



Authentic management as a moderator of the relationship between the congruence of gender role identity - gender management characteristics, and leader-member exchange (LMX)



Aharon Tziner* and Liron Barsheshet-Picke

School of Behavioral Studies, NAC, Israel

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effect of the congruence of gender role identity (androgynous/non-androgynous) and gender management characteristics (communal/agentive) on the quality of leader-member exchange (LMX); also whether authentic management is a variable that moderates this relationship. The study hypothesized the existence of a positive relationship between gender role identity and gender management characteristics with the quality of LMX. An additional hypothesis was that authentic management moderates and explains this relationship. The sample included 120 women subordinates managed by women. The respondents completed a questionnaire, in which they were requested to evaluate and describe their perception of their manager according to the study variables: gender role identity (androgynous/non-androgynous), gender management characteristics (communal/agentive), the quality of LMX, and the degree of authenticity that characterized their management style. At the same time, 24 managers were asked to complete a questionnaire that dealt with the quality of their leader-member exchange (LMX). The findings supported all of our hypotheses and indicated a positive relationship between the variables. When gender role identity and gender management characteristics are congruent, the quality of LMX is perceived as higher. In addition, we found that authentic management is indeed a moderating variable. That is to say, the relationship between the congruence of gender role identity and gender management characteristics and LMX is moderated and explained by authentic management. Additional findings point to the gap between managers and subordinates when evaluating and reporting LMX. When no congruence was found, there was a gap between the managers' and subordinates' reports, i.e., the managers evaluated LMX as higher. On the other hand, when congruence was found there were no significant differences between subordinates' and managers' reports regarding LMX.

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La gestión auténtica como moderadora de la relación entre (1) la congruencia de la identidad del rol de género –características de género de la gestión– y (2) el intercambio líder-subordinado (LMX)

RESUMEN

Este trabajo analiza el efecto de la congruencia de la identidad del rol de género (andrógina/no andrógina) y las características de género de la gestión (comunitaria/egocéntrica) en la calidad del intercambio líder-subordinado (LMX), así como que si la gestión auténtica es una variable que modere dicha relación. El estudio plantea la hipótesis de una relación positiva entre la identidad del rol de género y las características de género de la gestión con la calidad de la LMX. Otra hipótesis ha sido que la gestión auténtica modera y explica esta relación. La muestra constaba de 120 mujeres dirigidas por otras mujeres. Cumplimentaron un cuestionario en el que se les pedía evaluar y describir su percepción de su jefa de acuerdo a las variables del estudio: identidad del rol de género (andrógina/no andrógina), características de género de la gestión (comunitaria/egocéntrica), la calidad de la LMX y el grado de autenticidad característico de su estilo de gestión. Además se pidió a 24 directivos que cumplimentasen un cuestionario sobre la relación líder-subordi-

Palabras clave:

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*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Prof. Dr. Aharon Tziner. Schools of Behavioral Studies and Business Administration. Netanya Academic College, 1. University St. Netanya, Israel. E-mail: atziner@netanya.ac.il

nado (LMX) que les caracterizaba. Los resultados avalaban todas nuestras hipótesis, señalando una relación positiva entre las variables. Cuando la identidad del rol de género y las características de género de la gestión eran congruentes se percibía que la calidad de la LMX era superior. Además se encontró que la gestión auténtica es realmente una variable moderadora; es decir, la relación entre la congruencia de la identidad del rol de género y las características de género de la gestión y la LMX es moderada y explicada por la gestión auténtica. Otros resultados revelan la brecha entre líderes y subordinados al evaluar la LMX e informar sobre ella. Cuando no se hallaba congruencia había una brecha entre los informes de los líderes y de los subordinados; es decir, los primeros evaluaban mejor la LMX. Por otra parte, cuando había congruencia no había diferencias significativas entre los informes de subordinados y líderes en relación a la LMX.

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Is there such a thing as “feminine” management? Do women and men behave differently as managers? This question has been studied extensively, yet is still controversial. Nevertheless, there is consensus that women encounter more obstacles to become managers, particularly management roles that are perceived as masculine (Mor, Mehta, Fridman, & Morris, 2011).

The March 2011 edition of the *Status* management journal dealt with this question and was entirely devoted to the issue of feminine management. The introduction was written by Rachel Ben-Zvi, CEO of “Motto - Mass Communication”, who manages 170 employees of which 90% are women. She claims that there is no such thing as “feminine” management; there is “natural” management, in which one needs not make an effort to become a management-bully in order to help employees to become a better version of themselves.

So, who is a good manager? Ben-Zvi used a parable to answer this question: “A good manager is one who can be an octopus and a wild horse at the same time. A wild horse is motivated by the urge to be first, to rebel against conventions; it is determined, passionate, and focused on the desired outcome. In parallel to the organizational world: to lead a vision and a strategy. And how does the octopus fit in? In the ‘how’ – the tactics – by achieving the daily balance, reinforcing the weak arms with strong arms, and controlling the workload and the pressure that allow the organization to move ahead securely.”

It can be said that this parable includes the combination of the main variables of the present study: gender management styles and their integration, and, of course, the result: achieving sound leader-member exchange based on trust, security, and reciprocity. The parable primarily emphasizes the variable that is at the core of this study: “natural” management, that is to say, *authentic management*. Nowadays, the demand for this type of management is increasing, and authenticity is becoming a valued asset in the organizational world.

Most research on this issue has addressed the role of charisma rather than authenticity. However, some studies have shown the link between awareness/authenticity and charisma. An aware manager can influence his or her subordinates and be appreciated by them (Hsiung, 2011). Therefore, when women adopt behavior that is contrary to their gender identity, it can be seen or interpreted as inauthentic or “by script”. Thus, a female manager is perceived as “real” or “playing a role” according to the awareness and sincerity that she displays (Kawakami, White, & Langer, 2000).

Recent studies (Kark, Waismal-Manor, & Shamir, 2012; Koenig, Mitchell, Eagly, & Ristikari, 2011) have indicated that both men and women in the labor force assume characteristics that are typical of the other gender. But, whereas men use “feminine” qualities as an additional means to gain control and satisfaction, women do not enjoy the advantage of flexibility and integration, thus creating a new asymmetry between men and women in the labor force (Mor et al., 2011).

This asymmetry takes discussion of this issue one step forward, because its roots are actually in the integration rather than in the conflicting expectations and stereotypes of gender and role, which are usually prominent in related studies. Therefore, in the present study we have chosen to focus on an androgynous group of women

that combine “male” and “female” characteristics, and to examine whether authentic management style can balance the consequent asymmetry and serve as a solution for women managers.

Theoretical Review

Congruence of gender role identity (androgynous/non-androgynous) and gender management characteristics (communal/agentive)

Congruence and its components. Discussion of the variable “congruence” requires decomposition and definition of its components in order to create its subsequent conceptual reconstruction. In regard to the present study, congruence means that female managers act according to expectations and beliefs attributed to them by their gender and according to their perceived gender identity. The assumption is that women make an effort to match their gender role to their management role despite frequent contradictions, which might form a management style that is different than men’s (Rosette & Tost, 2010).

Gender role identity (androgynous/non-androgynous). Gender roles in society are shared expectations and beliefs that are attributed to individuals based on their gender. Gender roles include rights and obligations that are defined as befitting men and women in society. Gender roles affect behavior not only because men and women react to society’s expectations, but also because most people internalize their gender roles (Eagly & Johannesen, 2001).

Androgyny is defined as the degree of one’s psychological flexibility regarding gender-related stereotypical behaviors, namely, women that combine male and female stereotypical behaviors. Operationally, based on Bem’s (1974) Sex Role Inventory, an androgynous woman manager receives high scores on both the female and the male scales (Kark et al., 2012).

Gender management characteristics (communal/agentive). Managers are affected not only by their place in the hierarchy, but by their gender roles. There is agreement today that gender roles boil over to organizations, and therefore gender serves as an “identity background” in the workplace (Eagly & Johannesen, 2001). On the basis of the Social Role Theory regarding gender differences and similarities, expectations from leaders based on their categorization as male/female are usually defined as either *agentive* (a style attributed mainly to men and described as assertive, controlling, and confident) or *communal* (a style attributed mainly to women and described as being helpful, kind, gentle, sympathetic, and sensitive to others) (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000).

Do men and women act differently as managers? This has been a very controversial question for many years in the academic and organizational worlds. However, there is general consensus that women encounter more obstacles to becoming managers, probably because management roles invariably incorporate the dominance of male characteristics (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Koenig et al., 2011).

Studies on this topic range from traditional perceptions that male and female management styles are totally diverse to social perceptions that suggest minimizing the importance of gender

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