

## LEADERSHIP FROM A GENDER PERSPECTIVE

### Background

Many public organizations are experiencing great pressure to do more with fewer resources. This is a significant challenge, but leadership might be part of the solution. We probably all know someone who happily exerts herself to do a good job and someone who only does what is absolutely necessary. Existing research has shown that employees' perceptions of leadership often has major effects on employees' motivation. Employees with high motivation perform better.

However, all employees are not motivated by the same type of leadership. Several studies, both internationally and in Denmark, indicate that women and men differ in the degree of communal and agentic traits. Thus, there is reason to believe that some types of leadership behavior are more closely related to male characteristics, and others to female characteristics.

Existing research has shown that people who are similar are more likely to be compatible, have shared social networks and mutual trust. Similarities – including gender (“gender congruence”) – have also been shown to increase mutual understanding and acceptance.



Research on gender and leadership has largely focused on how gender differences affect leadership behavior. Male and female leaders often practice different forms of leadership, but we do not know whether gender differences also affect which type of leadership employees prefer and are motivated by.

### Objective and methods

The purpose of the project is to investigate the effect of gender on leadership, with focus on transformational and transactional leadership. Unlike much research on gender and leadership, this project focuses on the gender of the employee as well as the combination between the gender of the employee and the leader.

The project will highlight the following questions:

1. What does employee gender mean for the effect of leadership?
2. What does employee gender and gender-based traits mean for leadership preferences?
3. What does gender congruence mean for the effect of leadership and leadership training?

The project is based on data from the LEAP field experiment, a survey experiment and a survey. The empirical data is primarily from high schools.

### Additional information

The project is headed by PhD student Trine Høj Fjendbo and supported by Associate Professor Christian Bøtcher Jacobsen and Professor Vibeke Lehmann Nielsen.