

Full Length Research Paper

# A survey on the role of gender differences in leadership style selection and its leading to organizational crisis-preparedness or crisis-proneness

MollaHosseini Ali

Associate Professor, Department of Management, Bahonar University of Kerman, Iran.  
Email: A\_Mollahosseini@Yahoo.com Tel: +989133993911

Accepted 18 January, 2019

One of the topics that has engaged the human mind all the time, is a major difference created among human beings in terms of gender. Perhaps one of the first questions a human being asked himself/herself has been that what these differences mean, and what has been the necessity of human beings being created in two or according to a more contemporary narrative in more than two sexes. Men and women, from a long time ago have recognized the world very differently compared to each other, and sometimes the distance between the two sexes has been so much that they have been referred to as two different planets. This article is written to understand this point whether the gender difference has any effects on selecting a certain leadership style by managers or not? And whether this selection by managers leads to the crisis preparedness or crisis proneness in the complex under their order or not? This point can be useful to all those organizations, in some way, facing this question of what kind of management and which style of leadership to use for the success of their organization. This research is considered as an applied theoretical study. In this study, in order to find an answer to our question, a questionnaire has been designed and distributed among the managers of governmental Organizations in Kerman City. The sample size was extracted according to Cochran formula and a final number of 180 questionnaires were determined. The results of this research indicate the fact that there exists a significant relationship between in Kerman city's governmental organizations managers' sex and the type of their leadership style and consequently their attitude toward the crisis. On the other hand, the managers' type of attitude toward crisis, may lead to crisis preparedness or crisis proneness within the organizational framework of their complex. This study confirms the fact that gender is an influencing factor in incidence or absence of crises and organizational crises in particular.

**Key words:** crisis, leadership style, gender, crisis preparedness, crisis proneness

## INTRODUCTION

Webster dictionary defines "crisis" like this: Crisis is "a sudden change, for better or worse, in the course of a disease; an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending; a situation that has reached a critical phase" (Woodyard, 1998; 5) Umansky while confirming Webster definition describes crisis as a serious and disturbing problem that has its own nature (Woodyard, 1998; 5). For centuries, the Chinese have accepted that there are positive aspects in all crises. Their symbol for the term crisis is "wei-ji", a combination of two words: danger and opportunity. (Woodyard, 1998; 6). Stephen Fink, a management expert, uses the cultural view of Chinese and unpredictable nature of crisis to developing an approach

to face the crisis. He believes a *crisis* is *not* necessarily *bad* and puts a *positive* spin on the situation (Woodyard, 1998; 6). According to Mitroff and his colleagues, a crisis is a disruption that physically affects a system as a whole and threatens its basic assumptions (Barnett and Perth, 2000; 75). Crisis is a situation that has reached severe hardship or a dangerous point (Yazdanpanah, 2005; 1). McCarthy also believes that the crisis is a situation that requires immediate response and allocation of full resources. (McCarthy, 2002; 58). Organizational crisis can be defined as human events with high frequency and results that can profoundly delay the continuity of organizational operations. (Wang, 2009; 446) Shakib and Mousavi believe that crises are events that occur

suddenly caused by natural events and human actions which impose damages to a collection or human society and resolving it needs necessary, urgent and extraordinary actions and operations. (Center for Studies and Rural and Urban Specialized Services, 1385; 4), and from another perspective, Abbasi provide the definition of crisis as this: crisis is an event, incident or a course which cut the system off its regular functions, meaning that it interrupts the regular movement of an organization, a collection, a city or the like or causes delay in implementation trend of activities, missions, goals of the system. (Hussain Abbasi, 2009; 29)

## Review of Literature

### Leadership

Leadership is defined as the ability to influence others to achieve organizational goals. In this regard, the individual can be leaders of the two main styles of behavior, orientation to the task (task orientation) and the tendency to mutual relations between people (relationship orientation) . Fiedler suggests that in terms of performance, leadership style must be in compliance with the requirements of situation. He encounter influence as the essential element of leadership .That is, leadership is a relationship in which one tries to conduct a joint task to influence the others. The important point is that effective leadership depends on the good that is in due time and take the appropriate location (Mitchell, 1377; 450-470) Stogdill opinion of management theorists and led to almost the number of people commenting about leadership have definitions for it. (Moghimi, 1377; 275) Drucker pointed out that managers are Most Important and rare resources of each type of enterprise. According to Teri, leadership is the Art of influencing people to induce them to attempt to achieve the desired goals of group. Massarik and Tannenbaum and Wechsler defined leadership as "using the process in relation to situational influence among the people and giving it to the destination or specific purposes. Koontz and O'Donnell" Leadership is influencing people to go along them to achieve a common purpose. "Tribute to the other writers to turn many management writers agree that leadership is the following process to influence individual or group activities in order to attempt to achieve the specified goal position. (Hersey and Blanchard, 1378; 98)

Ivancevich Believe that leadership consists of communication between a group of people known in which a person strives to others given the goal to lead. In another definition from Hampton with emphasis on the relationships between individuals to influence subordinate leadership through communicating with them in achieving the goals of the organization is expressed. Blanchard and

Hersey Defined leadership as the impact on people in their tasks willingly have described. (Alvani, 1386; 141-142) Reza Azad in his own book defines leadership like this "Organizational Leadership is the approach of Handling affairs and Comes from the attitude of Managers to organization and human resources. Leadership is a set of values and principles that managers believe and Act. leadership, is the Core and constructor of organizational culture. (Azad 1379; 42) As noted in the definition of leadership, the most important thing in leadership is direction to influence members of the organization. Leadership requires influence and influence people, and the director The role of the leader who can people under their supervision is penetrating and effective subordination and in other words to accept his power and influence. Issue of influence and power sources from power and influence stems from their relationship (Alvani, 1386; 141-142) It seems that almost all experts defines leadership as the process of influencing a person or group of individuals on other groups. disagreement among scientists about management leadership is due to two major factors: First, should leadership be a non-mandatory Process? Secondly, whether the management and leadership is different and what is difference? Leadership and influence Process doesn't Have any work to do with organizational hierarchy, and perhaps most important differences between leadership and management also comes at this point. (Moghimi, 1377; 275-276)

### Leadership styles

One of the important concepts in this research is scrutinize and formed an important element of this study is the concept of leadership style. Qolipour about this term, believes that the concept of leadership style is a key leadership behavior. Behavior and practice leader at work, he goes back to leadership style. Leadership style is that patterns of stability while working with individuals, are seen by others. These patterns cause a person to act in similar circumstances the same habits and patterns, and by others to be predictable. If you change the style for sustainability Leadership is not impossible, is very difficult and depends on the situation (Qoli Pour, 1380; 77). Moghimi quoted Hrsy and Blanchard about it states that "leadership style is to permanent and continuous patterns of behavior when people Working with and through others, used and must be understood by the people "(Moghimi, 1377; 276), doctor Rezayian also to define leadership style influence factors into the definition and states that leadership style is a way the leader of her influence for purposes uses. And yet the influence of two factors knows: power, status and power of personal posts

(Rezayian, 1385; 222) about the influence of these two factors was previously presented materials.

In this study the concept for the difference between men and women is used to investigate accountability crisis, controversy and crisis in their respective organizations will be discussed.

Leadership task - circuit includes features such as guided slave, slave to specify the role and function, coordination, problem solving, critical working poor, and pressures on the slave for doing better work. This task behavior - based on efficient utilization of human and material resources to achieve target organization are useful. Against the leadership relationship - including the circuit characteristics such as Supporting behavior, friendly behavior, slave address, in consultation with the slave leader as a representative desires slave and slave identification and cooperation is appreciated. This behavior relationship - based on creating and maintaining a good relationship with the slave are useful.

Many writers in this field to classify different types of leadership styles that can be used by managers are paid.

### **Differences between sex and gender**

Theoretically sex and gender are two different concepts. sex is referring to biological aspect (male sex vs. female sex), while gender is a social and cultural phenomenon. More particularly it must be said that gender refers to social structure behaviors related to Masculinity and femininity. (Yi Wu - Ming, 2009; 1990) Encyclopedia of Wikipedia describe the concepts like this "Sex and gender are not synonymous. While the "woman" and "man" is referring to sex, "femininity" and "manhood" is referring to gender. Men, women, and female, male are words that determine sexual identity and are determined by biology. However, gender distinctions of male and female are based on the meaning of social structure for sex.

Riemann in confirming this opinion believes that gender is defined in contrast to sex. Gender is concerned to social roles and interactions between men and women while sex refers more to biological differences. Male and female roles and relationships between men and women are not immutable, but because they are founded by the society, they are subject to change permanently and are made by ethnicity, class, age and other factors (Riemann, 2001; 6).

Men and women have two different areas for action, different capabilities for selection, different rights and different power of decision-making. These action areas are appointed by dominance of male and female cultural values and norms. Passive victims are not sex prisoners, they are capable of changing [giving shape to] many of those values, norms and social structures that limit their independence of action; so we should note that not only

people's characters are sex-based, but also values, norms, and social institutions and organizations are the same (Riemann, 2001; 7).

### **Crisis prepared and crisis prone organizations**

Organizations can be placed in a spectrum in terms of being crisis preparedness and crisis proneness. One ultimate of this range holds the crisis-prone organizations which have high vulnerability towards crisis and the other ultimate holds the crisis-prepared organizations which are ready to deal with crises. Crisis-prone organizations are those are inactive and surrendered against crisis and have no mechanism to deal with crisis actively. Contrarily although crisis prepared organizations cannot be said that are completely immune against crisis, they use all their power and capabilities to feel for crisis before it occurred and to deal with it effectively but they try to prevent crises from occurring and If crises occur they control them in a correct manner (Alvani, 1996; 58).

Richardson (1995) assumes that the leaders prone to crisis tend to put on display a higher degree of single-sided management visionary. Therefore, over-biased behavior patterns are dangerous and disproportionately emphasizes a single extravagance or wastage (to be very competitive, being very technical, etc.), they are more prone to failures and crises and Miller's simple theory reasons that those organizations that are prone to failure develop and expand a single strength or application during the vision of most of others. Thus those organizations which are very simple are integrated and change a formula for success into a path toward failure.

Term preparedness for crises usually assign to all measures that enables all governments, organizations, communities and people to respond quickly and efficiently while facing a crisis in times of crisis. Help ensure appropriate situations, factors and resources in the places affected, damage to the eyes and help reduce the negative effects resulting from the crisis is the purpose of this phase. Eliminating vulnerable to the destructive effects of the minimum reached before the clump is entered, the crisis can be decreased (Rajabi and others, 1388; 12).

### **Women vs Men: review of gender differences in leadership and management**

Research shows that techniques and methods of male and female leadership can be effective means of both methods has its own audience, but when we them together to treat compared to the way we understand leadership organization for women points for more.

Now the question is whether men and women lead differently? The question that Stephen Robbins in his

book and discussed it in this field and comment that many articles in this area have been developed, there are two studies examining this outcome has been determined. First, similarities leadership style of women and men is much more than the differences. And second, that the differences seem that women are more democratic in their leadership style, while men generally tend to have Commands and orders. Research indicates that the leadership style of men and women as natural and innate are different. Basically, women are using democratic leadership style. Slave encourage them to participate in power sharing are necessary information for them and they are trying to encourage them to attach themselves to become more value. They tend to their Charisma in leadership style, expertise and contact with others to use. But men often tend to issuing the command and control are intense affairs. (Robbins, 1378; 688) Most authors believe that the leadership style of tool, task circuit Men are lightly and autocratic style of leadership and in circuit relation, a charismatic and democratic is lightly feminine. Of this group of writers, the need to maintain masculine style and performance tasks while working emphasizes, feminine style is based on relationships between individual insists. Women mainly democratic and participatory style of management interest are. Their willingness to trust their employees to vote and have opinions, they can participate in decisions are. Rvznr the decentralization and devolution of decision making and power in organizations, which are conducted by women is higher (Rosener, 1990; 22). Although a considerable volume of literature on management and entrepreneurship This trend emphasizes that women are more feminine style, by Hofstede inconsistent evidence was presented in 1976 indicated that this was mainly that men prefer a consultative style and researcher in 2002 received another director - the owners of women, trends are more autocratic style. However, it seems that the fact that women should work and family responsibilities combined with their own incentives to their successful separation of different men. They accept the responsibilities that may be more balance between work life and Personal Life, show less interest. Therefore the use of participatory styles are styles that closer orbit with the commitment of human resources management system are, therefore, expect that it goes in the management of human resources management organizations, women are largely committed circuit, control circuit.

## **Decision Making**

According to studies by Verhol and colleagues, The level employees to participate in decisions are influenced by gender are also directors. Men after receiving comments the proposed staff, their final decision they take. Versus expected, women showed more interest in staff

participation in decision-making process are final. (Tabarsa and Jamali Nazari, 1387; 23-24).

At this time, expanding the presence of women in managerial and executive roles in organizations, many studies to evaluate the leadership abilities of women, as well as possible differences in leadership styles of men and women have paid. There is a problem which is that despite the high participation rate of women in labor and it increases day by day, their presence in the category of top management is very limited. In an infinite time ago that exist, this indicates that rates are high-ranking office organizational Posts by women will grow slowly.

(Sohrabi, 1385; 2) Women in management posts with some sub employees have fixed the constant and certain things were done and were rarely posts that have high risks and heavy risks to be able thereby to have dignity and with the use of slave elite teams creative and innovative to create. (Ott and Shafritz, 2000; 887).

In a meta-analysis reviews research to determine the role of gender differences in leadership style, it was found that although men and women seems to be a different leadership styles, but generally return to select men and women in leadership positions with common interests and both have similar efficacy. However, although in this context there is no practical significant difference but significant differences in the dimensions of leadership there. Eagly and Karaoe's meta-analysis and the role of gender differences in leadership styles and task oriented interaction axis identified. Men often as task-centered leaders who control and direct leadership style shows were identified. However, another meta-analysis that found that managers men to work in competitive environments, the implementation roles filled with claims, demands they impose on others and being more prominent in the group, are more motivated. these differences as well as differences in leadership effectiveness has also been raised. This means that the ratio of men to women in that role more masculine terms are defined, are more effective. (Anderson and others, 2006; 556-557)

Eagly and Karau's meta-analysis also claims women tend to lead to social, interpersonal relations in order to release a good spirit between people to facilitate, to be known. Then another meta-analysis claims that women helpers with less masculine terms are defined, are more effective.

These findings compatible with the role of theory in which people are expected to activities that are coordinated with their gender roles, more motivated, they are compliant. (Anderson and others, 2006; 556-557)

Findings of a research shows that senior managers of organizations believes that women than male managers are More transformational. Based on the observations of this study, globally as well as their female managers than male managers to assess more transformational. Transformational leadership with an emphasis on

intuition, individuality development, and grant the power to challenge traditional assumptions] in relation to leadership [More routine model has become the leading organizations. (Carls, 1998; 887)

*Kotiranta* and colleagues in their research work as an organization that can identify and remove obstacles from the advancement of women to achieve proper management, to acquire additional interests. The relevant conclusion is Wrong that the man to be leaders rather than women leaders was used because the average coherence between the positive leadership and profitability in the organization of women there. Generally, all mechanisms should focus on multiple networks - and most difficult - that encourages men and women prevented from climbing the ladder executive management to be placed. (Kotiranta and others, 2007; 1)

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Tools used and procedure

For this research, two questionnaires are used. First a questionnaire is used to determine the managers' attitudes toward crisis. This questionnaire involves both general research questions such as age, sex, education and management experiences and a dozen of questions about their attitudes toward crisis. These twelve questions are obtained from two sources. Some of these questions has been chosen from the extraordinary work of Manonegrin and Sheaffer (2004) and some other questions has come from the paper of Ph.d Seyed Mehdi Alvani (1996). The extent of Cronbach's Alpha for the first questionnaire, shows the number 0.084, a number that indicates the amount of desirability of its validity. The second questionnaire, doesn't involves any other general questioner. The questionnaire also has a dozen of questions that measure the leadership style and the type of their decision-making in terms of practical conditions. The questions of this questionnaire also are extracted from fundamental work of Manonegrin and Shaffer (2004) and also Miss Boroumand's book (1995). Cronbach's alpha for the second questionnaire also shows the figure represents 0.866 which represents a high level of validity and confirms its authenticity.

### Participants

According to the results of the study, studying the sample and analyzing the data show that 60 percent of the responding population are male respondents and 40 percent of them are women. Also, nearly 21 percent of respondents' ages are between 20 and 30. Nearly 33 percent are between ages 30 to 40. Approximately 31 percent are between ages 40 to 50. 12 percent of the respondents belong to ages 50 to 60 and almost 2 percent of respondents are more than 60 years of age.

## RESULTS

In this study, our goal has been to review one of the factors in the management literature that has been less considered by the time. Topics of sex and gender differences have come into researchers' consideration for

the last few years, but different aspects of this factor has not been explained correctly in the context of management activities.

As it was mentioned in the previous sections we are searching for reaching and understanding this point whether the gender differences create a significant difference in the type of managers' leadership style and consequently in their attitude toward areas of crisis and crisis management or not. Regarding the question again, the hypotheses of this research are reconsidered here:

Our first hypothesis is that sex is linked with the type of leadership style used by managers. This means those women that are in managerial roles in organizations, compared to men, usually pay more attention and importance to their below staff, their emotions and feeling as well as their opinions and creativity. In the opposite side the men who play the role of the manager, for the choice of their leadership style generally pay attention to some other factors. These factors can be considered as what is important is just doing what is asked of employees and increasing productivity without embracing the spirit of decentralization from legal authority of the manager. Our evidences show that this hypothesis is true in the government section organizations in the city of Kerman. These findings indicate the correlation between these two factors clearly. ( $r = 0.289$ ), ( $\text{sig} = 0$ ), means that male managers in the city of Kerman to the general trend was autocratic leadership style and management, while women generally tend to use the style was more democratic.

Our second hypothesis is based on the assumption that gender is in relation with managers' attitudes towards crisis. This is important, as it was already referred to, since it is one of the most important factors that makes organizations prone to crisis or the contrary; prepared for crisis, this is kind of attitude itself towards the area of crisis. This hypothesis also, as it was referred to in the previous sections, are confirmed by statistical data ( $r = 0.557$ ), ( $\text{sig} = 0$ ). The relatively high correlation between these two variables is telling the fact that the attitude of men and women, in government sector organizations of Kerman, is significantly different. Accordingly, male managers in Kerman have mostly passive approach to crisis, and the type of their views toward crisis is very optimistic and they assume that crisis is far from their organizations, while female managers are generally concerned about occurrence of crisis in their organization and they feel threatened by assuming crisis being close to their organization.

The third hypothesis claims that managers' leadership style, can affect their attitude toward crisis. The results ( $r = 0.350$ ), ( $\text{sig} = 0.002$ ) from this study also reflect the fact that managers with different styles of leadership, have different attitudes towards crisis.

And finally, the last but not the least hypothesis is considered as kind of a combination of all the above hypotheses. This hypothesis can be raised like this: the managers' gender, by affecting the type of their leadership style, affects their

attitude toward crisis.

## Discussion

Regarding women, the two variables of manager's attitude toward crisis and manager's leadership style both are dependent on each other but regarding men the two variables don't have a specific relationship with each other. Regarding women this relationship is direct; meaning that by changing their leadership style from autonomous to participatory, their attitude toward crisis is shifted from crisis proneness to crisis preparedness.

Finally, it should be mentioned that perception of preparedness for crisis is more gender-based than being neutral regarding gender. In an assumed crisis female manager are significantly more willing to achieve a democratic collective- participatory solution than their male counterparts. As our results show, it seems that the participatory leadership associated with "femininity" is more useful.

## REFERENCES

- Alvani, Seyyed Mehdi (1996). "Crisis Prepared and Crisis Prone Organizations", Knowledge Management Journal No. 35 and 36, Winter 96 and Spring 97.
- Alvani, Seyyed Mehdi (2007). "Public Management", published twenty-ninth, Third Edition, Tehran, New Publication.
- Anderson Neil, Lievens Filip, Van Dam Karen, Born Marise, (2006) "A Construct-Driven Investigation of Gender Differences in a Leadership-Role Assessment Center", J. App. Psychol. 91(3): 555-566.
- Azad Reza (2000). "Theoretical and Applied principles of systematic management", First Edition, Tehran, blessed Publications.
- Brush CG (1992). "Research on women business owners: past trends, a new perspective and future directions", Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice, 16: 14-18
- Carless, Sally A (1998). "Gender Differences in Transformational Leadership: An Examination of Superior, Leader, and Subordinate Perspectives", Sex Roles, 39(11/12): 887-902
- Hersey, Paul, Blanchard, Kenneth H (1999). "Organizational Behavior Management", translated by Qasim Kabiri, Sixth Edition, Tehran, Jihad University Press Institute (Majed)
- Hussain Abbasi, Laleh, (2009). "Crisis Management and Passive Defence", Journal of Exploration and Production, Vol. 58, July 2009.
- Kotiranta, Annu, Kovalainen, Anne, Rouvinen, Petri (2007) "Female Leadership and Firm Profitability", Eva analysis, no 3.
- Mano\_negrin, Rita, sheaffer, Zachary (2004). "Are women cooler than men during crisis? Exploring gender differences in perceiving organizational crisis preparedness/proneness", Women in management review. 19(2): 109-122.
- McCarthy, Shaun (2002). "The Function of Intelligence in Crisis Management: Towards an Understanding of the Intelligence Producer-Consumer Dichotomy"; translated by Mohammad Reza Tajik (for) presidential strategic studies center; Tehran; Culture of Conversation.
- Ming-Yi Wu (2009). "Sex, Gender Values, and Expected Leadership Conflict Management Styles in the Taiwanese Public Relations Field", Western Illinois University, China Media Research, 5(2), pp89-96
- Mitchell, Terence R (1998). "People in the organizations: understanding their behaviour" (1998) translated by Hussein Shokrkon, Tehran, Roshd Publication.
- Moghimi SM (1998). "Organization and Management"; research paper, First Edition, Tehran, Termeh Publication
- Morley, Chantal, Collet, Isabelle, Milon, Marité, Maillet, Katherine, McDonnell, Martina, (2007). "Female Leadership: Individual strategies to counter gender stereotypes and the model of the leader", int management
- Ott Steven, Jay M, Shafritz (2000). "Organization theories: myths," Ali Parsayyan, Tehran, Farzaneh Publication
- Poor Quli, Arian (1380). "Leadership style determinants of formal organizational structure", Journal of Knowledge Management, Year XIV, No. 53, Summer 1380, pp 75-100
- Powell, Gary (1990). "One More Time: Do Female and Male Managers Differ?," Academy of Management Executive
- Rajabi, Abbas Karimi, Yahya, Bagheri, honest, Karimi, Sadegh (1388) "Crisis Management", Institute of Higher Education Jaber ibn hayan
- Reimann, Cordula (2001). "Towards Gender Mainstreaming in Crisis Prevention and Conflict Management", Health, Education, Nutrition, Emergency Aid Building, Division 43
- Rezayian, Ali (2006). "Principles of Management", Tehran, Eighteenth edition, development organizations and study books Humanities (Samt)
- Robbins, Stephen Pi (1999). "Theories of organizational behavior concepts and applications", translated Parsayyan and Muhammad Ali Arabi, Volume II, seventh edition, Tehran, Office of Cultural Research
- Rosener JB (1990). "Ways women lead", Harvard Business Review, 68: 119-125
- Sohrab, Ruddy (1385). "Literature Review of Women and leadership differences between men and women leadership styles", Tehran, Fourth International Conference on Management
- Tabarsa, Gholam Ali, Jamal Nazari, Wish (1387), "Gender effects on patterns of industrial management", Journal of policy in the nineteenth, No. 196, August 87, pp 21-27
- Van Emmerik, Hetty, Euwema, Martin C. Wendt, H, "Leadership Behaviors, around the World: The Relative Importance of Gender, versus Cultural Background", Utrecht university.
- Woodyard, Tyrone M (1998). "Crisis Communication: A Commanders Guide To Effective Crisis Communication", Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.
- Yazdanpanah Mahshid (2005). "Planning and decision making in crisis management"; site crisis management articles.