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# Trust in Transformational Leadership: Do Followers' Perceptions of Leader Femininity, Masculinity, and Androgyny Matter?



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## Abstract

*This paper takes an authenticity perspective to examine whether followers' perceptions of a leader's feminine, masculine, or androgynous characteristics influence the relationship between transformational leadership and followers' perceived trust in the leader. The research was quantitative in approach. A cross-sectional survey design was used to collect data from employees from different public and private sector organizations in Pakistan. The findings show that the relationship between transformational leadership and trust is weaker when followers perceive leaders to be high on masculine and androgynous attributes. Leaders' femininity was found to have a positive effect in the relationship of transformational leadership with trust in the leader. The paper suggests practical implications and directions for future research.*

## Introduction

The continued interest over recent decades in the role of dispositional and individual difference variables in leadership research has been remarkable. Among the individual difference characteristics, a manager's gender has been studied as one of the crucial factors in determining his/her leadership effectiveness. Many such studies have focused on the influence of gender on transformational leadership and its effectiveness (e.g., Eagly & Karau, 2002; Powell & Graves, 2003). However, the bulk of such studies have not separated the effects of sex from managers' gender-role characteristics of femininity and masculinity. For example, Vinkenbunrg, Van Engen, Eagly, and Johannesen-Schmidt (2011) examined the relationship of gender with transformational leadership, but the authors did not distinguish between sex and gender role characteristics in their investigation. Thus, this stream of research has provided little concrete assessment of the broader picture of gender role characteristics in leadership effectiveness.

There are, however, a few exceptions that have systematically examined the relationship of gender roles with different modes of leadership effectiveness, such as effectiveness evidenced in transformational leadership and followers' identification with such leaders (e.g., Kark, Waismel-Manor, & Shamir, 2012). Kark et al. (2012) found gender roles related to transformational leadership and identification with the leader, but their study

did not show how leaders' traits of masculinity, femininity, and androgyny might affect the relationship between transformational leadership and its influence on identification with the leader. Thus, regardless of their simultaneously examining the effects of gender characteristics on behavioral and affective aspects of leadership effectiveness, their study does not answer the question of what happens when there is a discrepancy between the leader's transformational behaviors and his/her gender-related attributes.

Collectively, the existing research has demonstrated that leaders' gender role characteristics may play a crucial role in determining a manager's transformational leadership style, but none of the studies have shown how leaders' feminine, masculine, and androgynous attributes interact with transformational behaviors in affecting followers' outcomes, such as trust in the leader. The current study takes an authenticity perspective to examine how leaders' gender role attributes – femininity, masculinity, and androgyny – matter to followers' trust in transformational leadership.

## **Theory and Hypothesis**

### ***Authenticity of Transformational Behaviors and Follower Attributions***

Authenticity implies that one acts in accordance with the true self, expressing oneself in ways that are consistent with inner thoughts and feelings (Harter, 2002, p. 382). In keeping with this definition, Luthans and Avolio (2003) argue that authentic leaders are transparent about their intentions and strive to maintain a seamless link among espoused values, behaviors, and actions. Maintaining such consistency is important because employees observe not only what is done but also the motivations and beliefs that underlie leaders' actions (O'Reilly & Pfeffer, 2000). Earlier research suggests that consistency between one's values and actions cultivates perceptions of integrity and credibility (Gabarro, 1987; Ouchi, 1981), while inconsistency leads to lowered intentions to trust (McGregor, 1967). Clearly, leaders' motives and beliefs are not inscribed on their faces; however, given time, followers are still able to discover them. It is argued that people gradually shift their focus from readily and easily detected attributes to the underlying attributes when they closely interact with each other (e.g., Jackson, 1996). Thus, followers are able to identify leaders' deep-seated attributes and are affected by what they sense more than by what they see and hear (Fu, Tsui, Liu, & Li, 2010). This suggests that leaders' behavior based on deep-seated attributes may foster greater followers' trust in a leader than their superficial behavior (Gardner, Fischer, & Hunt, 2009).

Attribution theory (Jones & Davis, 1965; Kelley, 1973) suggests that individuals evaluate people in terms of the motives and intentions that they attribute as the cause of people's behavior. Attributions to internal factors are likely to provide more information about personality than external attributions. Thus, attribution of behavior to internal factors leads to positive responses (e.g., Lowe & Goldstein, 1970). Given the interdependent nature of the manager–subordinate relationship, subordinates may have a particularly strong interest in evaluating their manager's actions in terms of the underlying beliefs (Kelley & Thibaut, 1978). Leader behaviors are more likely to lead to increased positive responses if subordinates attribute the cause of such behaviors to the manager's values and motives. In a similar vein, a manager's transformational leadership behavior and subordinates' intentions to trust will be positively related if such behaviors are consistent with the leader's internal attributes, such as feminine, masculine, or androgynous characteristics. This will provide more information about a leader, and followers will have more confidence in his/her intentions and motives. Inconsistency may lead to managerial behaviors that are likely to be seen as unnatural by followers, and they may attribute such efforts to insincere motives (Thomas & Ravlin, 1995) and may respond

negatively to such behaviors. This view is compatible with the finding of Staw and Ross (1980) that leaders who behave consistently are viewed as more effective. Earlier research supports this assertion. For example, Thomas and Ravlin (1995) found that behaviors attributed to causes internal to the manager induced higher trust and perceived effectiveness. Likewise, Fu et al. (2010) revealed that transformational behaviors perceived to be consistent with self-transcendent values led to high follower commitment and lower intentions to leave the organization.

### ***Transformational Leadership and Trust in the Leader***

Transformational leadership describes a class of behaviors enacted by a leader composed of four dimensions: idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and inspirational motivation (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1997). Idealized influence is behavior that arouses follower emotions and identification with the leader. Intellectual stimulation focuses on follower awareness of problems and viewing problems from a new perspective. Individualized consideration relates to supporting, mentoring, and developing followers, while intellectual stimulation is about communication an appealing vision.

Trust is a willingness of one party (trustor) to be vulnerable to another party (trustee) based upon positive expectations of the trustor about intentions or behavior of the trustee (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995; Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer, 1998). There are two major perspectives in the literature on the nature of trust in the leader-follower relationship: one is the character-based perspective, and the other is the relationship-based perspective (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). The character-based perspective implies that followers attempt to draw inferences about the leader's characteristics such as integrity, dependability, fairness, and ability and that these inferences have consequences for follower's willingness to be vulnerable to their leaders (e.g., Mayer et al., 1995). From the relationship-based perspective, trust is because of the social exchange process, which goes beyond standard economic exchange (Brower, Schoorman, & Tan, 2000). The exchange denotes a high-quality relationship, and issues of care and consideration in the relationship are central (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). According to Dirks and Ferrin (2002), though these two perspectives have different theoretical backgrounds, but both have a common conceptual core that trust in the leader is a kind of positive perception about followers' willingness to be vulnerable to their leaders.

From the above, it is evident that the characteristics of transformational leadership are parallel to the antecedents of trust in the leader, such as ability, integrity, benevolence, care, and consideration. Past research shows ample evidence of positive relationships between leaders' transformational behaviors and followers' trust in such leaders (Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, & Frey, 2013; Casimir, Waldman, Bartram, & Yang, 2006; Jung & Avolio, 2000). Transformational leaders increase followers' trust levels by showing concern for their needs, honoring agreements, demonstrating the capability and persistence to achieve vision, and possibly through their own willingness to sacrifice for the good of their group (Kirkpatrick & Lock, 1993). It has been argued that during the process of achieving the vision, transformational leaders serve as role models for perseverance and self-sacrifice to motivate followers to realize the vision (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). As a result, followers typically come to admire their leaders, identify with them, and demonstrate a higher degree of trust in them (Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Gardner & Avolio, 1998). Modeling through transformational leadership stresses that a leader will lead by example to set up an integrity paradigm. The display of integrity by transformational leaders is similar to moral leadership (Cheng, Chou, Wu, Huang, & Farh, 2004). Moral leadership refers to leadership that is unselfish, righteous, and fair to all

(Hui & Tan, 1999). Prior research suggests that when subordinates perceive fairness and justice in the work place, they will trust their supervisors more (Aryee, Budhwar, & Chen 2002; Konovsky & Pugh, 1994). Moreover, by being a role model and showing respect for their followers, transformational leaders become more admired, respected and trusted over time (Bass & Avolio, 1990).

It has been argued that transformational leaders take into account individual followers' needs, goals, and interests (Li & Hung, 2009; Walumbwa, Orwa, Wang, & Lawler, 2005), which indicates that a leader respects subordinates, cares for them, satisfies their individual feelings and needs, and gives them appropriate support. According to earlier assertions, care and consideration are the main antecedents of follower trust in the leader (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Transformational leaders also frequently empower and encourage their followers to make their own decisions that can also build followers' trust in their leaders (Avolio & Bass, 1995). Based on the above, we suggest the following:

**H1: Transformational leadership is positively related to employee trust in the leader.**

### ***Gender Role Characteristics***

Traditionally, "appropriate" sex-congruent traits were those that were considered socially acceptable for an individual's biological sex, while non-congruent traits were those considered not to be socially acceptable, as they were designated to the opposite sex. However, later research has challenged the adoption of traditional sex-congruent traits, acknowledging that an individual can display both stereotypically masculine and feminine traits, regardless of his/her biological sex. Bem (1974) proposed the concept of androgyny, which suggests that an individual could possess both masculine and feminine traits, irrespective of his/her biological sex (Borna & White, 2003; Woodhill & Samuels, 2004).

### ***Femininity, Transformational Leadership, and Trust***

Femininity is characterized by attributes such as kindness, warmth, compassion, sharing, and nurturing (Spence, 1993; Spence, Helmreich, & Holohan, 1979). Individuals high on femininity are likely to ascribe high value to acceptance, interdependence, cooperation, receptivity, and merging (Alvesson & Billing, 2001). Within the work context, individuals high on femininity have been argued to be more willing to develop and nurture subordinates and share power with them (Mustafa & Lines, 2014).

Previous research has shown that feminine attributes are associated with transformational leadership (Ross & Offermann, 1997). Transformational leadership has communal aspects (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & Van Engen, 2003), such as a focus on openness, benevolence, participation, empowerment and the mentoring and development of subordinates, and such qualities have traditionally been associated with femininity (e.g., Duehr & Bono, 2006). Past research shows that individuals high on femininity tend to have superior skills with regard to mobilizing and utilizing social support (Kitamura et al., 2002; Neff & Karney, 2005; Reevy & Maslach, 2001), which is typical of transformational leaders.

Based on the above, it is expected that followers will develop perceptions of trust in the transformational leaders who are high on femininity. Followers will have confidence in the credibility and integrity of such leaders for maintaining consistency between their inner motives and their behaviors. Consequently, we suggest the following:

**H2. The relationship between transformational leadership and trust in the leader is stronger when leaders are high on femininity.**

### ***Masculinity, Transformational Leadership, and Trust***

Masculinity reflects the strength of one's concern for personal recognition, competitiveness, control, and achievement. People with a high masculine orientation tend to be action-oriented, impersonal, assertive, ambitious, and independent (Alvesson & Billing 2001; Bem, 1974; Hirsch & Morris, 2002; Spence et al., 1979). They have a strong focus on job accomplishment, competence, and challenge, and have a greater centrality of work in their lives (Bem, Martyna, & Watson, 1976; Hofstede, 1998; Spence, 1984). Thus, leaders high on masculinity may view their relationships with followers from an instrumental perspective (Mustafa & Lines, 2014).

Since masculinity emphasizes the pursuit of one's own success, recognition, and dominance over others, it is less likely to be consistent with the benevolent, communal, and developing and empowering nature of the transformational leadership. Earlier research suggests that leaders with high power motivation often exercise personalized leadership (McClelland, 1980). Personalized leadership relies on personal dominance, which stimulates enhancement of personal interests, and thus is both self-aggrandizing and exploitative of others (House & Howell, 1992). Thus, a high-power motivation is inconsistent with transformational leadership. Likewise, leaders with a high achievement motivation, a characteristic associated with masculinity, tend to focus more on their immediate concerns of managing employees, which as shown in earlier research is inconsistent with charismatic/transformational leadership (De Hoogh, Den Hartog, & Koopman, 2005; Rauch & Frese, 2007). Therefore, we would expect followers to have low intentions to trust leaders who exhibit transformational behaviors but possess high masculine attributes. Consequently, we suggest the following:

***H3. The relationship between transformational leadership and trust in the leader is weaker when leaders are high on masculinity.***

### ***Androgyny, Transformational Leadership, and Trust***

Androgyny has been defined as the possession of high levels of both masculinity and femininity (Bem, 1974; Woodhill & Samuels, 2003, 2004). Androgynous individuals are argued to be high on both agentic characteristics, such as being assertive, controlling, ambitious, dominant, forceful, and independent, and feminine characteristics, such as being affectionate, helpful, kind, sympathetic, interpersonally sensitive, and nurturing.

Previous studies suggest that androgyny is important for leadership effectiveness (Kark et al., 2012; Korabik & Ayman, 1989), as such characteristics enable leaders to be more flexible and adaptable to situational demands (Hall, Workman, & Marchioro, 1998; Koenig, Eagly, Mitchell, & Ristikariet, 2011). It has further been argued that androgynous characteristics may be strongly related to transformational behaviors (Kark et al., 2012). The reason is that transformational leaders are both tough and caring. They command respect and become role models for their subordinates because of their toughness, which means not giving in easily to pressure, while possessing self-confidence, and powers of persuasion. Moreover, masculine characteristics such as resilience, energy, inspiration, and determination have been argued to be traits of a transformational leader. Some researchers (Chen & Farh, 1999) have classified transformational leadership dimensions as either task-oriented or relationship-oriented. For example, the dimensions of articulation of a vision and intellectual stimulation are classified as more task-oriented and individualized support and an appropriate role model is classified as more relationship-oriented. Thus, followers may see the transformational leadership behaviors as consistent with androgynous attributes and may associate perceptions of trust with such leaders.

Despite the classification of some dimensions of transformational leadership as task-oriented, such behaviors seem to be more consistent with the communal feminine attributes than instrumental and individualist masculine attributes. For example, articulation of a vision is more consistent with the communal orientation of feminine attributes because a vision presumably involves the group, and communication of an appealing vision requires use of symbols and values related to the collective. Therefore, followers will buy a transformational leader’s vision if he/she has feminine attributes. If the leader has more masculine gender characteristics, followers may not fully buy into the vision and may even feel betrayed by their leader, thus lessening their trust. Moreover, transformational leaders do more things that empower followers and make them less dependent on the leader, such as developing follower skills and self-confidence, eliminating unnecessary controls, and building a culture to support empowerment (Yukl, 2013), which are more consistent with the communal and nurturing feminine attributes than the masculine characteristics of assertiveness, domination, and creation of an image of competence for the leader. Thus, followers may have low intentions to trust transformational leaders with androgynous attributes because the high level of masculinity may neutralize the effect of the high level of femininity. The positive effect on trust will be compromised when followers notice that the leaders’ behaviors are only partially consistent with their underlying attributes, which will offer incomplete information about the authenticity of transformational behaviors. Thus, the current understanding lacks consensus regarding the consistency of transformational behaviors with androgynous characteristics. Based on the above, we propose two competing hypotheses:

**H4a.** *The relationship between transformational leadership and trust in the leader is stronger when leaders are high on androgyny.*

**H4b.** *The relationship between transformational leadership and trust in the leader is weaker when leaders are high on androgyny.*

## **Methodology**

### ***Sample and Procedure***

The data were collected from employees of five different private and public organizations in Pakistan. The survey questionnaires were manually distributed and collected by the second author. The participants were randomly recruited, meaning that the distribution was random and no individual or group was specifically targeted while administering the surveys. Out of 140 surveys distributed, 116 were returned, of which 100 were retained for the analysis. The sample comprised 19 female and 81 male respondents. Surveys lacking demographic information and with important data missing were not included in the analysis. The demographic characteristics are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 100)**

<b>Demographic Characteristics</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	81	81
	Female	19	19
<b>Age</b>	30-35	1	1
	36-40	13	13
	41-45	36	36
	45-50	26	26
	51 and >	24	24

## **Measures**

To operationalize the concepts used in the study, the following measures were used:

### **Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership was measured using 16 items from Bass and Avolio's (2000) Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. This survey includes behavioral items measuring idealized influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation, and intellectual stimulation. However, in this study, we combined the four components into a composite measure of transformational leadership. Using an overall construct of transformational leadership is in line with prior research that has examined transformational leadership as a higher order construct (e.g., Judge & Bono, 2000; Walumbwa, Avolio, & Zhu, 2008). In this study, we treated transformational leadership as an individual-level variable, because we were interested in how an individual subordinate's perceptions of trust are influenced by his/her leader's transformational behaviors and gender role characteristics. Transformational leadership has been treated as an individual-level variable in the research (Avolio & Yammarino, 1990; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

### **Trust in the Leader**

Trust in leadership was measured using four items from the trust in leadership scale developed by Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, and Fetter (1990). The Cronbach's alpha value previously reported for this scale is 0.73 (Jung & Avolio, 2000). These items are measured on a seven-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree). High scores indicate high perceived trust in the leader.

### **Femininity**

To measure femininity, six items from Bem's (1974) scale were used. The respondents rated items from 1 (never or almost never true) to 7 (almost always true). The earlier reported Cronbach alpha for this measure is 0.93 (Kark et al., 2012).

### **Masculinity**

To measure masculinity, five items from Bem's (1974) scale were used. The respondents were asked to rate the items on a scale ranging from 1 (never or almost never true) to 7 (always true). The Cronbach alpha for this measure in the previous literature is 0.81 (Kark et al., 2012).

### **Androgyny**

To measure androgyny, we created a dummy variable based on femininity and masculinity scores. First, we coded scores as feminine if the respondents' average ratings for femininity were above 4 on a scale of 1 to 7, which means that in the view of the respondents, their leaders often displayed feminine attributes. For coding scores as masculine, we used the same criteria. Based on this coding, we created two further categories and coded "1" as "androgynous" and "0" as "others."

### **Analysis of Psychometric Properties and Construct Validation**

Principal components analyses were conducted in SPSS. Separate factor analyses were performed for the trust and the transformational leadership scales to examine their proposed uni-dimensionality. A few items for "transformational leadership" showed unsatisfactory loadings. This led to the removal of six items from the 16-item scale. The other 10 items loaded strongly on a single component. The principal component analysis for the "trust in leadership scale" corroborated the uni-dimensionality of the measure.



Principal component analysis using a varimax rotation confirmed that the “feminine” and “masculine” items belonged to two different factors. However, some items showed weak and cross-loadings. Based on the results of the analysis, two items each were removed from the “masculinity” and “femininity” scales. An item was regarded as having a weak loading was removed if its communality value and loading on its principal component was less than 0.50.

Next, reliability analysis was performed for all measures. Reliability coefficients for transformational leadership, trust, femininity, and masculinity resulted in alpha values of 0.93, 0.79, 0.82, and 0.80, respectively. Overall, these results suggest that the scales exhibit adequate psychometric properties. Scores for transformational leadership, trust, femininity, and masculinity were obtained by averaging the responses to the retained items in each of the scales. For example, a total transformational leadership score was obtained by averaging the responses to 10 items. Cronbach alpha values, average variance extracted (AVE), and factor loadings are provided in **Table 2**.

**Table 2. Cronbach Alpha, AVE and Factor Loadings**

Construct	Alpha	AVE	Items	Loadings
Transformational leadership	.924	.60	He talks about most important values and beliefs.	.892
			He specifies the importance of having a strong sense of purpose	.779
			He considers the moral and ethical consequences of decisions	.738
			He talks optimistically about the future	.780
			He expresses that goals will be achieved	.765
			He seeks differing perspectives when solving problems	.884
			He gets others look at problems from many different angles	.680
			He treats others as an individual rather than just as a member of a group	.739
			He considers an individual as having different needs, abilities and aspirations from others	.712
			He helps others to develop their strength	.784
Trust	.795	.62	My manager would never try to gain advantage by deceiving workers	.754
			I have complete faith in the integrity of my manager	.758
			I feel a strong loyalty to my manager	.871
			I would support my manager in any emergency	.762
Femininity	.778	.63	He is soft	.791
			He is sensitive to others' needs	.948
			He shows compassion	.652
			He shows affect	.762
Masculinity	.927	.87	He is willing to take risks	.930
			He is self-confident	.945
			He is determined	.932

Next, the discriminant validity of the constructs was assessed. Discriminant validity indicates the extent to which a given construct is different from other latent constructs, and a score of 0.5 for the AVE indicates an acceptable level (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Further assessment of discriminant validity was performed by comparing the square root of the AVE of each latent variable's AVE to the correlation of the latent variable with any other construct in the model. According to Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion, a construct has discriminant validity if the square root of that construct's AVE is greater than its correlation with any other construct in the model. This was obtained in our analysis. The means, standard deviations, reliabilities, and correlations for all of the survey variables are provided in **Table 3**.

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Discriminant Validity Coefficients**

Variable	Mean	S.D.	1	2	3	4
1) Transformational leadership	3.83	0.866	.777			
2) Trust in leader	5.39	.988	.395	.787		
3) Femininity	4.27	0.677	.433	.238	.793	
4) Masculinity	3.83	1.57	-.291	-.433	-.224	.932

**Note:** Bold numbers on the diagonal show the square root of the AVE. Numbers below the diagonal represent the construct correlations.

## Results

We conducted a separate set of regressions for transformational leadership and its interactions with femininity, masculinity, and androgyny. In each Model 1, we included control variables. In each Model 2, we examined the main effect of the transformational leadership on trust. In each Model 3, we separately examined the interaction effects produced by transformational leadership and femininity, masculinity, and androgyny on trust. We tested the moderating effect by examining the significance of the interaction terms.

**Table 4: Results of Regression Analysis**

Independent variables	Femininity			Masculinity			Androgyny		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<i>Control</i>									
Gender	.067								
Age	-.39								
<i>Main effect</i>									
Transformational leadership		.408*** (.000)			.300**			.399***	
<i>Interaction effects</i>									
TL	*		.286**						
TL	*					-.594***			
TL	*								-.300**

Dependent variable: Trust in leader.

Entries are standardized Beta coefficients. \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ .

As **Table 4** shows, in each Model 2, the main effects for transformational leadership are significant and in a positive direction. These effects support prior literature on the relationship between transformational leadership and trust in the leader. The addition of the interaction term in each Model 3 resulted in a significant increase in R square for transformational leadership\*femininity ( $R^2$  change=0.067), transformational leadership\*masculinity ( $R^2$  change = 0.26), and transformational leadership\* androgyny ( $R^2$  change = 0.062).

The direction of the significant interaction effects suggests that follower perceptions of the leader's femininity positively moderate ( $\beta = 0.286$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) the relationship between transformational leadership and trust in the leader. On the other hand, transformational leadership has a negative relationship with trust in the leader when followers perceive transformational leaders to be masculine ( $\beta = -0.594$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and androgynous ( $\beta = -0.300$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). Thus, the findings confirm H1, H2, and H3. Regarding the effect of androgyny, we found a negative sign that shows a possible attenuating effect thus supporting H4b.

Further, we examined each component of transformational leadership for its unique effects on follower perceived trust in the leader. Although we had no upfront hypotheses for such relationships in view of the earlier assertions that there is greater justification for examining the impact of transformational leadership on the dependent measures than each of its separate components (Walumbwa et al., 2008). The analysis revealed that individualized consideration explained the highest unique contribution ( $\beta = 1.68$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) in follower trust in the leader, and the other three components, i.e., inspirational motivation ( $\beta = 1.15$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); idealized influence ( $\beta = 1.13$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ); and intellectual stimulation ( $\beta = -0.469$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) were also significantly related to the outcome variable. Intellectual stimulation component yielded a negative relationship with trust, which is unexpected, but makes sense given the context of the study. For example, this dimension focuses on promoting change, which followers from a collectivist culture might have perceived as threatening to the established norms and cherished values that support collective action.

Moreover, we examined which elements of transformational leadership most correlate with feminine, masculine, and androgynous measures and the analysis showed that femininity positively and significantly related to inspirational motivation ( $r = .339^{**}$ ); intellectual stimulation ( $r = .517^{**}$ ); and individualized consideration ( $r = .432^{**}$ ), but the direction of relationship with idealized influence ( $r = .432^{**}$ ) was negative. Masculinity significantly and negatively correlated with all dimensions of transformational leadership, while androgyny had a negative significant relationship with intellectual stimulation and idealized influence.

## **Discussion and Implications**

In support of the plethora of prior studies showing a link between transformational leadership and trust in the leader (e.g., Braun et al., 2013), we found a significant positive relationship in support of our hypothesis. This indicates that employees tend to repose trust in a leader who communicates an appealing vision, provide an appropriate role model, and support, encourage, and develop followers his/her followers. However, the primary purpose of this paper was to examine whether the influence of transformational leadership on trust in the leader was contingent on followers' perceptions of the leader's gender role characteristics. We found evidence of the contingent role of gender role attributes in the link between transformational leadership and trust in the leader. The findings show that followers react positively to leaders who

exhibit transformational behaviors and hold feminine attributes. These findings make sense because transformational leadership has a strong emphasis on communal aspects, and femininity involves attributes such as being attentive, considerate, and nurturing (Eagly et al., 2003). The hypothesis that followers will react negatively to leaders who engage in transformational behaviors but hold masculine attributes was also supported. This suggests that masculine attributes such as assertiveness, independence, and control are less likely to be consistent with transformational leadership that focuses on inspiring, developing, and empowering followers. This may reduce followers' tendency to trust leaders whose inner motives do not provide enough information about their external behaviors.

Our assumptions regarding transformational behaviors leading to high/low perceived trust in the leader for leaders who possess a combination of femininity and masculinity led to a rather unexpected finding. The results showed that followers' perceptions of the leader's androgyny led to a negative relationship between transformational leadership and trust in the leader, which is inconsistent with the bulk of previous literature (e.g., Kark et al., 2012). One reason may be that high emphasis on both attributes might have neutralized the effects of each other. Another explanation may be that leaders could have both feminine and masculine attributes but differ in which trait ranks higher in order. It is possible that androgynous leaders in this study might have possessed masculinity to a higher degree, which would have eclipsed the effects of feminine characteristics, and followers would have reacted negatively to the transformational behaviors of such leaders. There is yet another possibility that followers suspected the intentions of leaders who combined masculine and feminine attributes. In summary, these findings suggest that followers may not necessarily place more trust in transformational leaders with both masculine and feminine attributes. However, it may be possible that the other types of leadership styles that incorporate both instrumental and relationship-oriented dimensions of leadership matter more for associating trust with leaders who embrace both feminine and masculine attributes.

Why followers in this study reacted more positively to transformational leaders with femininity and negatively to those with masculine and androgynous attributes might also be interpreted as a reflection of the Pakistani context. Pakistan is a country with Islam as religion of the majority of its residents. According to earlier assertions, Islam is one of the most influential factors, which has shaped Muslim value systems (Ali, 1986). Islam views ethics, morality, and authenticity as important components of leadership (AISarhi, Salleh, Mohamed, & Amini, 2014). In Islamic teachings, providing guidance to followers, protecting them, and treating them justly is highly valued (Beekun & Badawi, 1999, Ahmad & Ogunola, 2011). Moreover, leaders are expected to concentrate on the betterment of the collective whole (Ahmad, 2001; Bangash, 2001) instead of pursuing individual happiness. This suggests that employees in an Islamic society may react negatively to any inconsistency in leader's behavior and his/her deep-rooted characteristics, which they think is tied to moral standards.

The findings may also be a reflection of the society's prevalent culture that is characterized by collectivist and paternalistic values. In collectivist cultures, individuals have a tendency to see themselves from a holistic perspective and attach greater importance to group over individual goals (Hofstede, 2001). In such cultures, pursuit of self-enhancement and self-achievement values is less likely to be socially legitimized (Hofstede, 1980). Thus, followers in a collectivist context such as Pakistan may show low trustworthiness in transformational leaders who emphasize achieving collective goals,

but such behaviors tend to be less authentic because of inconsistency with their inner attributes.

Moreover, Pakistan's social norms are also deeply rooted in paternalistic values (Aycan et al., 2000). Organizational life in the country also portrays the paternalistic characteristics of the society (Mustafa & Lines, 2012). To elicit loyalty and deference from followers, a leader in a paternalistic setting needs to combine both affection and control in his/her behaviors. However, followers may show low loyalty and respect to leaders if the main focus of leaders is to control followers to achieve instrumental objectives than to promote employee wellbeing at the same time (Kabasakal & Bodur, 2007). Thus, this can be inferred that employees in this study were less willing/obligated to trust leaders whose behaviors and inner attributes offered inconsistent information whether such leaders have a genuine interest in follower care and wellbeing.

### **Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

This study attempts to contribute to the understanding of the role of perceived masculinity, femininity, and androgyny in transformational leadership effectiveness. Although we conducted the study in a Pakistani context, our findings should be applicable to societies in which followers are responsive to leaders who promote collective interests, hold unselfish motives and espouse a benevolent orientation. Thus, the importance of leaders' deep-seated attributes may be a contextual, the strength of the effect may vary across contexts with different social or normative expectations. Therefore, more conclusive support for a similar pattern of relationships would require testing the proposed relationships in a sample of employees spanning a larger number of organizations and societies. Moreover, our data were cross-sectional in nature, which has its own limitations in making any assertions regarding causality in the proposed relationships. Future studies could use longitudinal or experimental designs to test the underlying causality. Further, treating masculinity and femininity as independent attributes makes it possible to examine different combinations of these characteristics. In our study, we examined the effect of only one combination – androgyny – and all the other responses were grouped in the “other” category. Future studies should examine the effects of other combinations, such as undifferentiated on both traits, high on femininity and low on masculinity, and high on masculinity and low on femininity.

Lastly, in view of the inconsistency of our findings with previous literature for the effects of androgyny, future researchers could investigate the moderating effects of gender role characteristics in the relationship between certain other leadership styles and trust in the leader. It is possible that androgyny is more consistent with other leadership styles, such as paternalistic leadership, strategic leadership, charismatic leadership, and nurturant-task leadership, compared to transformational leadership. It would also be interesting to examine such an influence for authentic and ethical leadership.

### **Practical Implications**

Our findings suggest that managers need to give importance to a certain set of attributes to be effective in terms of transformational leadership and trust in the leader. Managers will be able to foster the perceptions of trust among followers when they hold feminine attributes and exhibit transformational behaviors. The findings further indicate that masculinity and androgyny may be related to other leadership styles and other forms of leadership effectiveness, but such attributes tend to be less beneficial for transformational leadership and trust in the leader. Therefore, in organizations where circumstances necessitate use of transformational behaviors or where leaders exhibit

transformational behaviors but experience a trust deficit from their followers, masculine or androgynous attributes may turn out to be less useful.

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