |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
|                    | Mean                        | Standard Deviation | Mean     | Standard Deviation | Mean                   | Standard Deviation |
| Male (N=75)        | 4.2586                      | .55206             | 4.4474   | .51085             | 3.9720                 | .67013             |
| Female (N=175)     | 4.4320                      | .52332             | 4.6127   | .41325             | 4.2503                 | .53030             |

### RQ2: Does sex of student's primary caregiver moderate the relationship between student sex and perception of professors'?

- Transformational Leadership
- Charisma
- Emotional Intelligence

Because a Pearson Correlation showed no significant association, the test of moderation was not calculated.

### RQ3: Is sex of the most influential caregiver associated with sex of the most influential professor?

A Pearson Correlation showed no significant association.

## DISCUSSION

Based on our findings for our first research question, we found that the sex of the student was associated with the perception of their chosen teachers' transformational leadership, emotional intelligence and charisma. It was found that female participants rated all professors higher in transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and charisma over male participants. This may tell us that female students see professors as more influential than male students. This means that students rate different professors, or leaders, differently based on their own sex. Previous research examines the sex of the leader much more often than the sex of the follower, but it could be that the sex of the follower and their perceptions of the leader are much more important.

Our second and third research questions examined possible relationships between the sex of the student, the sex of their primary caregiver, and their perceptions of their chosen influential educator. According to Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), students may be more likely to choose an influential professor based on qualities learned from a primary caregiver. Our findings, however, show that not only does the sex of the primary caregiver have no association with students' perceptions of professors, but sex of student also had no correlation with the sex of the professor they chose as influential. This shows that while we mirror people we find influential (according to Social Learning Theory), sex may play a much smaller role than previously thought.

A limitation of this research was the imbalance between sex of participants. It would be effective for further research to have an equal amount of both sexes represented. Also, it would benefit future research to explore relationships between sex, transformational leadership, emotional intelligence, and charisma, and less on the sex of the primary caregiver unless a stronger correlation was found given a different audience. Future research could also focus on one professor, and examine both male and female student's perceptions of that professor, rather than multiple professors, as in our study.

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