

## **The Relationship of Gender and Organizational Setting to Transformational and Transactional Leadership Skills of Selected College Student Leaders**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose was to examine the development of transformational and transactional leadership skills among Generation X collegiate student organizational officers and members. This study looked at the organizational structure of each group and member's gender to determine if these variables were related to leadership style. In this correlational study 190 college students between the ages of 18-22 from two different leadership organizations were given the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (Bass & Avolio, 1995). Significant relationships were found between the transformational leadership scores and gender. It was found that female student leaders tended to be more transformational than male student leaders. Males had a tendency to portray transactional leadership skills. The type of organization did not influence what type of leader emerged. Although Generation X attributes suggest all members are more transformational, it was concluded that gender continues to have a significant impact on the development of student leader transformational leadership skills.

### **Introduction**

Leaders of the 21<sup>st</sup> century face complex demands perhaps greater than leaders in the past. It is accepted that leaders will have to adapt and adjust to the continual changes in organizations and the world. It is important that young people be equipped to meet those needs and, consequently, preparation and practice for leaders address their anticipated future. Given these conditions, the current population of college students should be studied to determine the best leadership

education practices necessary for development of successful leadership behavior. Two situations have been selected to investigate for this baseline study. First, the generational attributes of the college students enrolled in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century may yield a different approach to leadership education. Second, the type of student organization may provide insight into the type of leadership styles students adapt.

Considering the first situation, the students of the research population are described as Generation X students, born between 1960-1980, and are documented to have different attitudes and expectations than the college students of 20 or 30 years ago (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). In *Dynamics of the Multigenerational Workplace* Zemke, Raines and Filipczak (2000) described the Generation X population as self-reliant, non-authoritarian, skeptical, risk-takers, family-oriented, and informal. In addition, they can adapt to change, technology, and are impatient. As leaders, they grew up in a system where they were treated as equal with their parents, experienced educational environments that allowed challenge, and believed that information equaled power. In the current climate of rapid change, the young generations know you have to act fast and prepare to win. Therefore, universities have developed a sense of duty to establish a foundation where Generation X students can practice leadership and learn to succeed. Consequently, leadership development is a critical part of the college experience. The W. K. Kellogg Foundation found that “leadership development is important and useful because it can enrich the undergraduate experience, empower students, and give them a greater sense of control over their lives” (Astin, 2000, p. 2).

The second condition of the study concerns the type of organization of which the students are members. For this study, two organizations were selected because they contained the upper echelon of student leaders within a large, land-grant university. Both organizations were leadership councils consisting of student leaders who represented many other students with varying interests on the college campus. However, one of the organizations was located in a college with direct links to agriculture and life sciences industries and graduation career opportunities. The other organizational membership consisted of students from all majors with no link other than their college class year.

### **Transformational Leadership and Generation X**

Burns began looking at transformational leadership early in the development of leadership theory. He studied the current leaders of that time. He determined that transactional leaders appeal to the self-interests of followers whereas transformational leaders appeal to the higher ideals and moral values of both leaders and followers. He believed that most leader-follower relationships are transactional (Burns, 1978). Burns’s studies, because of the timing, focused on two major generational groups – the Baby Boomer generation, birth years 1943-1960, and the Veteran generation, birth years 1922-1943 (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). Therefore, the original studies and those subsequent studies had

not yet examined the ever-changing world that exists for the more recent Generation X group. This study examined the development of transformational and transactional leadership skills among Generation X collegiate student organizational officers and members. It also determined whether gender and type of organization influences leadership skills.

### **Agriculture and Life Sciences Youth Leadership Education**

Over the years several researchers have investigated the youth leadership aspects found within the agriculture youth organizations of 4H and FFA (formerly Future Farmers of America). From the results of several studies it is generally agreed that leadership skills are enhanced by these youth organizations. For example, Boyd (1991) sought to determine if 4-H members developed leadership life skills and to ascertain if the skill development was related to their participation in 4-H. He found that 4-H members perceived themselves as having developed a higher level of leadership life skills than non-4-H youth. Continuing this line of research, Brick (1998) studied FFA members' self-perceived leadership skills. In this national study, she determined that length of membership did not affect leadership perceptions but activity within the chapter did have an influence. Additionally, FFA officer activities did not have an influence on members' perceptions of their abilities to work in groups and make decisions. She concluded that no matter when a member joins the FFA, he or she can become a secure leader through the activities of the FFA. And, officers should strengthen their teaming skills to intensify their security in group work and decision making. The work of Dodson (1995) similarly noted that agricultural youth leadership education was enhanced by participation in an agricultural youth organization. He studied students enrolled in a high school leadership course. Conclusions supported the notion that the more active students were in the FFA, the higher their perceptions were in the areas of making decisions, communication, understanding one's self, and working with groups. Additionally, the simulation activities used in the course were viewed by the students as valuable, stimulating, and helped learning.

Accepting the argument that determination of how youth attain their leadership skills is difficult, we were keenly aware from the research of agricultural youth leadership organizations that, perhaps, participation in agriculturally-based leadership organizations may impact the leadership behaviors and styles of collegiate leaders. Therefore, the intent of this investigation was to discover if a link occurred between the type of organization (agriculture vs. non-agriculture) and a collegiate leader's transformational or transactional leadership style.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theory**

In the 1970s Burns made a bold statement when discussing transformational leadership. He stated that transformational leadership occurs when the individuals

involved “raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality” (1978, p. 20). The individuals may start out in different directions but come together to form one. They work to increase the standards of each person involved. He believes that transformational leadership in “essence of the leader-follower relation is the interaction of persons with different levels of motivations and of power of potential, including skill, in pursuit of a common or at least joint purpose” (p. 19). Rogers (1992) studied Burns’ work on transformational leadership. He suggested Burns’ definitions meant that a transactional leader is one that is conventional whereas a transformational leader is more empowering.

The work of Burns and others, such as Rogers, yields the transformational leadership model that consists of two distinct leadership styles: transformational and transactional. According to Bass (1998), “Transformational leadership is an expansion of transactional leadership” (p. 4). Transactional leadership is characterized by the exchange of rewards and punishments. The duties of the follower come from a series of transactions by the leader. Leaders generally base their decisions upon discussion with others. They determine what should be required and then specify conditions in which the terms must be met. Transformational leaders work to motivate their followers. They are generally facilitative leaders that encourage participation by the followers. They work to build the followers up to be a self-lead organization. A true transformational leader will maximize their potential when they are willing to give up at any moment all that they are to receive all that they can become (Bass, 1998).

The Full Range Leadership Model consists of transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership. Transformational leadership is identified by four components: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration. Transactional leadership is made up of contingent reward, management-by-exception (passive), management-by-exception (active) and a laissez-faire style (Bass, 1998).

Burns (1978) believes that transformational and transactional leadership are on two ends of a continuum. In contrast, Bass and Avilio (1994) treat these leadership theories separate from each other with each composed of several factors. According to Williams (1997), Bass defines transformational leadership in terms of distinct components while the transactional leadership is not components but three distinct types of transactional leadership.

Transformational leadership is difficult to define. Bass uses examples to illustrate the definition, but finds no need to define transactional leadership in that way. A good leader will encompass both transformational and transactional components into their leadership style. Each component is necessary at different times and at various circumstances.

### **Example Research on Transformational and Transactional Leadership**

A large body of research is acknowledged in documenting the comparisons of transformational and transactional leaders. For continuity purposes, a short summary of example studies follows. Bass and his associates have conducted numerous investigations on transformational and transactional leadership. They discovered that transformational and transactional styles were positively associated with effectiveness yet transformational leadership components were more highly related than transactional leadership factors to satisfaction and effectiveness. Avolio and Gibbons (1988) addressed the development of transformational leadership. After analyzing the life histories of several CEOs they found that there were several factors influencing their leadership style. They found that the parents of transformational leaders set high standards for achievement and encouraged them to do their best. The leaders learned how to deal with conflict and effective decision-making through their experiences within their families.

Popper, Mayseless, and Castelnovo (2000) examined the relationship between secure attachment and transformational leadership. They found that attachment security positively correlated with each component of transformational leadership but had no relationship with transactional leadership. Thus, they believe that only certain types of leadership, those with a great deal of empathy toward their followers, are expected to be associated with this large amount of security. The insecure attachment styles were negatively correlated with transformational leadership.

Tichy and Devanna (1986) studied 12 CEOs of large corporation to determine how the leaders worked under challenging conditions. They found out that transformational leaders manage change in a three-act process. Transformational leaders were the change agents of the organization. They helped create a vision for their organization and finally they broke down old structures and began building new dimensions to change (Northouse, 1997).

Egan, Sarros, and Santora (1995) studied transformational and transactional leadership styles in nonprofit and private sector organizations in Australia. They discovered that out of the four organizations surveyed that transformational leadership was more prevalent than transactional leadership and the laissez-faire approach. They also found out that leadership styles were independent of the organizational type. Finally, they found out that the methods leaders had adopted to operationalize leadership was not dependent upon the organizational type; therefore, there was no difference between the non-profit organizations and the private entities. The individuals decided on their own preference according to their ability and life experiences. Kelloway and Barling (2000) studied collegiate students in order to determine if the students could differentiate between the two particular leadership styles in a role-playing exercise. The participants could clearly detect the two transformational leadership components and altered their

behavior in response to the leaders' behavior. Followers recognize the components of transformational and transactional leadership and alter their actions according to the leader.

## **Gender and Leadership**

As with transformational leadership, gender has been investigated as an explanation of leadership behavior. Many researchers agree that gender has a significant effect on the outcome of many leadership situations. According to Helgesen (1990), women tend to lead from the center of an organization whereas men are more hierarchical and lead from the top. Men place emphasis on vision while many women connect more closely to the principles of voice. Males are more task-oriented and females tend to be more relationship oriented (Bass, 1967).

Eagly and Johnson (1990) found consistent differences between males and females in leadership styles. They concluded that women tend to be more democratic and participative than their male counterparts. Kanter (1977) looked at women in leadership roles and discovered that leadership styles varied from "commanding-affirming to controlling-disabling" (p. 166). He argues that the structure of the organization has important implications for the behavior of males and females. When women possessed power within an organization, their effectiveness was similar to that of men. Several studies have found that males are expected to be in more powerful positions than females and are expected to be more likely to use power in an effective way. They are supposed to be tougher, more aggressive, and more competitive (Meeker & Weitzel-O'Neill, 1977). Giovanonni (2001) describes women leaders as individuals who: foster participation, validate others, delegate authority, allow for an open flow of information, and shares in the decision making process.

## **Relationship between Gender and Transformational Leadership**

Survey and experimental evidence show that women in leadership positions have a greater tendency to be somewhat more transformational and display less managing-by-exception than men. Rosener (1990) explained this style as interactive leadership rooted in socialization. She predicted that women leaders would demonstrate a transformational style of leadership and men would exhibit a more transactional style. She looked at a group of individuals that were 51 years of age or older. Each of the women was instructed to find male counterparts within their organizations to participate. The study used an eight-page survey to conduct the research. There was a response rate of 31%. There were several factors that influenced this response rate including the length of the survey and the responsibility of the female participants to find the male counterparts. The results showed that a non-traditional leadership style that is more participatory could be effective in organizations that are immersed in change. They believe that this could only occur if the change had already been accepted. Changing

environments can create new opportunities for companies and may cause the individuals to examine their leadership style.

In 1985 Bass (1998) examined transformational leadership at a training workshop. There were 12 women and 12 men that served in upper management positions of Fortune 50 firms. Three to five subordinates of these leaders described the leaders by using the MLQ (Form 5R). He found that the top four managers with the highest MLQ charismatic leadership were women. In an early version of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire one of the characteristics is charismatic leadership. It is now divided into two parts of idealized influence (attributed) and idealized influence (behavior).

Bass, Avolio, and Atwater (1996) conducted four studies from the period of 1986 to 1992. In all four studies they found that women leaders attained higher scores for all four components of transformational leadership including charisma, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration (Bass, 1998). As far as the transactional components are concerned they found that contingent reward were not statistically significant in the separate studies. Except for one group, there were no differences between males and females in the components management-by-exception and laissez-faire approach. They discovered that women were more actively management-by-exception and men practiced passively management-by-exception. Komives (1991) discovered that there was no statistical difference between female and male managers who self-rated themselves except for intellectual stimulation. She found that females were significantly higher than their male counterparts. D'Ambrosio (2000) examined gender differences in transformational and transactional leadership styles among leaders. She found no statistical significance between gender and transformational and transactional leadership styles among leaders. The raters who were male tended to rate the female leaders higher in transformational leadership.

### **Unanswered Questions**

Considering the timing of research on transformational leadership and the relationship of gender to leadership, no clear direction has been created for the men and women of Generation X. In fact, one author has suggested that for the Generation X members, gender roles will converge yielding fewer differences between males and female actions (Mitchell, 1995). How then will the Generation X members lead? Will they carry through with their authoritarian approach similar to transactional leadership activities? Or will they maintain their risk-taking, non-hierarchical approach to leadership and present a more transformational approach? Will the Generation X males tend toward transactional leadership as the actions of the previous generations males? Or will they become more androgynous, transformational leaders? Similarly, will the female Generation X'ers maintain the typical gender identification with leadership and tend to be transformational? Finally, how will the transformational and transactional

leadership characteristics present themselves within a collegiate leadership setting?

## **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the development of transformational and transactional leadership skills among Generation X collegiate student organizational officers and members. It determined whether gender and type of organization strongly influence leadership skills.

There are two main questions that were asked in this study.

- Does gender impact self-perception of transformational and transactional leadership?
- Is there a difference in transformational leadership scores between two different student organizations?

## **Methodology**

### **Population**

The target population for this study consisted of undergraduate student leaders studying at large, land-grant universities. Two purposive samples were selected in order to obtain responses from appropriate groups (Cummins, 1995). Sample participants were student leaders who were elected officers, chairs, and members of the University Class Council (Class Council) and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Council (COALS Council). These two organizations were selected for their quality reputations in leadership development and because their members were experienced student leaders. Class Council is an organization that provides leadership and direction for each undergraduate classification (freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior). It works to maintain the traditions at the target university. It is comprised of six elected officers for each class, selected chairs, and members. The second organization, COALS Council is an organization that represents the voice of the students within the target university's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. It is composed of five elected officers, 15 members at-large, 10 freshman representatives, and two representatives from each organization within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The entire purposive sample consisted of 190 participants selected by each of the organizations' advisors. In addition, the purposive sample was a representation of both females and males from Generation X with ages, at the time of the study, from 18 to 23 years of age.

### **Instrumentation**

In order to gain a comprehensive look at the aspects of transformational and transactional leadership this study used the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ Form 5X). Bass developed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire in

1985. Since then it has been through several revisions due to findings from past research. The latest version of the MLQ Form 5X has been used in over 200 research programs, doctoral dissertations and master theses around the world (Bass, 1995).

This study administered the MLQ Form 5X to student leaders at centrally located, large land grant university during the spring semester of 2001. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire measures four distinct characteristics of transformational leaders and three characteristics of transactional leaders. Reliabilities for the total items and for each leadership factor scale range from .74 to .94 (Bass, 1995).

### **Procedure**

The intent of this study was to determine if gender and organizational type had an impact on the development of student leaders' transformational and transactional leadership skills. A correlational design was used for this study. The dependent variables were the participants' score in each leadership skill area of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. The independent variables were gender, classification, leadership positions, organizations, and the formal leadership training or activities that the student had taken in college.

The instrument was administered to student leaders of two different collegiate student organizations. The organizations' advisors provided a list of officers, chairs, and members. The investigator attended a regularly scheduled monthly meeting to conduct the study. Each student was given a packet that contained a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, an informed consent, and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.

The first section of the questionnaire asked about personal variables that could impact the study. The second section contained the core content that determined the students' scores on the measurements scales of transformational or transactional leadership. This questionnaire took 10-15 minutes to complete. After this meeting the investigator took note of those that participated. The student leaders who were not present at the Ag Council meeting were emailed a letter of intent and copy of the questionnaire. Class Council members not present had packets placed in their personal boxes in their class cubicle. Approximately 190 students participated in this study. There were 108 valid responses, which reflected a 69% response rate.

## Findings and Conclusions

### Findings Regarding Gender

A t-test for independent means was used to determine the relationship between the scores of each characteristic on the MLQ 5X and gender. Means for all the transformational and transactional leadership factors were compared for male and female students. Female means scores were 3.18 and male mean scores were 2.93. Through this analysis we found that female student leaders had a greater perception of their abilities to influence their followers (idealized influence-attributed and behavior); to inspire and motivate (inspirational motivation), and to coach and mentor their followers (individualized consideration) than did male student leaders. Statistically significant differences were not found for the MLQ 5X scale for intellectual stimulation. This indicated that there was no difference between the perceptions of female student leaders and male student leaders on the MLQ 5X scale of Intellectual Stimulation. The results shown in Table 1 indicate that there is a significant difference between male's and female's particular transformational leadership skills.

*Table 1. Characteristics of transformational leadership scores by gender*

| <b>Characteristic of Transformational Leadership</b> | <b>n</b> | <b>M</b> | <b>SD</b> | <b>t</b> |
|--|----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Idealized Influence (Attributed)                     |          |          |           |          |
| Male   | 42       | 2.83     | .59       | -2.60*   |
| Female   | 66       | 3.10     | .48       |          |
| Idealized Influence (Behavior)                       |          |          |           |          |
| Male   | 42       | 2.92     | .56       | -2.51*   |
| Female   | 66       | 3.20     | .58       |          |
| Inspirational Motivation                             |          |          |           |          |
| Male   | 42       | 3.09     | .68       | -2.39*   |
| Female   | 66       | 3.36     | .51       |          |
| Intellectual Stimulation                             |          |          |           |          |
| Male   | 42       | 2.98     | .48       | -0.92    |
| Female   | 66       | 3.07     | .51       |          |
| Individualized Consideration                         |          |          |           |          |
| Male   | 42       | 2.83     | .59       | -3.15*   |
| Female   | 66       | 3.17     | .51       |          |

Note: M=Transformational Leadership Scores; \*p<.05

We also discovered that male student leaders had a greater sense of waiting for problems to arise before taking action [management-by-exception (passive)] than female student leaders. Statistically significant differences were not found for the MLQ 5X scales of contingent reward, management-by-exception (active), and laissez faire approach.

These results point out that there was no difference between the perceptions of female student leaders and male student leaders on the MLQ 5X scales of contingent reward, management-by-exception (active), and laissez faire approach which can be seen in Table 2.

**Table 2. Characteristics of transactional leadership scores by gender**

| <b>Characteristic of Transactional Leadership</b> | <b>n</b> | <b><u>M</u></b> | <b><u>SD</u></b> | <b><u>t</u></b> |
|---|----------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Contingent Reward                                 |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Male  | 42       | 2.80            | .56              | -3.33           |
| Female  | 66       | 3.12            | .45              |                 |
| Management-by-Exception (Active)                  |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Male  | 42       | 2.02            | .63              | 1.16            |
| Female  | 66       | 1.86            | .73              |                 |
| Management-by-Exception (Passive)                 |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Male  | 42       | 1.73            | .63              | 3.53*           |
| Female  | 66       | 1.30            | .60              |                 |
| Laissez-faire                                     |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Male  | 42       | 1.05            | .76              | 0.45            |
| Female  | 66       | 1.00            | .56              |                 |

Note: M=Transactional Leadership Scores; \* $p < .05$

### **Conclusions Regarding Gender**

These findings indicated that the Generation X females had a greater tendency to be more transformational leaders than men. This study supported the research of several authors (Bass & Avolio, 1995; Komives, 1991; Rosener, 1990) who found that females had more transformational leadership characteristics than males. Although the typical transformational leadership and gender studies have shown that women tend to be more transformational than men (Bass, 1998), it was surprising that, as noted by the Generation X references (Zemke, Raines, & Filipeczak, 2000), that men did not also display similar transformational tendencies.

As with the "older" generations, the Generation X men are more transactional than women. This conclusion continues to support Bass (1998) who stated that men were more passively management-by-exception and females were more actively management-by-exception. From this study, supporting evidence concluded that gender continued to influence the leadership style used by collegiate students.

### **Findings Regarding Organization**

Another objective for this research was to identify whether the transformational leadership scores differ between two different collegiate organizations: COALS

Council and Class Council. A t-test for independent means was used to test this research question. Means and standard deviations were calculated for the five transformational leadership scores and four transactional leadership scores comparing Class Council and Ag Council members. The results of the analysis are represented in Tables 3 and 4.

There was no statistically significant difference between Class Council members and COALS Council members. This analysis indicates that Class Council and COALS Council members are similar in their transformational and transactional leadership activities. The organizational structures may vary slightly but the value that each student gained from their previous and current leadership activities were the same.

**Table 3. Characteristics of transformational leadership scores by organization**

| <b>Characteristic of Transformational Leadership</b> | <b>n</b> | <b><u>M</u></b> | <b><u>SD</u></b> | <b><u>t</u></b> |
|--|----------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Idealized Influence (Attributed)                     |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Ag Council   | 45       | 2.94            | .57              | -0.96           |
| Class Council  | 63       | 3.04            | .52              |                 |
| Idealized Influence (Behavior)                       |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Ag Council   | 45       | 3.11            | .58              | 0.16            |
| Class Council  | 63       | 3.09            | .59              |                 |
| Inspirational Motivation                             |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Ag Council   | 45       | 3.14            | .65              | -1.68           |
| Class Council  | 63       | 3.34            | .54              |                 |
| Intellectual Stimulation                             |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Ag Council   | 45       | 3.06            | .43              | 0.33            |
| Class Council  | 63       | 3.02            | .54              |                 |
| Individualized Consideration                         |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Ag Council   | 45       | 2.90            | .64              | -1.32           |
| Class Council  | 63       | 3.10            | .50              |                 |

Note: M=Transformational Leadership Scores

**Table 4. Characteristics of transactional leadership scores by organization**

| <b>Characteristic of Transactional Leadership</b> | <b>n</b> | <b><u>M</u></b> | <b><u>SD</u></b> | <b><u>t</u></b> |
|---|----------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| Contingent Reward                                 |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Ag Council  | 45       | 2.90            | .59              | -1.64           |
| Class Council                                     | 63       | 3.06            | .44              |                 |
| Management-by-Exception (Active)                  |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Ag Council  | 45       | 1.88            | .69              | -0.55           |
| Class Council                                     | 63       | 1.95            | .70              |                 |
| Management-by-Exception (Passive)                 |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Ag Council  | 45       | 1.38            | .65              | -1.18           |
| Class Council                                     | 63       | 1.53            | .64              |                 |
| Laissez-faire                                     |          |                 |                  |                 |
| Ag Council  | 45       | .93             | .61              | -1.25           |
| Class Council                                     | 63       | 1.08            | .65              |                 |

Note: M=Transactional Leadership Scores

### **Conclusions Regarding Organization**

The findings indicated that the type of organization did not influence whether an individual is a transformational or transactional leader. We acknowledge that we did not ask members of either organization if they were previous members of agricultural youth organizations. However, an association with agriculture youth organizations is often assumed for student leaders of Colleges of Agriculture. Therefore, many constituents identify agriculture students as those with developed leadership skills. We thought, perhaps, a clear distinction would be identified between a group of agricultural student leaders and non-agricultural student leaders. As noted in Boyd (1991), 4-H members perceived themselves as having developed a higher level of leadership life skills than non-4-H youth. However, in this case, the non-agricultural organization was no different from the agriculturally-based organization. In essence, then, the findings support Egan, Sarros, and Santora (1995) who found that leadership styles are independent of the organizational type. The individual decides on their preference according to their ability and life experiences.

### **Implications for Leadership Educators**

Members of Generation X are the leaders of the future. This study was an attempt to link the Generation X to transformation and transactional leadership characteristics. As leadership educations develop programs, modules, classes, and references, they must begin to consider how generational differences affect their clientele. It would have been simple if this study supported the notion that Generation X members utilize transformational leadership as a result of their generational experiences. However, this preliminary study suggests that leadership may not follow generational lines. Generation X males are

transactional just as their fathers and Generation X females are transformational just as their mothers. In addition, because the agricultural student leaders are no different than their non-agricultural student leader peers, agricultural youth leadership organizations may need to accept that leadership is a very complicated activity affected by countless interventions.

When dealing with the newer generations, traditional observations still need to be maintained. Young leaders may be from Generation X but females still exhibit themselves as more transformational than males. With this perception females continue to bring an existing set of values to an organization. Organizations need to know that these attributes are present in order to effectively utilize both men and women. It is important that an organization be aware that women continue to have a greater tendency to influence their followers (idealized influence-attributed and behavior); to inspire and motivate (inspirational motivation), and to coach and mentor their followers (individualized consideration) while men will have a greater sense of waiting for problems to arise before taking action [management-by-exception (passive)]. Generation X women are stepping up to the challenge and responsibility of leadership.

Bass (1998) stated that leaders need to be both transformational and transactional. The collegiate population studied, although Generation X, continues to need training for maximization of these skills. As leadership educators it is important that males receive the necessary transformational skills and females receive the essential transactional skills. We recommend continuation of programs and courses that strictly focus on these skills for each gender.

Finally, this study found that organizational type does not necessarily effect individuals' perceptions of transformational and transactional leadership skills. Although more organizational types need to be investigated, this study suggests that leadership styles are independent of the organization's structure. Leadership educators need to further examine if leaders select their style based on their own views and experiences rather than the setting of their particular organization. Generation X students are accustomed to team-based organizations (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000). When these students enter the workforce they will be confronted with some organizations that do not foster change. It is vital as leadership educators to help these students adapt to the various dynamics they may encounter. It is also important to train and educate current leaders that are identified as part of the Baby Boomer generation on how to manage Generation X employees. Thus, as leadership educators train their clientele, it is critical, based on this study, that we continue to seek answers as to how generational dimensions link to leadership behavior. We must continue to evaluate best practices as the emerging generations become the leaders of the future.

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