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Leadership styles: some evidence from the Turkish construction industry

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The construction industry provides an interesting research alternative to other sectors because of its unique characteristics. For this reason, this paper aims to explore and compare the leadership styles of managerial personnel in the construction industry. The study focuses on the empirical evaluations of the similarities and differences in leadership styles of construction professionals. A managerial-style questionnaire is developed based on the review of relevant literature. Questionnaire data obtained from 43 respondents show that the authoritative style is more frequently performed than all other styles. Results also indicate differences in terms of gender and managerial hierarchy. Implications of the results are discussed.

Keywords: Leadership, construction industry, Turkey

Introduction

Organizations have paid attention to leadership styles of their people who occupy managerial positions, holding the belief that leadership is an important factor in achieving business success. Leadership is one of the least-understood concepts in business, despite the countless articles and books written about it. Many theories of leadership have been developed, yet no single approach adequately captures the essence of the concept.

The intention of leadership theories is to explain relationship between leadership styles and the context in which leadership is evaluated. A review of management literature reveals that studies of leadership have focused mainly on finding the most appropriate or effective leadership style. However, there seems to be few empirical studies related to the subject in project-based industries such as construction. Therefore, this study explores leadership styles of those who occupy managerial positions in a construction setting.

Styles of leadership

Much has been written about leadership styles. Sometimes, it may appear to the general reader that researchers have

been repeating each other. The word ‘style’ is roughly equivalent to the way in which a manager chooses to influence other people. Style is an important part of leadership, because it shapes a manager’s approach to leadership. However, no evidence has clearly shown that a particular leadership style is optimal; hence, it may be concluded that no single leadership style is best for all managerial situations (Mullins, 1999; Vecchio, 2002).

Different approaches to the subject have led to various classifications of leadership styles. Although behaviour categories may be labelled similarly, their conceptualization and operationalization may be totally different in most cases. Leadership style is in general of two types: the first one is the employee-centred type, described as democratic or participative, and the second one is the task-centred type, described as autocratic or authoritarian. Autocratic versus democratic leadership style is considered to be a one-dimensional continuum. Handy (1993) uses the terms ‘structuring’ and ‘supportive’ as being the major functions of leadership.

Aside from these two styles, several attempts have been made to develop a more broadly based and meaningful classification. Tannenbaum and Schmidt (1973) proposed a continuum, which at its extremes defines a leadership-centred (authoritarian) and sub-ordinate-centred

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(democratic) state. They produced a graphical presentation of the trade-off between a manager's authority and the freedom that the subordinates have.

Hersey and Blanchard (1982) describe four leadership styles with varying amounts of directive and supportive behaviour. Their approach shows how well managers can match the appropriate style with the maturity level of subordinates. Likert (1967) has identified four main types of management styles: exploitative-authoritative, benevolent-authoritative, consultative and participative. He claims that the participative (democratic) style is always the superior among others.

Our study has adopted the consulting firm Hay/McBer's leadership style typology, which is based on the work of David McClelland. Hay/McBer found six distinct leadership styles, each of which stems from different aspects of emotional intelligence (AMAP, www.msu.edu). Hay/McBer categorizes leadership styles into six groupings based on two major classes or styles: they are transactional and transformational (Goleman, 2000).

Transactional leadership styles

Two styles of management fall under the transactional style.

Coercive style ('do what I tell you')

This is the least flexible and effective style. Coercive leaders manage by controlling subordinates tightly, require many reports, and prefer to motivate by using discipline.

Authoritative style ('come with me')

This style characterizes a leader who maximizes commitment to goals and strategy; defines standards and provides flexibility in accomplishing tasks. Authoritative leaders provide a clear vision that aims to motivate the subordinates to be creative. In this style, the leader can become overbearing, especially in the presence of experts and peers.

Transformational leadership styles

Affiliative style ('people come first')

This is a flexible style that creates emotional bonds and harmony between leader and group; improves positive communication; and increases the morale of subordinates. According to this style, people come first and the tasks second. So, the success of this style depends upon the level of development of the subordinates. If subordinates require a high level of direction and rudder, an affiliative leader can not be successful. So, it may be used in connection with authoritative style when a leader finds an employee rudderless.

Democratic style ('what do you think?')

This style builds consensus through participation; generates ideas and guidance but requires highly developed and competent subordinates to create ideas and to participate in the decision making process. A leader uses this style to develop buy-in and build trust among subordinates and peers. Endless meetings with no consensus and conflicts are the negative sides of democratic style. Obviously, this style should not be used in crisis mode when subordinates tend to require direction more than support from their leader.

Pacesetter style ('do as I do, now')

This style characterizes a leader who expects excellence and self-direction, sets high standards and demands more from poor performers. Hence, pacesetter leaders have little concern for interpersonal relations, that is, they focus on tasks to be achieved. This style also works well with highly competent, self-motivated, professional employees. These characteristics of the pacesetter style may drop the morale of subordinates. It is suggested to be used with one of the other styles.

Coaching style ('try this')

Coaching leaders develop people for the future; create dialogue and flexibility; and establish long-term goals and plans. They also help employees identify their strengths and weaknesses and improve their performance. This style becomes least effective when employees are resistant to learning or changing ways.

The research by Hay/McBer is based on a random sampling of 3871 executives, selected from a database of more than 20 000 executives. The research indicates that most successful leaders in any environment are those who can employ a range of styles depending on situational attributes. For example, if the task involves time pressure, then the autocratic style may be superior to the democratic.

Additionally, transformational leadership is contrasted with transactional leadership by a number of scholars (Bass, 1990, 1997; Bass *et al.*, 1996). Bass *et al.* (1996) defines transactional leadership as an exchange of rewards with subordinates for services rendered. Transactional leaders are the ones who seek to motivate followers through extrinsic rewards. Yukl (1989) defines transformational leadership as the process of influencing and empowering subordinates. More specifically, many authors refer to transformational leadership as a feminine leadership style. However, research by Hackman *et al.* (1992) showed that transformational leadership is a stereotypically gender-balanced style.

The problem that arises at this point is choosing the most appropriate leadership style in a given situation. It has been argued that there is no one best leadership style intended for all situations and that different leadership

styles are more effective in different situations (Fisher and Edwards, 1998). This is due to the fact that leadership behaviour might not always be under the influence of intrapersonal factors, but could also be based on situational and/or contextual factors.

An overview of the factors influencing leadership behaviour is provided by Reber's (1996) three-level model. At the first level, situational factors determine the leader-subordinates interaction. These situational factors may include the trust of subordinates in their leader, norms within the group, pressure of time, and the like (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1958; Vroom and Yetton, 1973).

At the second level, narrow contextual factors/organizational contingencies shape the interaction taking place between leader and subordinates. They play a role similar to that of the situational factors. Pawar and Eastman (1997) identified three contextual factors that shape the leadership behaviour of managers. These include organizational task system, organization structure, and mode of governance.

At the third level, wider contextual/external environment factors indirectly also influence the leadership style; these differ from situational and narrow contextual factors. According to Reber (1996), markets and culture are the two main areas of influence. The influence of culture on leadership behaviour is one of the most intensively examined constructs in cross-cultural research.

For the purposes of this article, we will limit our discussion of the wider contextual factors to culture. Hofstede (1980, 1994) found distinct differences across cultures towards the perception and preferences of the leadership style. On the other hand, some scholars believe that leadership behaviour is not influenced by cultural diversity (see, for example, Thiagarajan and Deep, 1969; Haire *et al.*, 1966). Enshassi and Burgess (1991) also addressed this issue and reached the conclusion that leadership style is not universally or culturally bound.

Culture and its implications for leadership

To what extent are leadership styles culturally determined? A good way to approach this question is to use Hofstede's model of 'national culture'. According to Hofstede (1980), countries can be categorized along four prominent value dimensions: (1) individualism-collectivism, (2) uncertainty avoidance, (3) power distance, and (4) masculinity. These four dimensions were validated by data from completely different sources (Hofstede, 2001). The analysis of the replications (Sondergaard, 1994) showed that the differences predicted by Hofstede's dimensions were largely confirmed. However, it is not the scope of this paper to explore the theory and methodology for the study of culture in the construction industry.

Hofstede's concept of power distance provides some insight as to the type of leadership style that would be fostered within a particular culture. Power distance refers to the inequality between superiors and subordinates. High power distance may lead to a very autocratic, controlling type of leadership, whereas a low power distance may give rise to a more democratic approach and place more emphasis on the empowerment of the subordinates etc. Hofstede (2001) found that in countries with high power distance, employees preferred autocratic, the persuasive, or the democratic majority-vote manager. The first two of these styles are more typical of the transactional leader. Whereas in countries with low power distance, individuals preferred a consultative manager, or one who exhibits decision-making traits more in line with a transformational style of leadership.

Hofstede's second cultural dimension is uncertainty avoidance or the extent to which a culture tolerates ambiguity and uncertainty. High uncertainty avoidance may lead to a more bureaucratic and controlling leadership, whereas low uncertainty may lead to a more laissez-faire leadership. In a study by Shane *et al.* (1995), it has been emphasized that transformational leadership is related to low uncertainty avoidance.

The individualism/collectivism dimension is often explicitly linked to the individual's relationship with his or her employer organization. Members of collectivist societies would tend to have a greater emotional dependence on their organizations and the organizations would be more likely to assume greater responsibility for its members (Hofstede, 2001). By contrast, employed persons in an individualist culture are expected to remain independent from groups, organizations, and all other collectivities. They are concerned primarily about themselves and their immediate families. This dimension suggests that high individualism may lead to a more competitive type of leadership, whereas high collectivism may give rise to a more consultative style. One other study found that collectivism was related to transformational leadership (Shane *et al.*, 1995). Hofstede suggests that the masculinity/femininity dimension affects the meaning of work in people's lives. This dimension concerns the extent to which individuals tend to support male or female favoured goals. High masculinity may give rise to a fairly macho type of leadership, whereas high femininity may lead to a more empathetic consideration type of leadership. In masculine cultures, there is a higher emphasis on assertiveness and the acquisition of money and other material things. Feminine cultures stress relationships among people, concern for others, and interest in the quality of work environment. Femininity was found to be positively correlated with the transformational leadership (Shane *et al.*, 1995).

Although, strong evidence of the influence of national citizenship on leadership behaviour was reported in the

literature, not many has focused on the relationship of an industry culture with the behaviour of individuals and organizations who consider themselves as part of the industry (Rowlinson and Root, 1996; Hancock, 2000). In reality, there are of course overlapping influences stemming from different levels of culture, e.g. regional and industrial culture, or professional culture (Alvesson and Berg, 1992).

Leadership in construction

Although many studies have been undertaken in the area of leadership styles, they have generally tended to be among manufacturing industries characterized by permanent organization structures. Few published work exists that is directly concerned with the construction industry. Langford *et al.* (1995, p. 91) state that 'a lack understanding of knowledge of the industry on the part of social scientists and a lack of understanding of social science by those in the industry has been the cause of this dearth'.

In considering leadership styles in construction industry, the first thing that needs to be determined is whether the construction industry is a special case. According to Harvey and Ashworth (1993), the construction industry has characteristics that separate it from all other industries. These characteristics that can have an impact on leadership styles in construction are: (a) project characteristics, (b) contractual arrangements, (c) project life-cycle and (d) environmental factors.

A construction project is composed of a multitude of organizations. Individuals or groups from several parent organizations are all drawn together for a short time related to a specific task. The project-based organization is disbanded upon the completion of that task. This project-based nature of construction industry with its temporary multi-organizations, will almost certainly have an important influence on the managerial leadership styles of professionals working in the industry.

Although, in most project environments, there is a strong preference for a democratic participative style, it may not be the most effective for all situations. Cleland (1995) argues that project leadership should be appropriate to the project situation because leadership is a continuous and flexible process.

Naum (2001, p. 219) states that large capital investment projects coupled with high complexity of decision issues can require different styles of leadership, and he admits that 'a participative style of leadership with bureaucratic organization is expected to be more appropriate than a directive style'. In contrast, Nicholas (1990) suggests that a less participating, more directive style might be more appropriate when there is less time and high pressure to complete the work. One can go even further and say that the most effective style of leadership depends on project

circumstances, especially project duration and intensity of work done.

The extensive use of sub-contracting is another factor that can have an impact on the leadership style of projects. Naum (2001, p. 222) suggests that 'the relationship between procurement method and leadership style is the proportion of sub-contracting against direct labour employment on project sites'. The study by Bresnen *et al.* (1986) showed that task-oriented forms of leader behaviour is more appropriate where subcontract labour forms the bulk of the workplace. Furthermore, construction professionals need different leadership styles in different phases of the project life cycle. Bresnen *et al.* (1986) mentioned that the temporariness of project cycles may have a bearing upon an understanding of leadership in construction work and its effects.

The style of leadership changes as the project progresses through its life cycle. During the different phases of the design process, styles may need to allow for more debates, fine-tuning and deliberation. Yet, during the construction phases, they may be more structured and dominant. During a concrete pour under adverse conditions, they may need to be tough, direct and even dictatorial. In settling disputes, they may need to be creative and conciliatory (Hopper, 1990).

Similarly, the environment in which leadership is exercised is also influential in shaping the leadership style of people who occupy managerial positions in construction settings. For example, the state of the labour market – in particular the level of unemployment – strongly influences the style adopted by the management. In this case, employees have less bargaining power due to high unemployment and may have to accept whatever leadership style management adopts. This means that leaders are able to impose more authoritarian styles.

In sum, it is difficult to determine the most appropriate leadership style to conform with each particular situation in the development of a project. Naum (2001, p. 223) concludes that 'Leaders may thus have to switch from one style of leadership to another or combine elements of different styles until the right balance between concerns for tasks and concern for people is reached'. For this reason, individuals involved in the management process of construction should be able to enact a range of leadership behaviours.

Research methodology

In this article, our focus is primarily to examine whether there is a difference in the leadership styles of managers in construction settings and the extent of the ability to use a variety of leadership styles. The research process commenced with a careful review of the literature. The literature review provided a basis for the identification of

leadership behaviour and styles. The research objectives were met through the use of a survey instrument. A managerial style questionnaire (MSQ) adapted from the work of David McClelland was used to assess the leadership styles of respondents in this study. The MSQ consists of six distinct leadership styles, each of which stems from different aspects of emotional intelligence.

The questionnaire is made up of 36 paired statements. For each set of paired statements, respondents are required to choose the alternative action that best describes the way they actually behave and not the way they believe they should act. The total score for all the styles will be between 0 and 12. A score of 0 and 1 may indicate a reluctance to use the style(s). The highest score shows the most preferred style. Mean scores for each style are an average of all the items corresponding to that particular style.

Sample

The unit of analysis for the study was management personnel in construction industry. The survey was conducted in contracting firms located in Istanbul. A total of 21 firms and 43 individuals constitute the sample of the study. The contracting firms in the sample were engaged in building, civil engineering and industrial construction. Non-probabilistic convenience sampling technique was used in which the most easily accessible participants from the firms were selected. There were, in total, 95 questionnaires issued in this study. A total of 61 questionnaires were received, 43 of which were satisfactorily completed resulting in a valid response rate of 45%. Of the respondents, 27 were male while the other 16 respondents were female. Regarding the composition of the respondents by occupation, the sample of 43 consisted of 26 (60%) architects and 17 (40%) engineers.

In order to determine whether respondents' positions had any influence on their choice of leadership style, respondents were categorized as upper and lower management. Positions such as division manager, project co-ordinator or project manager were classified as upper management and managerial positions lower than these (site manager, supervisor and field superintendent) were classified as lower management positions.

Data and measures

This study examines differences in leadership orientation of respondents. Each respondents' cognitive complexity among the six leadership styles was determined by the following equation;

$$d = \sum_{i=1}^6 (x_i - 6)^2$$

In the equation, $(x_i - 6)$ represents the deviation between the score corresponding to the leadership style i and the average score of 6 while d is the sum of the squared deviations. The value d may be referred to as a proxy measure for a balanced use of the six leadership styles. It is based on the squared deviations procedure (Bowen and Starr, 1994)

From this equation it is evident that the lower the sum of squares, the more balanced is the leadership type that indicates the personality of the respondent. The balanced use of the six leadership styles was operationalized in this study by creating three leadership types. The following is a description of each of the leadership types used in the study:

- (1) Highly balanced leadership type: respondents in this category scored between 0 and 16 .
- (2) Moderately balanced leadership type: respondents in this category scored between 16 and 22.
- (3) Unbalanced leadership type: respondents in this category scored 22 and above

Analysis and findings

Descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations were used to measure the respondents' leadership orientation. Table 1 represents the leadership orientation of respondents. The findings show that 39.53% of respondents have highly balanced leadership type. The percentage of respondents whose leadership type is moderately balanced is 16.28%. The remainder of 44.19% encompasses unbalanced leadership style.

The analysis of results regarding gender showed the majority of females, 50 % as having highly balanced leadership type, 12.5% as having a moderately balanced style and less than 37.5% as having an unbalanced leadership

Table 1 Leadership orientation

Leadership types	Total		Gender				Management level			
			Female		Male		Upper		Lower	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Highly balanced	17	39.53	8	50.00	9	33.34	10	45.45	7	33.33
Moderately balanced	7	16.28	2	12.50	5	18.51	4	18.18	3	14.29
Unbalanced	19	44.19	6	37.50	13	48.15	8	36.37	11	52.38
Total	43	100.00	16	100.00	27	100.00	22	100.00	21	100.00

style. Analysis of the responses regarding management level revealed that almost 45.45% of the upper managers have a highly balanced leadership type while 52.38% of the lower managers are in the unbalanced group.

Paired *t*-tests were performed owing to dependence in the data collected. Table 2 represents paired sample statistics. As it is seen from the table, there are significant differences in the frequency of which participants preferred to use a particular leadership style. Participants perform the authoritative style more frequently than all other styles, their values ranging from 2.496 ($p < 0.017$) to 5.542 ($p < 0.000$). In addition, they perform the coaching style more frequently than affiliative, democratic and pacesetting styles (respectively, $t = 4.763$ [$p < 0.000$], $t = 3.502$ [$p < 0.001$], $t = 2.269$ [$p < 0.028$]). The *affiliative* style (associated with transformational leadership) was the least frequently performed.

Overall, the most noteworthy result provided by the paired *t*-test states that managers emphasize the authoritative style (associated with transactional leadership). Independent *t*-tests were carried out in order to determine any gender or position affects across the leadership styles. Results indicated two significant differences.

Women reported the ($t = 2.467$, $p < 0.05$) use of 'the democratic style more often than men did (see Table 3).

In order to determine whether respondents' positions had any influence on their choice of leadership styles, they were categorized as upper and lower management. Independent *t*-tests revealed that lower and upper management differed in the use of *pacesetting* as a leadership style. Individuals holding upper management positions reported the use of pacesetting more often than individuals in non-managerial professional positions did ($t = 2.460$, $p < 0.05$).

Discussion of findings

Implications of these findings should be viewed in the light of several caveats. First, our findings are limited by the restricted sample size and the study context. Thus, some caution is called for in generalizing these findings to construction. Second, the instrument employed in this study does not include the culture-specific types of leadership. The instrument developed for individualistic and low power distance cultures was adapted to a collectivist and high power culture. Even bearing these caveats in

Table 2 Paired samples test

Leadership types	Mean	Std deviation	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)
Coercive-authoritative	-1.28	3.06	-2.743	42	0.009
Coercive-affiliative	1.35	3.21	2.759	42	0.009
Coercive-democratic	0.86	3.61	1.563	42	0.125
Coercive-pacesetting	0.44	3.13	0.927	42	0.359
Coercive-coaching	-0.40	2.43	-1.066	42	0.292
Authoritative-affiliative	2.63	3.11	5.542	42	0.000
Authoritative-democratic	2.14	3.41	4.111	42	0.000
Authoritative-pacesetting	1.72	2.47	4.565	42	0.000
Authoritative-coaching	0.88	2.32	2.496	42	0.017
Affiliative-democratic	-0.49	3.17	-1.012	42	0.317
Affiliative-pacesetting	-0.91	2.90	-2.050	42	0.047
Affiliative-coaching	-1.74	2.40	-4.763	42	0.000
Democratic-pacesetting	-0.42	2.33	-1.177	42	0.246
Democratic-coaching	-1.26	2.35	-3.502	42	0.001
Pacesetting-coaching	-0.84	2.42	-2.269	42	0.028

Table 3 Independent *t* statistic

Leadership types	Gender			Management level		
	Female (<i>n</i> = 16)	Male (<i>n</i> = 27)	<i>t</i> -stat	Upper management (<i>n</i> = 22)	Lower management (<i>n</i> = 21)	<i>t</i> -stat
Coercive	5.56	6.52	-1.420	5.86	6.48	-0.928
Authoritative	7.31	7.52	-0.339	7.59	7.29	0.520
Affiliative	4.44	5.04	-0.953	4.50	5.14	-1.060
Democratic	6.25	4.74	2.467*	5.45	5.14	0.493
Pacesetting	5.63	5.78	-0.301	6.27	5.14	2.460*
Coaching	6.81	6.41	-1.109	6.32	6.81	-1.397

* $p < 0.05$

mind, we believe that the present study has some clues for leadership studies in project-based industries.

The study presented in this article provides empirical support for the contentions of others (Lansley, 1996; Sinclair, 1998) that within the context of construction, authoritative leadership style is more frequently preferred than all other styles. This finding is also consistent with the earlier observations of the Turkish society. As a part of a large cross-cultural study, Kabasakal and Bodur (1998) found that Turkish leaders are either predominantly autocratic/paternalistic, or consultative, but not democratic.

Furthermore, in a study conducted by Esmer (1997) among 4824 people from all regions of Turkey, working respondents were asked to evaluate the styles of managers whom they are familiar with. Responses show that the most dominant management style was authoritarian (53.4%), followed by paternalistic (25%), consultative (13.6%) and democratic (8.5%).

This result can be interpreted in the light of cultural values. According to Hofstede's (1980) model of national culture, Turkey is classified as high-power distance, strong uncertainty avoidance, collectivistic and masculine. Among these dimensions, power distance and uncertainty avoidance have particular relevance for studying leadership or managerial styles

The high power distance prevalent in the Turkish society makes democratic leadership a rare practice. Due to the huge inequality between managers and subordinates, most people do not even expect their managers to have a democratic style (Pasha, 2000). The involvement of subordinates in decision-making process is viewed as a sign of poor leadership. It might be expected that encouraging subordinates to increase their involvement in decision-making processes may generate anxiety and lead to lower levels of performance. Similarly, leaders cultivated with the values of a high-power distance culture are likely to be reluctant to give up decision-making authority.

Similarly, strong uncertainty avoidance culture – a characteristic of the Turkish Society – is characterized by, a strong need for rules and regulations; employee preference for clear and unambiguous instruction from management involving less risk-taking; and less individual initiative and responsibility in the workplace (Hofstede, 1980). This means that subordinates of such cultures would most likely prefer to defer to the certainty of rules, procedures and leader directives, rather than make key decisions themselves and accept responsibility. Based on the foregoing, there appears to be an alignment between the most frequently observed leadership behaviour of respondents and the Turkish societal values of high-power distance and high-uncertainty avoidance.

In the following paragraphs, we will discuss the detected differences according gender and hierarchical level. When examining the differences in leadership orientation of male and female construction professionals, the findings

show that women had greater cognitive complexity in their managerial and leadership experiences, than did men. This evidence is in contrast with the findings of Bolman and Deal (1991, 1992). The authors assert that men and women are more alike than different on leadership orientation.

Additional evidence regarding gender differences has been found in the leadership styles. Although there has been substantial research comparing the leadership styles of men and women, little if any empirical research has been done on gender issues in construction. (Gale, 1994; Bennet *et al.*, 1999).

Some studies indicate differences between males and females on the use of leadership styles. Others do not find any significant difference between men and women. An additional view is that men and women managers differ in their leadership styles based on cultural stereotypes (Epstein, 1991). According to this view, females will be higher in people-oriented leadership, compared to male professionals.

As shown in the results, there is no difference in the adoption of transactional leadership styles between female and male managers. Both the female and male managers tend to use authoritative leadership style more frequently in construction setting. This result is in contrast with the stereotypical assertions that women were more likely to adopt a more democratic leadership style, while men were more likely to adopt a more autocratic style (Eagly and Johnson, 1990; Eagly *et al.*, 1992)

It is also interesting to note that a significant difference occurred only for one of the transformational leadership styles. That is, female managers have above an average score on the democratic style ($M = 6.25$), while male managers obtained their lowest score on this style ($M = 4.74$). This is in contrast with the findings of Vroom and Yetton (1973) and Hersey and Blanchard (1982), who concluded that acting democratically excludes being autocratic at the same time. However, the females in this sample tend to use both styles depending on the particular situational contingency of both the task structure and the subordinate characteristics. These findings, which seem to be contradicting each other, reflect the view that women who have worked hard for gaining their status in male-dominated cultures have to be masculine in order to be successful, and change their style accordingly (Davidson and Cooper, 1992; Davidson, 1996; Kanter, 1977). In addition, Eagly and Johnson (1990) found that in an environment with larger proportions of male subordinates, male managers were more task oriented and less democratic than female managers. This is especially true for the male-dominated industries such as construction.

In summary, organizational factors, especially sex-composition of the work environment, are likely to affect the leadership styles of male and female managers in construction settings. Both adapt to the organizational

context to some extent. However, there seems to be an asymmetry in this adaptation, as females may adapt their styles more often than men do.

With regard to the effect of the managerial post, managers in higher positions reported the use of pacesetting style more often, compared to managers in lower positions. A number of scholars argued that leadership may differ depending on the organizational levels at which leadership is observed (Den Hartog *et al.*, 1999). This result is supported by the findings of a survey conducted by IBM. The corporation found that at senior levels there was a strong tendency towards the pace-setting style (Arnold, 2000).

Yet, this evidence of the present study is in contrast with the contentions of others (Hunt, 1991; Sashkin, 1998; Waldman and Yammarino, 1999; Zaccaro, 2001) that at low hierarchical levels, task orientation could be more evident than at higher hierarchical levels. However, managers with the pacesetting style focus on tasks to be achieved rather than those people who must achieve them. This evidence may be attributed to the characteristics of the construction industry. Cartwright and Gale (1995) suggest that masculine cultures such as construction are likely to be dominated by power relations and are results-oriented. In the construction context, technical expertise serves as an important power base for managers. For example, the more technical knowledge the manager has, the stronger (legitimate position) power that he or she possesses over subordinates. For this reason, senior managers tend to place a greater emphasis on expert knowledge than on positional power; this is especially true for the Turkish construction industry.

Furthermore, many scholars agree that senior management plays a critical role in developing and sustaining a quality-based culture. This finding of the study also suggested that senior managers were more quality-driven than those in lower management positions. Thus, this study provides confirming evidence, which Hopper (1990) argues that the nature of construction demands quality-driven individuals. Quality-driven means that the leader pushes to build in excellence in getting the job done.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this research, limited to the population studied, are two-fold. First, although the female and male managers in this study are similar in terms of their transactional leadership behaviour, their transformational practice is significantly different. This conclusion suggests that both sexes are inclined toward a task-oriented style when in a gender-congruent context. It may also be concluded that in an environment with larger proportions of male subordinates such as construction, male managers are less democratic than female managers.

Second, managers in higher positions are stronger in pacesetting style than those in lower management positions. This evidence indicates that senior managers lead by example, yet exert tight control over poor performance. Although they set high standards, they tend to do the job than delegate, even taking away jobs from employees when dissatisfied. One implication of this finding is that in the construction context, senior managers tend to place greater emphasis on quality-based culture. On the other hand, the detected difference between the two managerial levels studied here might be attributed to the particular situational contingency of both the task structure and the subordinate characteristics.

Since this study was conducted on a relatively small sampling ($n = 43$) of the Turkish Construction Industry, further research is needed to determine the generalizability of our results. It is hoped that a more extensive research covering a much larger sample size and cross-cultural studies could be conducted in the near future. This study could then become more consolidated.

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