



A Study on the Dimensions of Leadership Practices with Respect to Gender in Secondary School Students

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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to study the differences in leadership practices with respect to gender in secondary school students. For this purpose, comparisons of the students' scores in the dimensions in leadership practices scale are carried out. Samples for the study include 50 urban students (33 boys and 17 girls) of classes VIII and IX of secondary school in Bal Nagar area of Hyderabad city, Telangana, India. The dimensions of Leadership practices are measured by collecting data using the Student Leadership Practices Scale - Self, prepared by Kouzes, J.M., and Posner, B.Z. (2006), for high school and college students. For data analysis, mean, standard deviation are used. The significance of the test is calculated using t-test for the level of significance α at 0.05 using SPSS Ver. 20. The findings of the study reveal no differences between the genders in the dimensions "Inspire a Shared Vision" and "Challenge the Process" and significant gender difference in other dimensions and the mean leadership practices score.

Keywords: Leadership practices, dimensions of leadership practices, student leadership practices scale, gender difference.

Introduction

According to the concept of Primal Leadership, the ability to self regulate emotions is at the heart of successful leadership¹.

The sections of the brain primarily responsible for emotional regulation are the amygdala which is the emotional brain² and the orbito-frontal cortex, a region in the prefrontal cortex associated with emotional self regulation. Women have significantly larger ratio of orbito-frontal cortex to amygdala when compared to men and they also have larger orbito-frontal cortices than men³. Moreover, the prefrontal cortex starts developing earlier in adolescent girls than in adolescent boys⁴. It is the last section of the brain to mature in mid-twenties⁵.

Based on these anatomical differences in gender with respect to emotional self regulation, the researcher tried to study the presence of any significant difference in the dimensions of the construct leadership practices in adolescent boys and girls. In a previous study, the researcher along with his colleagues found a positive, moderately strong and positive correlation relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership practices in adolescent secondary school students⁶. No significant difference between the genders was found when the construct Leadership practices was considered as a whole in that study.

To measure the dimensions of leadership practices in adolescent genders, the Student Leadership Practices Inventory – Self prepared by Kouzes and Posner^{7,8} was used. The National Academic Advising Association reviewed the LPI instrument and concluded: "presents a valid, practical model of leadership. The 'self' and 'observer' forms of the LPI provide valuable

information that students can use to examine their prior leadership experiences and compare their self-assessments with reliable feedback from others. This package provides everything a facilitator needs for a successful leadership development program in which students discover and value their own leadership opportunities and make action plans for their future leadership development"⁹.

Leadership: Northhouse defined leadership as "a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal"¹⁰.

Statement of the Problem: A Study on the Dimensions of Leadership Practices with Respect to Gender in Secondary School Students.

Research Objectives: i. To study the gender contrast in the dimension *Model the way*, of the construct leadership practices. ii. To study whether boys and girls differ from each other in the dimension *Inspire a shared vision*, of the construct leadership practices. iii. To study the difference between boys and girls with respect to the dimension *Challenge the process*, of the construct leadership practices. iv. To study the distinction between the genders in the dimension *Enable others to act*, of the construct leadership practices. v. To study the distinction between boys and girls in the dimension *Encourage the heart*, of the construct leadership practices. vi. To study the gender difference in the mean *Leadership practices* score.\)

Research Hypotheses: H₀: The boys and girls do not significantly differ from each other in the dimension *Model the*

way, of the construct leadership practices. H₀: The two genders do not significantly differ in the dimension *Inspire a shared vision*, of the construct leadership practices. H₀: There is no significant difference between boys and girls with respect to the dimension *Challenge the process*, of the construct leadership practices. H₀: The genders are not significantly different in the dimension *Enable others to act*, of the construct leadership practices. H₀: No significant difference exists between the genders in the dimension *Encourage the heart*, of the construct leadership practices. H₀: The boys and girls have no significant difference between them with respect to their mean *Leadership practices* score.

Methodology

For measuring leadership practices, the instrument Student Leadership Practices Inventory – Self, prepared by Kouzes and Posner^{7,8} was used. The instrument has 30 items, covering five dimensions of leadership namely, Modeling the Way, Inspiring a Shared Vision, Challenging the Process, Enabling Others to Act and Encouraging the Heart.

Kouzes and Posner^{7,8} reported the *Cronbach's alpha for the student LPI as 0.824 on American college students*. The tool possesses excellent face validity and construct validity, and is administered all around the world to measure leadership practices, cut across gender, socio-economic background and nationality.

The items 1, 6, 11, 16, 21 and 26 measure the dimension Modeling the way. The items 2, 7, 12, 17, 22 and 27 measure the dimension inspiring a shared vision. The items 3, 8, 13, 18, 23 and 28 measure the dimension challenging the process. The items 4, 9, 14, 19, 24 and 29 measure the dimension Enabling others to act and the items 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 measure the dimension encouraging the heart.

The participants read the statements of the instrument during the test and provide their responses on a five point Likert scale (1 = rarely, 2 = once in a while, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = very frequently). Scores range from 30 to 150. Higher a subject scores in the test, greater are his or her leadership behavior.

The population for this study was the secondary school students in private schools at secondary level of education in the urban areas of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation limits. The secondary school students of VIIIth and IXth classes from St'Mary Joseph High School, Bal Nagar, Hyderabad, were the samples in this study. Simple random sampling technique was used in this study while selecting a sample of 50 students from a secondary school in Bal Nagar area.

The Principal of M.N.R.P.G. Teacher Education College provided a formal permission letter to allow the researcher to administer the test for data collection. The letter was duly submitted to the Principal of St'Mary Joseph High School. The permission was granted by the Principal of the school to collect the data.

The Student Leadership Practices Scale - Self, prepared by Kouzes J.M., and Posner B.Z.^{7,8} for high school and college students, was administered on 14 to 16 years boys and girls of VIIIth and IXth class from St'Mary Joseph High School for the measurement of the dimensions of leadership practices in them.

Results and Discussion

Significant differences were found between the two genders in the dimension Model the Way, of the construct leadership practices, at the level of significance 0.05. Refer Table-1. No significant differences exist between the genders in the dimension Inspire a Shared Vision, of the construct leadership practices, at the level of significance 0.05. Refer Table-2. The genders do not significantly differ in the dimension Challenge the Process, of the construct leadership practices, at the level of significance 0.05. Refer Table-3. The boys and girls do significantly differ in the dimension Enable Others to Act, of the construct leadership practices, at the level of significance 0.05. Refer Table-4. There is significant difference between boys and girls with respect to the dimension Encourage the Heart of the construct leadership practices, at the level of significance 0.05. Refer Table-5. The two genders significantly differ from each other in the mean score of the construct leadership practices, at the level of significance 0.05. Refer Table-6.

Table-1
Testing Hypothesis One

Mean, Standard Deviation and Significance of the Genders with respect to the Dimension Model the Way							
Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-critical	t-calculated	*Sig.	Result
Male	33	3.989	0.408	2.01	2.123	Yes	H ₀ :Rejected
Female	17	5.492	1.225				

*For level of significance 0.05 (2-tailed), degree of freedom 48 and p-value 0.039.

Table-2
Testing Hypothesis Two

Mean, Standard Deviation and Significance of the Genders with respect to the Dimension Inspire a Shared Vision							
Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-critical	t-calculated	*Sig.	Result
Male	33	3.661	0.385	2.01	0.904	No	H ₀ :Accepted
Female	17	3.558	0.372				

*For level of significance 0.05 (2-tailed), degree of freedom 48 and p-value 0.371.

Table-3
Testing Hypothesis Three

Mean, Standard Deviation and Significance of the Genders with respect to the Dimension Challenge the Process							
Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-critical	t-calculated	*Sig.	Result
Male	33	4.348	0.439	2.01	0.107	No	H ₀ :Accepted
Female	17	4.333	0.536				

*For level of significance 0.05 (2-tailed), degree of freedom 48 and p-value 0.915.

Table-4
Testing Hypothesis Four

Mean, Standard Deviation and Significance of the Genders with respect to the Dimension Enable Others to Act							
Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-critical	t-calculated	*Sig.	Result
Male	33	4.489	0.793	2.01	2.781	Yes	H ₀ :Rejected
Female	17	4.573	1.179				

*For level of significance 0.05 (2-tailed), degree of freedom 48 and p-value 0.008.

Table-5
Testing hypothesis five

Mean, Standard Deviation and Significance of the Genders with respect to the Dimension Encourage the Heart							
Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-critical	t-calculated	*Sig.	Result
Male	33	4.166	0.37	2.01	2.992	Yes	H ₀ :Rejected
Female	17	3.823	0.41				

*For level of significance 0.05 (2-tailed), degree of freedom 48 and p-value 0.004.

Table-6
Testing Hypothesis Six

Mean, Standard Deviation and Significance of the Genders with respect to the Mean Leadership Practices Score							
Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-critical	t-calculated	*Sig.	Result
Male	33	4.079	0.308	2.01	2.598	Yes	H ₀ :Rejected
Female	17	3.854	0.246				

*For level of significance 0.05 (2-tailed), degree of freedom 48 and p-value 0.012.

Conclusion

The present study tried to find the presence of any significant difference in the dimensions of leadership practices in adolescent boys and girls. Gender-wise, the students

significantly differed in the dimensions Model the way, Enable others to act and Encourage the heart along with mean leadership practices construct score, with the means of boys greater than the means of girls in these measurement. However,

no gender difference existed in the dimensions Inspire a shared vision and Challenge the process.

However, this study was conducted on only 50 secondary school students due to constraints like money and time. More studies on similar lines in multiple cultural settings and on larger samples, can well establish the role of gender in leadership practices. Also, the period of adolescence is a transient time physically, psychologically, emotionally and socially. Concrete findings in neuroscience in future might establish the different rates of development of the prefrontal cortex in adolescent boys and girls and thus provide a sound scientific basis to this exploratory study.

In light of such a scenario in near future, the curriculum designers, educators and administrators would be bound to take cognizance of the latest developments and bring the needed changes in the instruction of leadership practices at school and college levels.

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