



Social exchange outcomes of transformational leadership

Comparing male and female principals of public primary schools in Iran

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study is to investigate gender differences in transformational leadership and social exchange outcomes in public primary schools in Tehran, Iran.

Design/methodology/approach – A total number of 400 teachers and 77 principals completed questionnaires. Multivariate analysis of variance was performed to determine gender differences in transformational leadership dimensions including idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Also, multiple regression was used to identify the impact of dimensions on three social exchange outcomes including procedural justice, trust in principal, and organizational citizenship behaviors of teachers.

Findings – Results showed that female principals as compared to male principals obtained significantly higher scores on transformational leadership dimensions and the greater amount of transformational behaviors displayed by them has accompanied with the greater prediction of social exchange outcomes.

Research limitations/implications – This study suggests that there are some benefits associated with having female principals and schools could particularly benefit from developing principal training programs that focus on developing female principals qualities. Some following limitations could be avoided in future research: only relying on teacher rating of principal, possible effect of the teacher's gender on the relationship of transformational leadership with social exchange outcomes, and principal-teacher gender mach limitation in rating principals.

Originality/value – Given the limited studies conducted on gender differences in transformational leadership and social exchange outcomes in schools and in Iran, this study provides empirical insights and extends this line of inquiry in public schools. This study confirms the results of previous studies which they have found females as more transformational than male counterparts and also provides new finding surrounding social exchange outcomes. These results could be influential in encouraging Iranian policy makers to further acknowledge women administration in public schools.

Keywords Gender differences, Principals, Social exchange outcomes, Transformational leadership

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

In Iran, education has been usually considered to be the foundation and support of economic growth and development. This Islamic country has a centralized educational system. The Ministry of Education is responsible for the administration of education. The curricula are exactly the same in all schools. All students are taught the same subjects and use the same textbooks. The budgets and the financial resources of the schools are mostly allocated by the Ministry of Education. Schools are divided into the pre-school, primary, middle, secondary, and pre-university levels. As a general rule, all schools are single-sex and primary, middle, secondary, and higher education is free, although private schools and universities do exist and are permitted to charge tuition fees. Regarding to the national rules, principals are appointed by the central authority. All of all-girl schools should have female teachers and all-boy primary schools can also have female teachers.



Although the rapid modernization processes appear to have much influence upon school leadership opportunities for females, but there are a smaller percentage of females in these positions and this situation is similar across the developed and the developing countries (Oplatka, 2006). This situation in Iran is differing from other developing countries and females have great opportunity to become as a principal. Regarding to the national rules of pre-university educational levels (primary, middle, and high schools), all of all-girls schools should lead by female principals and all-boys primary schools can also lead by them. This condition has led to the more percentage of school leadership positions for females in Iran. This means that they should face more pressures from a wide range of stakeholders for accountability and effectiveness than male counterparts. Similar to the non-Iranian researchers the increasing number of females in school leadership positions created interest in studying gender differences in leadership (e.g. Shams Mourkani, 2010) but the literature surrounding this issue, especially in form of gender differences in new leadership styles, is very narrow (e.g. Zeinabadi, 2010). There is not also any published study about gender differences in transformational leadership and social exchange outcomes in primary schools. This study contributes to the literature and could be influential in encouraging policy makers to further acknowledge female leadership in all types of schools. The aim of the present study is to compare male and female principals with regard to the transformational leadership behaviors and also examines and compares the impact of transformational leadership behaviors of male and female principals on social exchange outcomes including procedural justice, trust in principal and organizational citizenship behaviors of primary schools teachers.

Theoretical perspectives

In general, in leadership studies the issue of how males and females lead is an ongoing and controversial and has been of interest to scholars for decades (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Powell, 2011). Previous studies have tried to answer the key question that whether male and female leaders display different leadership styles. The common stereotype was that task orientation was a more masculine and relation orientation was regarded as more feminine style (Bass and Riggio, 2006). With regard to this classification, some researches which are largely influenced by feminist scholars, argued that males and females behaved similarly, and their leadership position was strongly influenced by executive role models that seemed to claim for masculinity (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). A meta-analysis by Eagly and Johnson (1990) of studies from 1961 to 1987 showed that in actual work organizations there were no significant differences between male and female leaders. Although there is scarce evidence to support this notion that the requirements of the leadership role similarly shape the style of female and male leaders, some researchers (e.g. Eagly, 2007) believe that gender differences in leadership style are most likely to occur that are not closely regulated by leader roles. This is due to the fact that leaders have some freedom to choose the particular ways that they fulfill their roles and also have specific characteristics and stereotypes which separate them from each other.

According to stereotypes which characterized male and female leaders, the considerable body of research which acknowledged gender differences in leadership has documented that females, more than males, manifested relatively relation oriented, interpersonally oriented and democratic styles, and males, more than females, manifested relatively task oriented and autocratic styles (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). These results lead to this notion that the core style of male

and female in the same organizational role is strongly influenced by stereotypes. According to Carless (1998) these results are congruent with gender-centered perspective which proposes that females develop a feminine style which is characterized by caring and nurturance, and males adopt a masculine style, which is dominating and task oriented. Similarly, the social-role theory proposes that individuals behave in accordance with societal expectations about their gender role. Therefore, relation and task-oriented style is socially expected form female and male leaders, respectively (Carless, 1998).

Similar to other organizations, in the context of educational organizations, gender-related issues in school leadership has attracted the attention of educational researchers. In their investigations they have compared leadership style of male and female principals with regard to the different styles including task and relation oriented or feminine and masculine styles (Cubillo and Brown, 2003). Regarding to this classification, they have also employed male and female stereotypes in their investigations and reported that male principals tend to be more directive, bureaucratic, and task oriented and females tend to be more collaborative, democratic, and relation oriented (Shakeshaft, 1989; Eagly *et al.*, 1992; Fennell, 1999; Oplatka, 2003).

In contrast to evidence which resist on gender differences in school leadership, some other studies indicate no significant differences (e.g. Mertz and McNeely, 1998) and some of them insist on female advantage in effective school leadership (e.g. Shakeshaft, 1989). On the other hand some evidence report that male principals are better for school administration and female principals should equip themselves to male stereotype or masculine styles to be an effective leader (e.g. Young and McLeod, 2001). Generally, evidence surrounding gender issue in leadership style in both of educational and non-educational organizations does not provide a comprehensive explanation of differences in leadership styles of male and female leaders. Therefore, this issue needs to further investigation.

Transformational leadership and social exchange outcomes

The shift of a considerable number of researchers and scholars to studying new style of leadership reinforced educational and non-educational researcher to study transformational leadership as a new line of inquiry for further investigations of males and females leadership styles. Empirical evidence surrounding the gender differences in transformational school leadership is relatively scarce and has yield contradictory results.

Although Burns (1978) first introduced the idea of transformational leadership, the concept has been considerably developed by Bass (1985). In Bass (1985) point of view, transformational leaders motivate followers to performance beyond expectations and activate their higher order needs. They also increase the follower awareness and consciousness towards the importance of designated outcomes. Follower of transformational leader feels trust, admiration, and loyalty towards the leader and goes beyond self-interest for the sake of the organization (Bass, 1985). In contrast to transactional leaders who obtain cooperation of follower by establishing economic exchanges process, transformational leaders establish psychological and social exchange process which bonds leader and followers within a collaborative change process (Pillai *et al.*, 1999).

The most important dimensions of the transformational leadership conceptualized by Bass (1985) include idealized influence (leader serves as a role model and followers idealize and emulate the behaviors of their trusted leader), inspirational motivation (leader articulates a clear vision to followers and provides them with symbols and

emotional appeals directed at goal achievement), intellectual stimulation (leader promotes creativity among followers through encouraging them to transform old ways of thinking and doing), and individualized consideration (leader addresses needs of followers individually and delegates assignments to them to provide learning opportunities).

Transformational leadership has consistently shown advantageous effects on a range of individual and organizational outcomes (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Based on exchange process between leader and followers, social exchange theory provides the new line of inquiry for researchers to investigate consequences of transformational leadership in organizations (Pillai *et al.*, 1999). According to this theory, there is a continuum of exchange between leader and followers from lower-quality to higher-quality exchanges. Lower-quality exchanges are economic exchanges which characterized by the exercise of formal organizational authority. They are based on transactions and short-term benefits. In these exchanges leader obtains routine and formal follower performance and he/she usually emphasizes on providing rewards in exchange for meeting agreed upon objectives. Higher-quality exchanges, on the other hand, are social, covenantal, and psychological contracts which go beyond economic exchanges. In contrast to lower-quality exchanges, higher-quality exchanges are friendly working relationships between leader and followers (Deluga, 1994; Pillai *et al.*, 1999).

Empirical studies demonstrated that organizational citizenship behavior is one of the most important variables in a context in which higher-quality, social and psychological exchange characterized the quality of leader-follower relationships (Moorman *et al.*, 1993; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Pillai *et al.*, 1999; Aryee *et al.*, 2002). Organizational citizenship behavior is generally defined as a set of helpful, discretionary, and extra-role behaviors exhibited by employees that are not directly or clearly recognized by the formal reward system and have an overall positive effect on the operation of the organization (Moorman *et al.*, 1993). Previous studies also indicated that in social exchange context, organizational citizenship behavior is the result of follower trust in leader which is generally defined as faith in and loyalty to the leader (Pillai *et al.*, 1999; Aryee *et al.*, 2002; Ertürk, 2007). Therefore, when there is trust between the leader and the followers, the followers are more willing to engage in organizational citizenship behaviors. Also, the review of the existing literature reveals that in social exchange context, trust in leader is a result of follower's procedural justice perception (Pillai *et al.*, 1999; Ertürk, 2007). Procedural justice is one of the facets of organizational justice and refers to the idea of fairness in the processes that determine and allocate resources. Followers, who feel that their leader has, or will, demonstrate justice in the processes of resources allocation will reciprocate this sentiment in the form of trust and organizational citizenship behavior (Deluga, 1994; Konovsky and Pugh, 1994; Pillai *et al.*, 1999; Ertürk, 2007).

Gender differences in transformational leadership and social exchange outcomes

Concerning that gender may, in fact, play a big role in transformational leadership behaviors, the existing literature has offered more support for females (Bass and Riggio, 2006). Although few studies report no significant differences (Maher, 1997; Carless, 1998; Manning, 2002), authors mainly refer to transformational leadership as a feminine leadership style (e.g. Carless, 1998; Yammarino *et al.*, 1997; Eagly *et al.*, 2003). Rosener (1990) showed that females described themselves in ways that characterize transformational leadership. Carless (1998) also found that female leaders were more transformational than males, both when they rated themselves and when they were

rated by their followers. Regarding the gender of followers, Bass and Avolio (1991) found that female leaders were rated as more transformational than males by both of male and female followers. Similarly Druskat (1994) found that female leaders were evaluated as being more transformational by female followers than male leaders who were evaluated by male followers. On the other hand, studies refer to transactional leadership as a masculine leadership style and believe that male leaders are more transactional than females (Rosener, 1990; Bass *et al.*, 1996; Eagly *et al.*, 2003). These studies generally offer similar explanations for their findings and report that these gender differences might be due to actual differences between males and females in their tendency to be nurturing and development of their followers.

Along with the evidence supporting females as transformational leader, two different feminism perspectives also help shed light on females as transformational leaders. According to gender reform feminism, males and females are similar in their common humanity and any biological differences should be ignored to increase gender equality in organizations (Lorber, 2001; Kark, 2004). On the bases of this perspective several studies (e.g. Rosener, 1990; Eagly *et al.*, 2003) have indicated that females are perceived, and perceive themselves, as using transformational leadership styles more often than males. The second perspective is gender resistance feminism which emphasizes the positive value of qualities identified with females such as sensitivity, nurturance and emotional expressiveness, and indicates that these qualities highlight females' position as leaders in organizations (Lorber, 2001; Kark, 2004). Kark (2004) reports that majority of studies which found females as transformational leaders emphasize on nurturing qualities of females and claim that this leadership style does not fit the stereotypes described for males.

Regarding to female advantage in transformational leadership, it can be argued that social exchange outcomes are highly expected from female leaders. As argued by Eagly *et al.* (2003), transformational leadership tend to be associated with positive outcomes and female leaders have better place in influencing different subordinate or organizational-related outcomes than male counterparts.

In educational organizations, although empirical evidence regarding transformational leadership is extensive (e.g. Leithwood and Jantzi, 2005; Leithwood *et al.*, 2008) but evidence surrounding gender differences in transformational school leadership is relatively scarce and has yield contradictory findings. Some researchers have found that female principals are rated higher in transformational leadership than male principals (Young and McLeod, 2001; Eagly *et al.*, 2003; Trinidad and Normore, 2005) and some studies (e.g. Rice, 1993; Baltrus, 2005) report no gender differences in transformational school leadership. In general, the available evidence cannot provide clear answer for following questions, hence current study attempts to probe them:

- (1) Are female principals more transformational than males counterparts?
- (2) Does one gender as a transformational leader has greater influence on social exchange outcomes including procedural justice, trust in principal and organizational citizenship behaviors of teachers?

Methodology

Sample

This quantitative study is implemented in public primary schools in Iran. The sample group consisted of 77 principals (36 females and 41 males) and 400 teachers

(200 females and 200 males), which are randomly selected from 77 primary schools located in five educational districts (north, south, east, west, and center) of Tehran. All of principals have been at their school for at least one year and all of teachers have worked with their principal for at least a minimum period of one year.

Instruments

Four questionnaires were used to collect data. These questionnaires have been shown to be a valid and reliable instrument in different studies. All of items were presented in Persian and were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The original English version of the questionnaires were translated in to Persian and then back translated in to English. The two versions were evaluated by professors fluent in both language and the best items were selected. To ensure that the questionnaires are readily interpretable for teachers and principals, pilot surveys were administrated to samples of teachers and principals. Results indicated that Persian version items were clear and meaningful to the respondents. In this study teachers responded to transformational leadership, procedural justice, and trust in principals questionnaires and principals responded to the organizational citizenship behaviors questionnaire.

Transformational leadership. Transformational leadership behaviors of principals were assessed using the multifactor leadership questionnaire (MLQ) developed by Bass and Avolio (1990). Because the focus of the current study is on transformational leadership, four of the subscales of MLQ were selected. The subscales identifying transformational leadership include: idealized influence behavior (eight items), inspirational motivation (four items), intellectual stimulation (four items), and individualized consideration (four items). The coefficient α per scale was as 0.84, 0.90, 0.87, and 0.82, respectively.

Teacher trust in principal. Teacher trust in principal was measured by Omnibus T-scale developed by Hoy and Tschannen-Moran (2003). This scale contains 28 items with three subscales. Only the eight-item trust in principal subscale was selected for the analytical purposes of this study. For the sample of this study, coefficient α was found 0.91. Factor analysis of this instrument revealed one dimension. Sample items include: "I trust the principal," "I am suspicious of most of the principal's actions," "I have faith in the integrity of the principal."

Procedural justice. Colquitt's (2001) measure of organizational justice was used to measure teacher's procedural justice perception. This questionnaire has four subscales. For the purpose of this study only the seven-item procedural justice subscale was selected. Factor analysis of this instrument revealed one dimension and its coefficient α s in this study was 0.85. Example items include: "I have been able to express my views and feelings during decision-making procedures," "Those decision-making procedures have been applied consistently," "I have been able to appeal the outcome arrived at by decision-making procedures."

Organizational citizenship behaviors. To measure a teacher's organizational citizenship behaviors, the 12-item organizational citizenship behavior scale (OCBS) developed by DiPaola *et al.* (2005) was modified to access principal's beliefs about teacher's organizational citizenship behaviors at individual level. In this study the coefficient α of adapted OCBS was found 0.87. Similar to other questionnaires in this study, factor analysis of OCBS revealed one dimension as DiPaola *et al.* (2005) have found. Sample items include: "This teacher serves on committees in this school," "This teacher helps students during his/her own time," "This teacher is volunteer to mentor and assist new teachers."

Data collection and analysis

After receiving the permission from education office, cooperation of school principals was sought by initially forwarding a letter explaining the nature of the study, protection of the collected data, and projected outcomes. In each school, data were collected by researcher during a separate faculty meetings with teachers and principal. Before the teachers complete the questionnaires, they were encouraged to participate and the researcher explained the purpose of the study and obtained their informed consent. The teachers had the option of identifying themselves in the questionnaires; however, strict confidentiality was promised and ensured. During data collection, some difficulties in getting the complete data; it was impossible, for example, to survey all the teachers at one school in a single visit. Given the number of schools studied, this worked out to a lot of visits.

The collected data were analyzed using PASW Statistics 18 (formerly SPSS). Mean scores and standard deviations were calculated for each variable. Pearson r statistics were computed to determine correlations between variables. In order to respond to the first research question multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was performed to determine gender differences in four dimensions of transformational leadership. In responding to the second research question standard multiple regression analysis was used to identify relative effects of the dimensions of transformational leadership style of male and female principals on procedural justice, trust in principal, and organizational citizenship behaviors of teachers.

Results

Table I represents mean, standard deviation, and possible correlation between variables. As it can be seen in this table, transformational leadership (as an overall construct) is significantly and positively related to procedural justice ($r=0.43$; $p < 0.01$), trust in principal ($r=0.65$; $p < 0.01$), and organizational citizenship behavior ($r=0.64$; $p < 0.01$). All four dimensions of transformational leadership were also significantly and positively related to procedural justice (ranging from $r=0.34$ to 0.47 ; $p < 0.01$), trust in principal (ranging from $r=0.41$ to 0.67 ; $p < 0.01$), and organizational citizenship behavior (ranging from $r=0.42$ to 0.64 ; $p < 0.01$).

The first research question seeks possible gender differences in transformational leadership. To find these differences, computed MANOVA showed that there were significant differences between male and female principals in overall transformational leadership (Wilks' $\Lambda = 0.93$, $F(4, 394) = 7.55$, $p < 0.05$) and also in idealized influence

| Variable | Mean | SD | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|------|------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| 1. Transformational leadership | 4.03 | 0.71 | 1 | | | | | | | |
| 2. Idealized influence | 3.98 | 0.93 | 0.89** | 1 | | | | | | |
| 3. Inspirational motivation | 3.97 | 0.81 | 0.83** | 0.61** | 1 | | | | | |
| 4. Intellectual stimulation | 4.09 | 0.94 | 0.74** | 0.57** | 0.43** | 1 | | | | |
| 5. Individualized consideration | 4.05 | 0.89 | 0.73** | 0.52** | 0.48** | 0.31** | 1 | | | |
| 6. Trust in principal | 4.06 | 1.02 | 0.65** | 0.67** | 0.59** | 0.45** | 0.41** | 1 | | |
| 7. Procedural justice | 3.98 | 0.93 | 0.43** | 0.47** | 0.40** | 0.46** | 0.34** | 0.40** | 1 | |
| 8. Organizational citizenship behaviors | 4.08 | 1.03 | 0.64** | 0.64** | 0.56** | 0.42** | 0.44** | 0.79** | 0.36** | 1 |

Table I.
Descriptive statistics
and correlations

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed)

($F(1, 397) = 14.21, p < 0.05$), inspirational motivation ($F(1, 397) = 25.44, p < 0.05$), intellectual stimulation ($F(1, 397) = 5.68, p < 0.05$), and individualized consideration ($F(1, 397) = 11.12, p < 0.05$) (see Table II). In general, female principals obtained significantly higher scores on transformational leadership dimensions as compared to male principals.

Three multiple regression models for both of male and female principals were run to respond to the second research question. In each model, dimensions of transformational leadership were entered as predictor variables. The first regression model included trust in principal as the criterion variable. In this model, transformational leadership dimensions were found to be significant predictors of trust in principal for both of male ($R^2 = 0.50, F(4, 195) = 49.96, p < 0.05$) and female ($R^2 = 0.34, F(4, 195) = 38.05, p < 0.05$) principals. For female principals idealized influence ($\beta = 0.28$), inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.17$), intellectual stimulation ($\beta = 0.22$), and individualized consideration ($\beta = 0.11$) significantly contributed to trust in principal. On the other hand for male principals of the four dimensions, idealized influence ($\beta = 0.37$) and intellectual stimulation ($\beta = 0.19$) found to be significant predictors (see Table III).

In the second regression model procedural justice was entered as the criterion variable. This model suggested that procedural justice was significantly explained by four dimensions of transformational leadership style of male ($R^2 = 0.11, F(4, 195) = 5.75, p < 0.05$) and female ($R^2 = 0.20, F(4, 195) = 11.39, p < 0.05$) principals. For the female principals standardized regression coefficients revealed that procedural justice was significantly explained by idealized influence ($\beta = 0.37$), inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.16$), intellectual stimulation ($\beta = 0.19$), and individualized consideration ($\beta = 0.21$). Similar to the first model, for the male principals two of dimensions including idealized

| Variable | Female principals | | Male principals | | F(1, 397) |
|------------------------------|-------------------|------|-----------------|------|-----------|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| Idealized influence | 4.07 | 0.85 | 3.90 | 0.98 | 14.21* |
| Inspirational motivation | 3.99 | 0.76 | 3.88 | 0.87 | 25.44* |
| Intellectual stimulation | 4.16 | 0.75 | 3.84 | 0.84 | 5.68* |
| Individualized consideration | 4.20 | 0.82 | 3.92 | 0.79 | 11.12* |

Note: *Significant at the 0.05 level

Table II. MANOVA on dimensions of transformational leadership

| Variable | Female principals | | Male principals | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------------|----------|
| | β | <i>t</i> | β | <i>t</i> |
| Idealized influence | 0.28 | 4.02* | 0.37 | 3.55* |
| Inspirational motivation | 0.17 | 2.50* | 0.07 | 1.43 |
| Intellectual stimulation | 0.22 | 2.56* | 0.19 | 2.78* |
| Individualized consideration | 0.11 | 2.05* | 0.07 | 0.56 |
| | $R^2 = 0.34$ $F(4, 195) = 38.05^*$ | | $R^2 = 0.50$ $F(4, 195) = 49.96^*$ | |

Note: *Significant at the 0.05 level

Table III. Regression analysis of transformational leadership dimensions on trust in principal

influence ($\beta = 0.31$) and intellectual stimulation ($\beta = 0.16$) found to be significant predictors (see Table IV).

The third regression model included organizational citizenship behavior as the criterion variable. In this model four dimensions of transformational leadership were found to be significant predictors of organizational citizenship behavior for both of male ($R^2 = 0.35$, $F(4, 195) = 26.08$, $p < 0.05$) and female ($R^2 = 0.55$, $F(4, 195) = 61.24$, $p < 0.05$) principals. According to the standardized regression coefficients, for the female principals it was revealed that idealized influence ($\beta = 0.41$), inspirational motivation ($\beta = 0.12$), intellectual stimulation ($\beta = 0.18$), and individualized consideration ($\beta = 0.17$) significantly predicted organizational citizenship behavior. Similar to the first and the second model, for the male principals just idealized influence ($\beta = 0.40$) and intellectual stimulation ($\beta = 0.17$) found to be significant predictors (see Table V).

In general, analysis of the data shows that female principals have obtained significantly higher scores on transformational leadership dimensions as compared to male principals and the greater amount of transformational behaviors displayed by them has accompanied with the greater prediction of trust in principal, procedural justice, and organizational citizenship behavior of teachers.

Discussion

The results of this study initially confirm the results of previous studies which they have found transformational leadership as a significant predictor of trust in leader (e.g. Pillai *et al.*, 1999; Ngodo, 2008; Zeinabadi and Rastegarpour, 2010), procedural justice (e.g. Pillai *et al.*, 1999; Ertürk, 2007; Ngodo, 2008; Zeinabadi and Rastegarpour,

Table IV.
Regression analysis
of transformational
leadership dimensions
on procedural justice

| Variable | Female principals | | Male principals | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------------|-------|
| | β | t | β | t |
| Idealized influence | 0.37 | 3.33* | 0.31 | 2.05* |
| Inspirational motivation | 0.16 | 2.18* | 0.07 | 1.13 |
| Intellectual stimulation | 0.19 | 2.29* | 0.16 | 3.66* |
| Individualized consideration | 0.21 | 2.32* | 0.08 | 1.14 |
| | $R^2 = 0.20$ $F(4, 195) = 11.39^*$ | | $R^2 = 0.11$ $F(4, 195) = 5.75^*$ | |

Note: *Significant at the 0.05 level

Table V.
Regression analysis
of transformational
leadership dimensions
on organizational
citizenship behaviors

| Variable | Female principals | | Male principals | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|-------|
| | β | t | β | t |
| Idealized influence | 0.41 | 4.13* | 0.40 | 2.85* |
| Inspirational motivation | 0.12 | 2.15* | 0.09 | 0.18 |
| Intellectual stimulation | 0.18 | 3.36* | 0.17 | 3.97* |
| Individualized consideration | 0.17 | 2.41* | 0.05 | 1.14 |
| | $R^2 = 0.55$ $F(4, 195) = 61.24^*$ | | $R^2 = 0.35$ $F(4, 195) = 26.08^*$ | |

Note: *Significant at the 0.05 level

2010), and organizational citizenship behaviors (e.g. Pillai *et al.*, 1999; Ngunia *et al.*, 2006; Ngodo, 2008). According to Bass (1985), who clearly identifies transactional leadership based on economic exchange and transformational leadership based on social exchange, much of previous studies indicate that transformational leadership establish a social exchange relationship with their followers and that the nature of this relationship influences procedural justice, trust in leader, and organizational citizenship behaviors as social exchange outcomes.

While some previous studies reported no gender differences in transformational leadership (Maher, 1997; Carless, 1998; Manning, 2002) or reported that female leaders frequently displayed two or three dimensions of transformational leadership more than males (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Eagly *et al.*, 2003), the most important finding of this study is the occurrence of the gender differences in all dimensions. This result coupled with the previous findings in non-educational (Rosener, 1990; Bass *et al.*, 1996; Eagly *et al.*, 2003) and educational (Young and McLeod, 2001; Eagly *et al.*, 2003; Trinidad and Normore, 2005) organizations and provides new support for the claim that gender differences exist in transformational leadership style exist and female leaders are more transformational than male counterparts. Although some previous studies (Carless, 1998; Bass *et al.*, 1996) reported that female leaders were rated themselves as being more transformational than male leaders, the result of this study is also congruent with previous studies (Eagly *et al.*, 2003; Druskat, 1994; Bass *et al.*, 1996) which showed females leaders as more transformational than males when they were rated by their followers. Following to this result, greater impact of female principals as transformational leaders on social exchange outcomes is highly expected. This finding is congruent with studies which introduce females as effective and good leaders for follower and organizational related outcomes (e.g. Shakeshaft, 1989; Eagly *et al.*, 2003).

There are some possible explanations for the results of this study. Majority of previous studies described female leaders as more relation oriented; more interested in followers; more devoted to follower development; less self-serving authoritarians and more socially sensitive than their male counterparts (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Komives, 1991; Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Bass and Riggio, 2006). Similarly, educational researchers (e.g. Shakeshaft, 1989; Fennell, 1999; Grogan, 1999; Sherman, 2000; Oplatka, 2003) look at qualities of female principals which shape them as transformational leaders and report that female principals: are emotionally committed to providing a democratic atmosphere; are oriented towards caring rather than rights; are willing and tend to be people oriented; are emphasis on fairness; show no reliance on force and frequently avoid authoritarian solutions and rely on their interpersonal relations skill. Bass and Riggio (2006) believe that these qualities are more related to transformational leadership and female leaders appear to display them.

Female principals in this study worked in all female dominated contexts and had the power to control resources and formulate their own rules, norms, and interests. According to Carless (1998) in a context where females held power, female leaders displayed much more transformational leadership than male leaders in all male-dominated contexts. Also Pounder and Coleman (2002) indicate that the leadership of schools is defined much more in feminine terms. According to feminine nature of primary school administration, the result of the present study may be due to feminine nature of school administration position.

Another explanation can be made for follower gender. Druskat (1994) found that female followers rate their female leaders as exhibiting more transformational than

male followers who evaluate their male leaders. Perhaps male and female teachers of this study associated transformational leadership behaviors with female principals, rather than male principals.

Practical implications and further studies

This study clearly indicates that female principals are more transformational than male counterparts and they also produce higher levels of social exchange outcomes. Generally, this study found that there are some benefits associated with having female principals. Therefore, this study suggests that schools could particularly benefit from developing principal training programs that focus on developing female principals qualities which shape school principals as transformational leaders. Results of the present study have also positive implications for the future of women in school administration position and provide support for evidence (Shakeshaft, 1989; Pounder and Coleman, 2002) which systematically questioned the issue of under representation of women in school leadership positions. Although Iranian primary schools are numerically dominated by women but the majority of principals are predominantly men. The result of this study could be influential in encouraging policy makers to support women administration in primary schools.

This study has some limitations such as only focussing on public primary schools, using two self-report questionnaires and merely relying on teacher ratings of principals. These limitations could be avoided in future research. Another important limitation of this study can be explained based on gender differences in two of social exchange outcomes. As previous studies explained, gender could be considered a determinant of two criterion variables of this study as females might be expected to place more value on procedural justice (Sweeney and McFarlin, 1997) and to exhibit more organization citizenship behaviors than males (Kidder and McLean Parks, 2001). Based on these findings, in the present study, the greater prediction of procedural justice and organization citizenship behavior in female principals may be due to female teacher advantage in these variables. Therefore, researcher should take into account the moderate effect of the gender of teachers on the relationship of transformational leadership with social exchange outcomes.

Finally, given the small, but significant gender differences in transformational leadership and small differences between male and female transformational leadership behaviors in prediction of some criterion variables, it would be unsuitable to firmly conclude that female principals are superior in school administration. Pounder and Coleman (2002) believe that today schools need to androgynous or balanced leadership behaviors. According to this perspective principals, regardless of biological gender, will be able to combine the best of male and female leadership traits to make proper response to demands of environment and to increase school effectiveness.

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