

**Gender and Gendered Personality Traits of the Leader: Role of Need for
Leadership**

by

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STATEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

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ABSTRACT

The landscape of leadership is often dominated by gender stereotypes, where men are predominantly preferred for leadership roles. This study delves into the tangled dynamics of leadership preferences, specifically examining the impact of gender, gendered personality traits and the individual's need for leadership. Drawing on the framework proposed by de Vries (1998) on the "Need for Leadership," this research investigates the preferences among four leader profiles: masculine-male, masculine-female, feminine-male, and feminine-female. The study, conducted with 248 participants from Amazon's MTurk, utilized a two-by-two design to present these profiles and evaluate their suitability as leaders. Results challenge conventional gender norms, suggesting that the preference for leaders is not solely determined by traditional gender stereotypes but is influenced by individual needs for leadership. Furthermore, the research underscores the importance of aligning leadership styles with followers' needs, emphasizing the potential for enhanced work engagement and performance. This study offers significant contributions to the literature on gender and leadership, suggesting a more inclusive understanding of leadership dynamics that goes beyond traditional gendered expectations.

Keywords: gender, gendered personality traits, need for leadership

ÖZET

Liderlik alanı genellikle cinsiyet stereotiplerinin hakimiyetindedir ve liderlik rolleri için ağırlıklı olarak erkekler tercih edilmektedir. Bu çalışma, özellikle cinsiyetin, cinsiyete dayalı kişilik özelliklerinin ve bireyin liderlik ihtiyacının etkisini inceleyerek liderlik tercihlerinin karmaşık dinamiklerini araştırmaktadır. De Vries'in (1998) "Liderlik İhtiyacı" konusunda önerdiği çerçeveden yararlanan bu araştırma, dört lider profili arasındaki tercihleri araştırıyor: maskülen-erkek, maskülen -kadın, feminen-erkek ve feminen -kadın. Amazon MTurk'ten 248 katılımcıyla gerçekleştirilen çalışmada, bu profilleri sunmak ve lider olarak uygunluklarını değerlendirmek için ikiye iki tasarım kullanıldı. Sonuçlar, geleneksel cinsiyet normlarına meydan okuyor; lider tercihinin yalnızca geleneksel cinsiyet stereotipleri tarafından belirlenmediğini, aynı zamanda bireysel liderlik ihtiyaçlarından da etkilendigini gösteriyor. Ayrıca araştırma, liderlik tarzlarını takipçilerin ihtiyaçlarıyla uyumlu hale getirmenin önemini altını çizerek, işe bağlılık ve performansı artırma potansiyelini vurguluyor. Bu çalışma, cinsiyet ve liderlik literatürüne önemli katkılar sunarak, geleneksel cinsiyetçi beklentilerin ötesine geçen, liderlik dinamiklerine ilişkin daha kapsayıcı bir anlayış ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: cinsiyet, cinsiyete dayalı kişilik özellikleri, liderlik ihtiyacı

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1. Introduction

“In the future, there will be no female leaders. There will just be leaders.”

-Sheryl Sandberg, former COO, Meta Platforms

When people are selecting a leader, they often choose men for leadership positions, as in Schein's (1973) “think manager-think male” paradigm. Women are not only preferred less for leadership positions but also get negative evaluations since they are violating role congruity (Eagly & Karau, 2002) since men are supposed to be leaders and women are not. However, it may not be easy to distinguish whether we prefer men for leader leadership positions because they are men or “masculine”. The literature on leader selections conflates gender and gendered personality trait (Koenig et al., 2011), assuming that all men are masculine, and all women are feminine. Since gender and gendered personality traits are social concepts, assuming all men are masculine and all women are feminine may not be accurate in all leadership cases. There are masculine female leaders (Kawakami et al., 2000) and feminine male leaders (Chamorro-Premuzic, 2019). Moving on with 2 additional leader profiles (masculine female and feminine male leaders), it wouldn't be possible to make a statement that when we are asked to choose a leader, we choose men for leadership positions. Additionally, it appears to be unclear whether people prefer leaders because they are men or masculine. Thus, it might be critical to distinguish these features of the leader candidates. When we disentangle the gender and gendered personality trait of the leader candidate, we end up with four different leader candidate profiles: masculine-male, masculine-female, feminine-male, and feminine-female.

At this point, the question turns into “Who is preferred as leader among these four profiles?” The answer may be that “it depends”. There may be many reasons for people's preference for a particular leader profile, such as the autonomy level of the job, the person's

competence, experience, personality, and so on. It is not feasible to test all these possible factors individually and analyze their effect on people's decisions in leader selection. de Vries, in 1998, developed a comprehensive construct named "Need for Leadership". The Need for Leadership is defined as "the extent to which an employee wishes the leader to facilitate the paths towards individual, group, and/or organizational goals" (de Vries et al., 2002) simply a construct defining one's level of need to be led by a leader in any given context. The current research aims to answer who people prefer among the four leader candidate profiles (masculine-male, masculine-female, feminine-male, feminine-female) and how these preferences differ depending on people's need for leadership.

When we associate leadership with masculinity and men, women leaders and feminine men may face negative evaluations and discrimination. However, not for every person masculine man leaders need to be the ideal leader type. People with a low level of need for leadership, where a person needs minimum guidance, may need a leader with more feminine traits who is understanding, caring, friendly, etc., in order to be led about their interpersonal matters. Contrarily, people with a high level of need for leadership, where a person needs guidance, may need a leader with more masculine traits who is determined, self-sufficient, willing to take a stand, etc., in order to be told precisely what to do.

The current study aims to contribute to the literature of leadership and gender in terms of including masculine female and feminine male leader profiles by questioning the assumptions that were mentioned above as assuming all men are masculine, and all women are feminine. Additionally, this study aspires to contribute to the literature by further examining the role of need for leadership in leader selection among the four leader profiles. For the practical side of the current research, working with a leader that suits their followers' needs would increase their work engagement, thus increasing their motivation and performance. Therefore, understanding the followers' need for leadership would benefit many

organizations from both financial and sustainability perspectives. Additionally, as gender stereotypes play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions and expectations of leaders who challenge conventional gender norms, masculine-female leaders and feminine-male leaders face the influence of these stereotypes, which can have an undesirable impact on their leadership effectiveness. Research by Eagly and Karau (2002) suggests that masculine-female leaders, characterized by traits typically associated with masculinity, may be perceived as overly dominant, facing resistance from subordinates who struggle to adapt their leadership style with prevailing gender norms. Similarly, another study conducted by Rudman and Glick (2001) indicate that feminine-male leaders, embodying traits traditionally linked with femininity, may be viewed as less assertive and less competent, leading to concerns about their leadership capacity. These stereotypes may significantly hinder the career development of both masculine-female and feminine-male leaders, which emphasizes the importance for organizations to challenge and address these biases to foster diverse and inclusive leadership (Hart and Fujimura, 2014).

2. Literature Review

2.1. *Gender and Gendered Personality Traits in Leadership*

The study of gender, and gendered personality traits which can be defined as “aspects of their personality align with traits that are traditionally considered masculine or feminine” (Coffé, 2018, p.170) has been a subject of significant number of studies and debates in psychology and many other fields (Newton & Stewart, 2013; Jones et al., 2019).

Understanding how gendered personality traits and their expression may be important and beneficial for comprehending individual differences and their implications for various aspects of life, including leadership behaviors, interpersonal relationships, etc.

Historically, Western societies have been holding on to the traditional gender roles: men are associated with agency parallel to masculinity, which is characterized with being

aggressive, independent, assertive, and determinant, whereas women are associated with communion parallel to femininity, that is characterized with being polite, helpful, dependent, and concerning for others (Bakan, 1966; Bem, 1974). These traditional gender roles have shaped the perceptions of appropriate behavior for men and women (Bakan, 1966).

Masculine traits include assertiveness, ambition, and emotional restraint, etc., whereas feminine traits include nurturance, empathy, and emotional expressiveness, etc. (Spence & Helmreich, 1978). It is important to add that these people may possess these traits on a spectrum, and they may have a combination of both masculine and feminine traits regardless of their gender.

From an early age, children are exposed to gender-specific socialization, which shapes their behavior and self-concept (Lips, 2008). These socialization processes contribute to gaining the gendered personality traits. Research suggests that societal expectations on gender roles can influence the types of careers people are encouraged to pursue (Diekman et al., 2011). For example, men may be more encouraged to pursue careers in managerial positions, which are often associated with masculine traits like analytical thinking and competitiveness, while women may be encouraged to caregiving professions that fit with feminine traits (Diekman et al., 2011).

According to the meta-analytic findings by Eagly et al. (1995), in an environment where men are dominant by the number, women leaders are evaluated negatively in terms of their effectiveness. While women leaders suffer by this negative evaluation, because men are expected to have masculine traits, feminine men similar to masculine women also suffer from the similar negative evaluation. The reason behind this is they would be violating the social norms according to the social role theory (Eagly, 1978) as the role attributed to the men is to have masculine traits and not feminine traits. Moreover, including all the previous arguments, the main reason behind those negative evaluations would be that an effective and successful

leader is associated with men more than women, which is supported repeatedly by the findings of multiple studies (Schein, 1973; Schein, 1975; Schein and Mueller, 1992). Even though women in the US are occupying half of the workforce, in the Fortune 500 companies, only about 15% of them are in managerial positions (Soares et al., 2013). Historically, leadership positions have been dominated by men, reflecting deep-rooted gender biases and stereotypes. This phenomenon, often referred to as the "glass ceiling," refers to the invisible barriers that have limited women's access to top leadership roles (Morrison et al., 1987). Traditional stereotypes associating leadership with masculine traits, such as assertiveness and dominance, contributed to these inequalities (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Leadership perceptions are often influenced by implicit biases related to gender, research has shown that people may hold unconscious stereotypes that associate leadership with masculinity, leading to biases in evaluating leaders (Rudman & Glick, 1999). These biases can result in a "think manager-think male" paradigm (Schein, 1973), disadvantaging female leaders.

Research has explored potential gender differences in leadership styles, suggesting that women may be more likely to adopt transformational and participative leadership styles, emphasizing collaboration, empathy, and interpersonal relationships (Eagly & Carli, 2007). In contrast, men may lean towards transactional and autocratic styles, focusing on task-oriented actions and directive behaviors (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). It should be noted that these features of leadership styles are also parallel to the masculine and feminine traits, respectively.

The role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002) claims that when certain features are attributed to certain role, this study focuses on the role of leader/manager, people who possess these roles without those attributions would be violating the norms. Specifically, women occupying managerial roles, because they are violating social norms as they are not men,

leads them to face negative evaluations. In other words, because women are associated with communal qualities, and successful leaders are believed to have agentic qualities, women are not associated with leader positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Thus, the current study proposes that, gender and gendered personality traits will have an impact on one's leader selection. Specifically:

Hypothesis 1: People will prefer the masculine man candidate more than the feminine man candidate for a leader position.

Although feminine men would be penalized by society because of violating social norms, according to the gender hierarchy, masculinity is perceived as an achieved status that can be rewarded (Eagly & Wood, 2012). Therefore, among the women, having masculine traits may be perceived as an achievement. Building on that, the current study proposes the second hypothesis below:

Hypothesis 2: People will prefer masculine woman candidates more than feminine woman candidates for a leader position.

2.2 Need for Leadership

Leadership is a concept that comes within the needs of the followers (de Vries, 1998). The Need for Leadership (de Vries, 1998) can be defined as the extent to which people desire guidance, direction, or support from a leader in a given situation (Vroom & Jago, 2007). It suggests that leadership is not always needed and, in some cases, may even be unwanted. Various methods, such as self-report questionnaires, behavioral observations, and situational analysis, have been employed to measure the Need for Leadership (de Vries, 1998). While leader-centered approaches are occupying the majority of the leadership studies, the concept of "need for leadership" is related to the subordinate rather than the leader (de Vries, 1998). The need for leadership cannot be considered as a basic need but considered as a quasi-need

(Lewin, 1951). According to the substitute theory of leadership by Kerr and Jermier (1978), leadership is implied to be necessary for some people, whereas for others to be unnecessary. Previous studies used the term "Need for Supervision" to address this issue (e.g., Ashkanasy & Gallois, 1994), with meaning need for leadership in organizations. The concept of the "Need for Leadership" by de Vries (1998) appears to be parallel with situational leadership theories, which emphasize the importance of adapting leadership behaviors to the specific demands of a given situation (Hersey & Blanchard, 1969; Fiedler, 1967). This perspective of the Need for Leadership (de Vries, 1998) challenges the one-size-fits-all leadership model, arguing that leadership effectiveness depends on matching leadership behaviors to the profile of the leaders to the followers' needs and the context. Previous studies have revealed many findings under the Need for Leadership concept. For instance, people with low self-efficacy or a high need for structure tend to have a greater need for leadership (Eisenbeiss et al., 2008).

There are several examples where leadership may not be necessary as we presume. For instance, the communication cost between the leader and the subordinate can be higher than the value the leader can add (Williamson, 1975). Specifically, when one has lower need for leadership, the time and the energy spent by the leader to give guidance to their follower and by the follower to receive the guidance may not worth the end result of this communication since the follower has almost no need for this. Additionally, the energy and time consumed by the supervision can be highly costly for both the leader and the subordinate (Martin, 1983). Substitute theory by Kerr and Jermier (1978) suggests that how much one values leadership may vary depending on how much one needs leadership. It appears that a higher level of need for leadership can be implied as higher importance given to the leadership and leader position.

Although the current study only focuses on the role of need for leadership in leader profile preference, this study acknowledges that the leadership style or as the current study's phrasing, the leader's profile plays a significant role in meeting the Need for Leadership.

Leaders who are flexible with their leadership style to match the needs of their followers and the situation tend to be more effective (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Therefore, understanding the Need for Leadership would have significant implications for leaders in practice. Leaders who are aware of the demands and needs of their followers and the situation can adapt their leadership behaviors accordingly. This adaptability can benefit the leader-follower relationships and overall leadership effectiveness.

Since a successful leader is associated with men and masculinity more than women and femininity, I expect that a higher need for leadership will be associated with preferring man and masculine leader more than woman and feminine leader. Specifically:

Hypothesis 3: People who have the higher levels of need for leadership will prefer masculine man candidates more than three other candidate profiles (feminine man, feminine woman, masculine woman), for leader position.

Hypothesis 4: People who have the lower levels of need for leadership will prefer feminine woman candidates more than three other candidate profiles (feminine man, masculine man, masculine woman), for leader position.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The data was collected through the participants registered on MTurk Amazon Web Services which provides an online data collection service. The prerequisites of the current study were to be either a student or an employee or both and to be between the age 18 and 65 due to the common working age gap. The reason for the prerequisites is to enable the participants to answer the questions related to their work/school life and leaders.

A total of 466 participants completed the survey. The power analysis using the G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007) software revealed that the suggested sample size of this study is 195 for 0.30 effect size with 5% error probability. Out of 466 participants 218 participants were excluded from the data based on the following at least one of the criteria that are: (1) they completed the study in extremely short period of time (e.g. under 3 minutes), (2) they gave irrelevant or copy/paste answers to the open-ended questions, (3) they participated more than once.

The final sample of 248 participants consisted of 39.5% females and 60.5% males. The mean age was 34.29 and 84.3% were in a leadership/manager position at the time of the study.

3.2. Measures

Demographics. Demographics were measured by asking participants' gender (woman, man, other, i do not want to specify), age, education (middle school graduate, high school graduate, university student, university graduate, graduate student, postgraduate), duration of their work or internship experience (none, less than a year, a year or more than a year), whether they are currently in a leadership/manager position.

Need for Leadership. Need for leadership was measured by using the scale "Need for Leadership" developed by de Vries (1998) in Dutch language and translated to English by de Vries et al. (2002) (see Appendix A). The scale has 17 items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from "completely disagree (1) to completely agree (5)". A sample item was as follows: "I need my manager/leader to arrange things with higher-level management.". De Vries (1998) has shown that the scale of Need for Leadership is a unidimensional and reliable scale with the Cronbach's alpha value of .91. The

Cronbach's alpha value of the current study is also .91, which confirms the measure is homogeneous and unidimensional.

Gender and Gendered Personality Traits of the Leader. Each participant was presented one type of leader profile that is created by a two-by-two design, masculine-feminine and male-female. The leader profile that was presented to each participant was named as “Leader Type” in the analysis. Masculine and feminine items were derived from the adjectives in Bem's Sex-Role Inventory (1974) and the gender of the candidate was displayed by generic male and female names. As an example, a feminine-male leader profile was presented as follows: “Someone is being sought for a manager/leadership position in your institution and James is one of the candidates who are found to be sufficient in terms of his general performance. People around him generally describe James as caring, sympathetic, sensitive to the needs of others, understanding, willing to soothe hurt feelings, warm, caring, and gentle.” Similar scenarios have been developed for masculine-male, masculine-female, and feminine-female types.

Participants were asked how likely they were to prefer the described leader as someone they would work under by asking the question “To what extent do you think this person is suitable for the position of leader/manager?”. Participants were presented with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from “not suitable” (1) to “very suitable” (5). The preference of each participant on a 1-to-5 scale was named as “Leader Rate” in the analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics, correlations among variables and reliability coefficients are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics, alpha coefficients, and correlations.

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	Skewness	Kurtosis
1. Gender of the Participant	NA	NA						NA	NA
2. Need for Leadership	66.36	10.19	-.05					-.74	1.09
3. Gender of the Leader Candidate	NA	NA	.07	.03				NA	NA
4. Gendered Personality Trait of the Leader Candidate	NA	NA	-.03	-.05	-.02			NA	NA
5. Leader/Manager Position of the Participant	NA	NA	.10	-.08	.06	.06		NA	NA
6. Leader Rate	3.94	.71	-.41	.24**	-.01	-.09	-.09	-.33	.02

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. NA: non-applicable

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

To test our first hypothesis, a General Linear Model was performed on the leader rating depending on the gender of the leader candidate and gendered personality trait of the leader candidate with the covariate variable need for leadership controlling the gender of the participant. Prior to further analysis to compare leader profiles masculine man, feminine man and masculine woman, feminine woman; interaction of gender and gendered personality trait of the leader candidate was tested. There was no significant interaction observed for the gender and gendered personality trait of the leader candidate, $F(1, 247) = 2.42$, $p = .121$, $\eta^2 = .27$ (Table 2). Additionally, there were no significant main effect observed for the gender of the leader candidate, $F(1, 247) = .14$, $p = .704$, $\eta^2 = -.10$ and no significant main effect observed for the gendered personality trait of the leader candidate, $F(1, 247) = 3.39$, $p = .07$, $\eta^2 = -.03$. Further comparisons weren't tested as the interaction effect was not significant.

Table 2

General Linear Model analysis for the effect of the gendered personality trait of the leader candidate, gender of the leader candidate and need for leadership.

Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI		p
			LL	UL	
Gender of the Participant	.05	.10	-.13	.22	.62
Gendered Personality					
Trait of the Leader	.03	.12	-.21	.26	.83
Candidate					

Gender of the Leader					
	-.10	.13	-.35	.14	.41
Candidate					
Need for Leadership	.17	.004	.01	.03	<.001
Gendered Personality					
Trait of the Leader					
	.27	.18	-.07	.62	.121
Candidate * Gender of the					
Leader Candidate					

In order to test our third and fourth hypotheses, a General Linear Model was again performed on the leader rating depending on the gender of the leader candidate and gendered personality trait of the leader candidate with the covariate variable need for leadership controlling for the gender of the participant. There was no significant interaction observed for the gender of the leader candidate and need for leadership, $F(1, 247) = 1.79$, $p = .182$, $\eta^2 = -.01$. However, the interaction between gendered personality trait of the leader candidate and need for leadership was significant, $F(1, 247) = 11.53$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = -.03$ (Table 3).

Table 3

General Linear Model analysis for the effect of the gendered personality trait of the leader candidate, gender of the leader candidate and need for leadership.

Effect	Estimate	SE	95% CI		<i>p</i>
			LL	UL	
Gender of the Participant	.06	.09	-.12	.23	.53

Gendered Personality

Trait of the Leader	1.93	.58	.78	3.08	.001
Candidate					
Need for Leadership	.04	.01	.02	.06	<.001
Gender of the Leader					
Candidate	.62	.58	-.52	1.76	.29
Gendered Personality					
Trait of the Leader					
Candidate * Need for	-.03	.01	-.10	.59	<.001
Leadership					
Gender of the Leader					
Candidate * Need for					
Leadership	-.01	.01	-.03	.01	.18

In order to investigate further the interaction effect observed for the gendered personality trait of the leader candidate and need for leadership, moderation analysis was conducted using SPSS's PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). For comprehensive understanding of the moderated relationship, the variables need for leadership and gendered personality trait of the leader candidate were tested as independent variable and moderator exchangeable. In the model tested for need for leadership as a moderator, simple main effect of gendered personality trait of the leader candidate on leader rate was not significant at higher level of need for leadership ($b = 0.14$, $SE = 0.12$, $t = 1.17$), but significant at lower level of need for leadership ($b = 0.44$, $SE = 0.12$, $t = -3.59$, $p < .001$). See Figure 1, as for low level of need for leadership masculine candidates are being significantly rated higher, while for higher levels of need for leadership it is not the case.

Figure 1

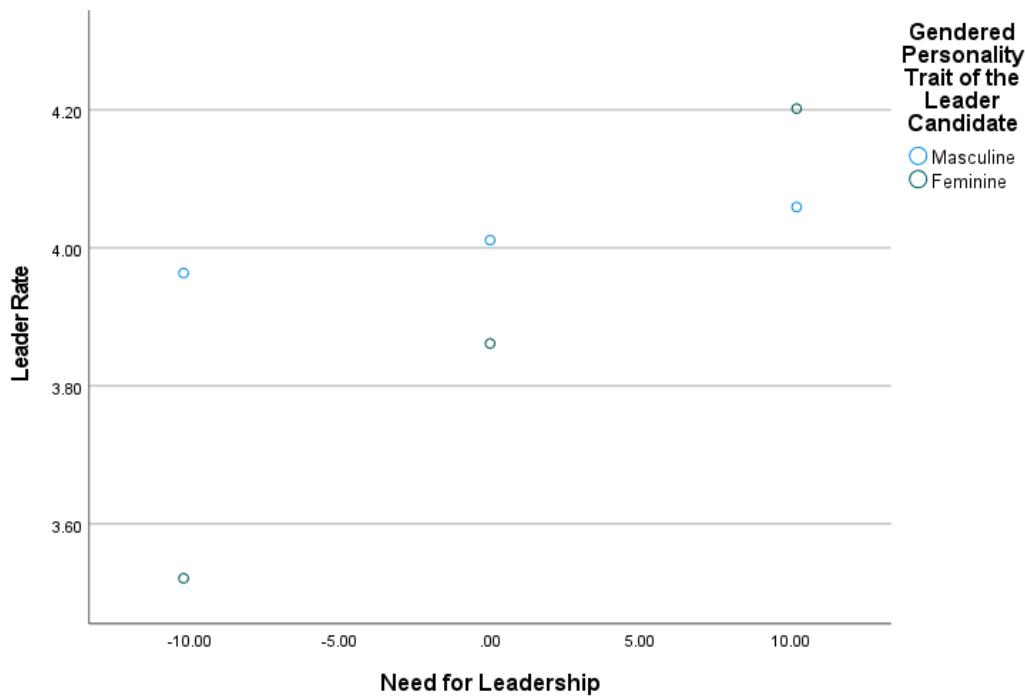
Plot of the effect of gendered personality trait of the leader candidate moderated by the need for leadership.



In the model tested for gendered personality trait of the leader candidate as a moderator, the simple slope of need for leadership on leader rate was not significant at masculine leader candidate ($b = 0.005$, $SE = 0.01$, $t = 0.84$, $p = .40$) but significant at feminine leader candidate ($b = 0.03$, $SE = 0.01$, $t = 5.13$, $p < .000$). See Figure 2, as for masculine candidates the leader ratings start higher on the lower levels of need for leadership compared to feminine candidates but for feminine candidates, leader ratings increase significantly with the level of need for leadership.

Figure 2

Plot of the effect of need for leadership moderated by the gendered personality trait of the leader candidate.



5. Discussion

The outcomes of this study challenge the anticipated relationships between gender stereotypes and leadership preferences proposed by the initial hypotheses. Hypothesis 1, suggesting a preference for masculine male leaders over feminine male leaders, and Hypothesis 2, proposing a preference for masculine female leaders over feminine female leaders, did not receive significant support from the collected data as there were no significant interaction effect of gender and gendered personality trait of the leader candidate. This discrepancy challenges conventional assumptions about the inherent connection between masculinity and leader emergence, urging a more nuanced understanding of leadership attributes.

The present study aimed to investigate the impact of the gender and gendered personality traits of leader candidates on leadership ratings, with the inclusion of the covariate variable need for leadership. The results of the General Linear Model revealed noteworthy findings, supporting some hypotheses while rejecting others.

First, there was no significant effect for the gender of the leader candidate. This suggests that the gender of the leader candidate did not have a substantial influence on leadership ratings. However, significant effects were observed for the gendered personality trait of the leader candidate and the need for leadership. These results indicate that the perceived personality traits and the general need for leadership in a candidate play crucial roles in influencing leadership ratings, thus possibly in leader selection. Moreover, a significant interaction effect was found for the gendered personality trait of the leader candidate and the need for leadership. This interaction highlights the importance of considering both the personality traits of the leader candidate and the perceived need for leadership for employees in understanding how these factors jointly influence leadership ratings.

This study suggests that leadership selection is a complex process that extends beyond traditional gender stereotypes. It highlights the evolving landscape of leadership, where the multifaceted nature of effective leadership goes beyond fixed gender expectations. Although the literature on gender and leadership repeatedly suggests that (Schein, 1973; Schein, 1975; Schein and Mueller, 1992) people would prefer masculine leaders over feminine leaders for both genders, the current study aimed to add another layer to the dynamics of this leader selection process. The introduction of the "Need for Leadership" concept by de Vries (1998) as a crucial factor influencing leader preferences adds depth to the understanding of leadership dynamics. The current study reveals a significant role of individuals' need for leadership in their preferences for specific leader profiles. Participants with lower levels of need for leadership tend to favor masculine leaders linked with assertiveness and directive qualities. In contrast, those with a higher level of need for leadership did not have a preference between feminine and masculine leaders. As masculine personality traits are task-oriented, which does not require any guidance or support necessarily for someone who seeks to be led by another person therefore, for someone who has low level of need for leadership

may prefer a masculine leader for themselves (Faizan et al, 2018). For example, someone who has low level of need for leadership would not be seeking for a leader to fulfill their need to be led but may seek for a leader who will enable them to finish their tasks, solve the problems or simply “get things done”. On the other hand, feminine personality traits are person-oriented which requires personal attention, providing support etc. Therefore, for someone who has high level of need for leadership may prefer a feminine leader for themselves as this leader profile would meet their needs (Faizan et al, 2018). More specifically, someone with high level of need for leadership would seek a leader to fulfill their need to be led and as taking care of other, paying attention to others’ needs are considered as feminine personality traits, they would prefer feminine leaders in this case. This alignment with followers' needs highlights the importance of tailoring leadership approaches based on diverse preferences to enhance work engagement and performance.

The results when gendered personality trait of the leader was a moderator suggest that the impact of the need for leadership on leader ratings varies based on the gendered personality trait of the leader candidate, with a more pronounced effect for feminine candidates. While there is no significant effect of need for leadership for masculine leader candidate, the leader ratings were significantly and positively associated with need for leadership for the feminine leader candidate. These findings may suggest that the more people have a need for leadership, and thus guidance and support from a leader, they prefer feminine leaders who can offer them care, empathy, being understood and compassion rather than masculine candidates who offer determination, support in problem solving and focusing on the goal.

Understanding the nuanced relationship between leader preferences, gender, and the need for leadership carries practical implications for organizational dynamics. Adapting leadership approaches to cater to the diverse needs of followers can contribute to enhanced work engagement, motivation, and overall performance. Recognizing and addressing biases against

leaders who are outside of the traditional gender norms, such as masculine women and feminine men, would be crucial for fostering diversity and inclusivity in leadership roles.

The study emphasizes the role of organizations in actively challenging biases and promoting a more inclusive and supportive work environment. By doing so, organizations can create conditions that align leadership styles with the diverse needs of their workforce, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and effective leadership culture.

5.1. Limitations and Future Directions

While this study provides valuable insights, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations. The use of hypothetical leader profiles may not fully capture the complexity of real-world leadership dynamics. Future research could explore the impact of non-binary and genderqueer identities on leader preferences to provide a more comprehensive understanding of diverse leader profiles.

Additionally, the study primarily focused on binary categorizations of gender, and future investigations could explore the intersectionality of gender with other factors such as race, ethnicity, and cultural backgrounds or sectors of work. Longitudinal studies could further explore how changing societal norms and attitudes influence leader preferences over time, adding depth to the understanding of evolving leadership dynamics. Lastly, in order to keep the study simple for the participants only one question was presented for leader rating. It might be more realistic and comprehensive to add further questions regarding the perceived success and effectiveness of the leader for the future studies.

Lastly, for future studies it might be insightful to investigate the further possible reasons why people do not prefer feminine leader candidates on average but prefer them when they have high level of need for leadership only and what other factors might be impacting people's preference when they have low level of need for leadership and prefer masculine leaders. Finally, proposing other questions for leader rating in different situations, scenarios

would be more insightful for future studies as there are multiple aspects of leader selection process to cover.

5.2. Conclusion

In conclusion, this research contributes to the ongoing discussions on gender and leadership by challenging traditional assumptions and emphasizing the importance of considering individual differences in leader preferences. While the study's findings did not align with the initial hypotheses, they aimed to provide valuable insights into the complex relationship between gender stereotypes, leadership preferences, and the need for leadership. This study aims to open a space for further research and interventions aimed at promoting diversity and inclusivity in leadership roles, ultimately contributing to a more equitable and effective leadership landscape.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Filtering Questions and Demographics

Filtering Questions:

1) I am older than 18 years-old and younger than 66-years old.

- Yes
- No

2) Please select:

- I am a student
- I am an employee
- I am both
- I am neither

Demographics:

1) Your gender:

- Woman
- Man
- Other
- I do not want to specify

2) Your age

3) Your education:

- Middle school graduate
- High school graduate
- University student
- University graduate
- Graduate student
- Postgraduate

4) Your work or internship experience:

- None
- Less than a year
- A year or more than a year (Please specify year, example:5)

5) Are you currently in a leadership/manager position?

- Yes
- No

Appendix B: Scales

Need for Leadership:

Instruction: Would you please indicate, considering the leader you are asked to think of and the sector they are in, on which of the following aspects you personally need the contribution of your leader?

1. I need my supervisor to set goals.
2. I need my supervisor to decide what work should be done.
3. I need my supervisor to transfer knowledge.
4. I need my supervisor to motivate me.
5. I need my supervisor to coordinate, plan and organize my work.
6. I need my supervisor to maintain external contacts.
7. I need my supervisor to provide me with information.

8. I need my supervisor to gear all activities of the team to one another.

9. I need my supervisor to create a good team spirit.

10. I need my supervisor to provide me with support.

11. I need my supervisor to arrange things with higher-level management.

12. I need my supervisor to handle conflicts.

13. I need my supervisor to give work-related feedback.

14. I need my supervisor to correct mistakes.

15. I need my supervisor to help solve problems.

16. I need my supervisor to recognize and reward contributions.

17. I need my supervisor to inspire me.

Answering categories: 1 = not at all; 2=not much; 3=partly; 4=mainly; 5=a lot.

Gender and Gendered Personality Traits of the Leader:

Please answer the following question, taking into account the position of the leader and the sector they are in, that you are asked to think about at the beginning of the study.

A hypothetical person is defined below. Read the characteristics of this person and answer the

question at the end.

Female-Masculine: Someone is being sought for a manager/leadership position in your institution and Julia is one of the candidates who are found to be sufficient in terms of her general performance. People around her generally describe Julia as: dominant, assertive, willing to take risks, independent, self-sufficient, strong personality, willing to take a stand in the face of events and defending her own beliefs. To what extent do you think this person is suitable for the position of leader/manager?

Female-Feminine: Someone is being sought for a manager/leadership position in your institution and Julia is one of the candidates who are found to be sufficient in terms of her general performance. People around her generally describe Julia as: caring, sympathetic, sensitive to the needs of others, understanding, willing to soothe hurt feelings, warm, caring and gentle. To what extent do you think this person is suitable for the position of leader/manager?

Male-Masculine: Someone is being sought for a manager/leadership position in your institution and James is one of the candidates who are found to be sufficient in terms of his general performance. People around him generally describe James as: dominant, assertive, willing to take risks, independent, self-sufficient, strong personality, willing to take a stand in the face of events and defending his own beliefs. To what extent do you think this person is suitable for the position of leader/manager?

Male-Feminine: Someone is being sought for a manager/leadership position in your institution and James is one of the candidates who are found to be sufficient in terms of his general performance. People around him generally describe James as: caring, sympathetic, sensitive to the needs of others, understanding, willing to soothe hurt feelings, warm, caring and gentle. To what extent do you think this person is suitable for the position of leader/manager?

Answering categories: 1 = not suitable at all; 3=partly; 5=very suitable.

