

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Gender Differences in Educational Management

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Abstract

This article examines gender differences in educational management and their impact on leadership effectiveness. It highlights the importance of gender-sensitive approaches in developing managerial competence and improving organizational climate, decision-making, and interpersonal relations. The study also considers gender competence as a key element of school leadership, shaped by socio-cultural factors and gender stereotypes.

The findings indicate that integrating a gender approach into educational management promotes more inclusive, democratic, and effective leadership, while supporting a positive institutional environment and enhancing the performance of teachers and students.

KEYWORDS

Gender approach, educational management, gender competence, school leadership, managerial competence, gender differences, leadership styles, educational organization, inclusive management.

INTRODUCTION

Today, the education system is undergoing processes of transformation and renewal in various parts of the world. In these processes, educational management encompasses not only pedagogical aspects but also social and political dimensions. At the same time, gender differences in educational management remain a significant issue. Gender-based disparities exist not only among students but also among teachers and leaders who manage the education system.

Gender differences in educational management manifest across several domains. Disparities among teachers, school leaders, and educational administrators reduce the overall effectiveness of the system. Typically, men are more represented in leadership positions, while women are more often engaged in teaching and other supportive roles. This imbalance may hinder the sustainable development of the education system.

In the contemporary context, a modern leader is viewed as a manager who demonstrates adaptability to innovation, possesses a high level of professionalism, and effectively performs their functional responsibilities. Their activities, along with their gender competence (gender awareness), directly influence the external image of the educational institution and the psychological microclimate within the team. In turn, this determines the creative activity of both students and pedagogical staff. Gender competence is interpreted as a key (leading) competence of an educational manager. It includes the acquisition of knowledge about the essence of the gender approach, the skills to implement gender strategies in organizing the pedagogical process, and the practical ability to apply gender knowledge and competencies in establishing effective gender interaction within the education system.

Historically, gender relations have been shaped by the economic, social, and political dominance of men. Gender

status, gender hierarchy, and behavioral models are not determined by nature but are formed through institutions of social control and cultural traditions. Therefore, gender affiliation is embedded in the structure of all social institutions, and the reproduction of gender consciousness at the individual level supports the existing system of social relations across all spheres [1].

In the practice of educational management, gender aspects encompass differences in leadership styles, the specific characteristics of male and female psychology, as well as various dimensions of psychological and emotional intelligence.

Some scholarly studies emphasize that the management styles of female managers may be more effective than those of their male counterparts, highlighting the distinctive socio-psychological characteristics of women leaders and the specific features of "women's management" as a separate phenomenon [2].

Historically, gender relations have been formed on the basis of men's economic, social, and political dominance. Gender status, gender hierarchy, and behavioral patterns are not determined by nature but are shaped through institutions of social control and cultural traditions. Consequently, gender affiliation is embedded within the structure of all social institutions, and the reproduction of gender consciousness at the individual level sustains the existing system of social relations across various spheres of society.

However, in the contemporary context, the widespread dissemination of democratic values has brought the issue of gender equality to the forefront. Gender equality refers to the principle of equal rights and opportunities for both women and men, including the necessity of ensuring equal access to leadership and management positions. Unfortunately, in many societies, including that of Uzbekistan, the principle of gender balance often remains declarative in nature and is not fully implemented in practice.

Management and leadership represent one of the key regulatory spheres of social life, and it is precisely within this domain that the gender phenomenon manifests most vividly and in stereotypical forms. The dominance of men in positions of power and governance—within families, organizations, institutions, enterprises, and at the societal level—leads to the monopolization of managerial functions predominantly by men [3].

Some academic works suggest that the leadership styles of female managers may, in certain contexts, be more effective than those of male managers. These studies also analyze the unique socio-psychological traits of women leaders and the specific characteristics of women's management in general [4].

In educational management practice, gender aspects are shaped by taking into account the specific features of leadership styles, the organization of interpersonal relationships, as well as the psychological characteristics and emotional intelligence of both men and women.

Research examining the comparative effectiveness of women and men indicates that, at a certain stage, the most politically appropriate strategy was to demonstrate that women are equally competent as men in overcoming structural barriers in management. However, the findings of studies measuring effectiveness were often generalized into the conclusion that "there are no differences in leadership styles." In reality, these studies documented that women's managerial competence is not inferior to that of men and, in some cases, may even surpass it. Nevertheless, describing women's and men's behavior as "equally effective" is fundamentally different from portraying them as "identical."

An interesting observation is that, within the predominantly male-oriented context, studies comparing the performance of men and women have identified differences; however, these differences were often not reflected in the final conclusions. For example, in the study conducted by Hemphill, Griffiths, and Frederiksen, although women demonstrated better performance than men across multiple indicators, the researchers nevertheless concluded that men should "probably" be given preference over women in appointments to school leadership positions.

In their discussion of the question, "Should men be appointed as primary school principals more often than women?", the authors suggested that the answer would "probably be no."

The study does not claim that women should always be preferred over men. However, it indicates that, as a group, men are not necessarily stronger than women. The evidence supports the appointment of women as primary school principals, particularly when the role of the principal is understood to include the following functions:

- working effectively with teachers and the broader school community;

- setting clear educational goals and objectives;
- ensuring student engagement and participation;
- possessing knowledge of teaching methods and instructional techniques;
- receiving positive evaluations from teachers and administrative staff.

Existing literature categorizes gender differences in the following domains:

- work environment;
- leadership;
- communication;
- decision-making;
- conflict management.

Some studies have examined women in the corporate sector. Benedetti cautions against making direct comparisons between two groups. According to her, while women in the corporate sector scored higher across many classification criteria, studies of women administrators in the education system produced more balanced results. Nevertheless, differences do exist, although they are not substantial. Therefore, it is important to include all available literature in the analysis.

Let us turn to the central question under discussion: do women lead differently from men? According to Judy B. Rosener, women utilize their distinctive communication abilities and lead in ways that differ significantly from men.

Their success is achieved not despite certain human qualities traditionally labeled as “feminine” and considered unsuitable for leadership, but precisely because of these qualities [5].

Interviews and written surveys conducted with women leaders have made it possible to understand how they perceive themselves as leaders and how their leadership style differs from the traditional “command-and-control” approach. Rosener referred to this approach as a “transformational leadership style.”

Differences between men and women become particularly evident in how they describe their leadership styles and methods of influencing subordinates. Male leaders often perceive their work as a sequence of tasks, relying on systems of rewards for well-performed work and sanctions for poor performance. At the same time, they tend to depend more on the formal authority associated with their position.

In professional environments, the differing perceptions of men and women have led to the formation of stereotypical thinking. According to such stereotypes, women are considered more suitable for repetitive and monotonous tasks, are less career-oriented, and are less capable of resolving conflict situations. However, when new situations and opportunities arise, women actively utilize these opportunities to gain experience and advance in their careers.

Stereotypes formed about women hinder a full understanding that individuals’ interests and behaviors are determined not primarily by their gender, but by specific working conditions and situational factors.

A gender-based comparison of managerial and leadership qualities of women and men.

Managerial and leadership qualities	Gender-specific characteristics of women	Gender-specific characteristics of men
Motives of work activity	View a career as a means of personal growth and self-realization	Associate a career with prestigious and promising positions
Leadership style	A tendency toward a relatively democratic management style	Use of a command-and-control (administrative) management style

Focus on interpersonal relations	Places greater emphasis on relationships among team members; the interpersonal climate is of significant importance	Primarily focuses on financial and operational issues
Emotionality in the work process	A higher level of emotional expressiveness	Emotionally controlled, composed behavior

Stereotypes formed about women hinder a comprehensive understanding that individuals’ interests and behaviors are determined not primarily by their gender, but by specific working conditions and situational factors.

Female leaders possess the ability to motivate their teams, supporting employees by recognizing even minor achievements. In this context, an important social effect—also pursued by women in politics—emerges, namely the humanization of interests. Women tend to pay greater attention to social issues. Moreover, compared to men, they often demonstrate lower levels of confidence regarding the future and tend to adopt a more cautious approach.

At the same time, other researchers deny the existence of such distinct characteristics. Alice H. Eagly and Blair T. Johnson present evidence both supporting and refuting the existence of gender differences in leadership styles. However, the hypothesis that female leaders are more oriented toward interpersonal relations, while male leaders are more focused on task performance, has not been fully confirmed [6]. Nevertheless, women have been observed to demonstrate a tendency toward greater personal involvement in the work process and a less pronounced display of authority in their leadership style.

At the same time, it would be incorrect to assume that the gender characteristics of men and women are entirely identical. Due to women’s reproductive functions and their frequent need to combine professional activity with family responsibilities, it is essential to take these specific features into account and ensure equal opportunities. This includes providing equitable conditions in areas such as remuneration, career advancement, and professional development.

Studies on gender differences in educational management indicate that, although men and women may differ in certain

stylistic and psychological aspects of leadership, there are no significant differences in their intellectual potential or professional competence. In the modern education system, effective management should be based not only on traditional approaches but also on the principles of gender sensitivity, inclusivity, and social justice.

Research findings demonstrate that the democratic, communicative, and collaborative leadership style often associated with female leaders is an important factor in creating a positive psychological climate within a team. At the same time, traits commonly associated with men—such as decisiveness and strategic orientation—also constitute essential components of effective management. Thus, effective educational management is formed through the integration of positive characteristics associated with different genders.

Furthermore, existing gender stereotypes in society, the “glass ceiling,” and other social barriers continue to limit women’s participation in management. This further reinforces the need to ensure gender equality within the education system and to fully utilize the potential of women.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the implementation of a gender approach in educational management serves as a crucial factor in developing managerial competence among leaders, fostering a healthy socio-psychological environment within organizations, and improving the quality of education. Therefore, the development and practical implementation of strategic measures aimed at ensuring gender equality in the education system should be considered a priority.

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