

Gender Diversity and Leadership Style in Virtual Environment

Kusi Appiah Emmanuel

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<p>Researcher Kusi Appiah Emmanuel</p>	<p>Group IBMA 2015</p>
<p>Gender Diversity and Leadership Style in Virtual Working Environment</p>	<p>Number of pages and appendices 82+16</p>
<p>The main purpose of this study is to improve readers' understanding of the dynamics behind virtual team performance. It focuses on how gender differences, leadership styles and behaviours influence virtual team performance among teachers in Haaga-Helia and Estonia Business School. It also aims to identify whether leadership styles and behaviours vary due to gender differences and have dissimilar effects on virtual team performance. Another intention is to investigate whether gender diversity (i.e. differences) typically bring greater success to teams or working groups in a virtual learning environment.</p> <p>The theoretical framework was based on the full-range leadership model. However, the scope was concentrated on transformational and transactional leadership styles and behaviours aspect of the model. These leadership styles were chosen by the researcher because they have attracted extensive research attention since their inception; transformational and transactional leadership styles have been proved to impact virtual teams in meaningfully diverse ways; and transformational, and transactional leadership styles can be translated into practical recommendations and suggestions for leadership training. (Hambley, O'Neil and Kline, 2007).</p> <p>The research strategy for this study was a survey. Having an intention to explore the phenomenon under study, identify themes and patterns, the researcher adopted an abductive form of research approach. Collection of data was obtained from primary and secondary sources. Simple random sampling technique was used select the sample. The analytical approach was both qualitative and quantitative (mixed approach).</p> <p>From an empirical perspective, two opposing views were obtained. From quantitative approach aspect of the study, it was discovered that both genders exhibited transformational and transactional leadership styles and behaviours when working in virtual teams or tasks. These behaviours were not gender linked, meaning there are no differences between genders. However, based on the result obtained from the qualitative aspect of the study, it has been known that leadership styles are gender linked. It therefore means that there are differences between male and female leadership styles. Besides these inconsistencies, these leadership styles and their associated behaviours have been empirically proven to be linked to positive virtual team performance. Finally, it has been proved by this study that gender diversity generates greater success to teams or work groups in a virtual working environment.</p> <p>In conclusion, this study has a provided an interpretive view of gender and leadership styles in virtual environment. It has investigated for the leadership styles and behaviours of teachers in virtual working environment, and the inherent differences with respect to gender; and the efficacy of gender diversity to virtual teams or working groups.</p>	
<p>Key words Leadership style, Virtual Environment, Gender, Virtual Leadership, Virtual Team</p>	

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1 Introduction

In a rapidly changing environment caused by advances in information and communication technology, it is necessary for organisations to maintain and develop competencies continuously. This includes spreading knowledge and creating new knowledge. As environmental conditions are changing faster and faster, knowledge management and organisational learning have become more and more important (Argote, Ingram, Levine and Moreland, 2000, 1-2, 4). Within academic institutions the task of managing knowledge and competencies has changed over time leading to a new generation of knowledge management. Initially, knowledge management focused on knowledge-carrying individuals as units of analysis and defined knowledge as existing and measurable skills that need to be captured and codified. However, in recent times knowledge management in academic institutions (learning and creation of knowledge) focuses on network of activity systems as units of analysis and sees knowledge as being embedded and created in collective practices. (Ahonen, Engeström and Virkkunen, 2000, 282-287). This has given rise to collaborative research and development initiatives and projects among academic institutions. This study is a result of such initiatives. It is focused on the theme- Leadership in distributed virtual working model. It came as a result of the recent collaboration agreement that was signed by Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and EBS (Estonian Business School) to launch a joint research and development collaboration.

The first chapter of this study introduces the background of the study, explains the needs and objectives, describes the research questions, scope of the study, international aspects of the study, and finally presents the structure of the study.

1.1 Background

According to statistics, among all the information and communication technology facilities, the internet outpaced the others in reaching a wider coverage of users around the globe. Researchers profess that to reach 50 million users it took 74 years for the telephone; 38 years for the radio; 13 years for the television; 11 years for the personal computer; and 4 years for the Internet. (Gabay, 2000).

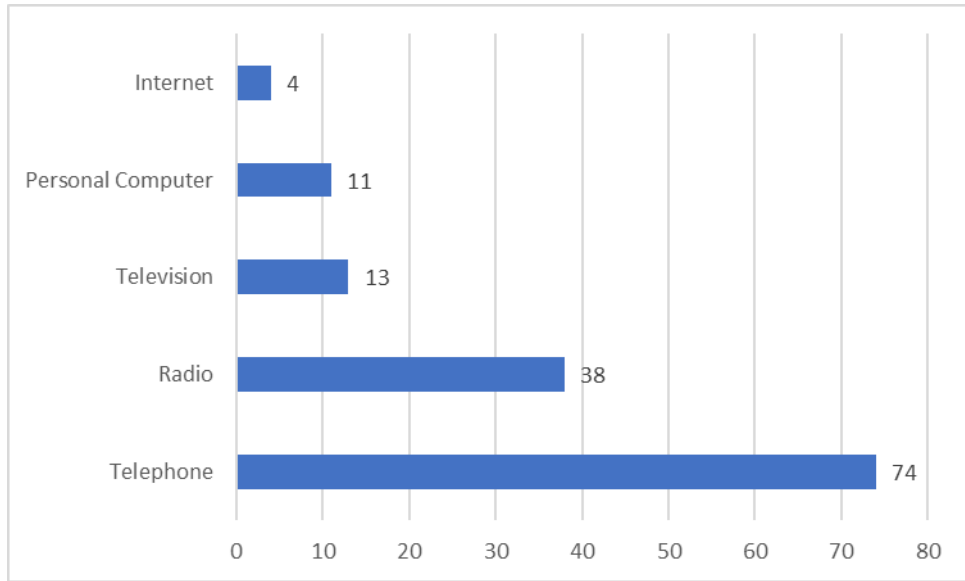


Figure 1. Number of Years to Reach 50 Million Users (Adapted from Gabay, 2000)

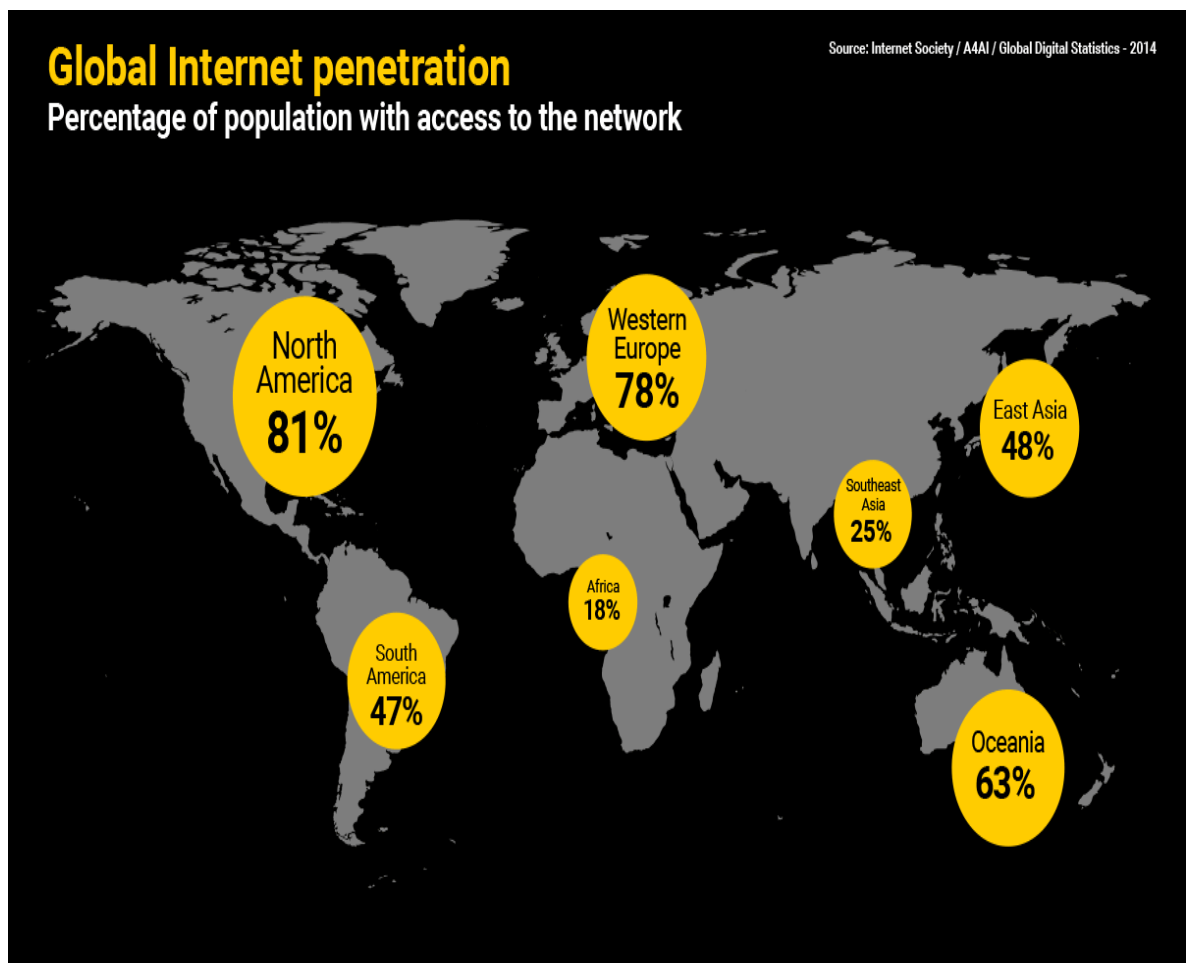


Figure 2. Global Internet Penetration (Internet Society; Global Digital Statistics, 2014)

The pace at which the internet is moving, especially in North America, Western Europe, Oceania, and Asia has altered the way teams are organised in organisations. Collocation teams have become less effective and limited in usage among organisations and institutions of higher learning. Most organisations as well as institutions have embraced virtual teams. Leading in virtual team has become a common phenomenon among individuals and organisations. In as much as to distinguish leadership in virtual environment from leadership in an offline environment, it has been given the term known as virtual leadership. Other leadership studies' researchers have coined the term e-leadership to mean virtual leadership. They define e-leadership as a social influence process linked by technology to generate a change in a team or group's performance. (Avolio, Kahai, and Dodge, 2001).

Leading in a virtual environment goes beyond ordinary leadership because it is associated with complex challenges created by differing cultures and time zones. In a virtual environment, leaders have to lead differently. It therefore demands specific strategies for building trust, establishing effective working relationships, creating congenial working atmosphere, making decisions, staying abreast of work projects, and avoiding communication barriers associated with teleconferencing, email, voice mail, etc. The dilemma confronting virtual leaders today is the limited understanding of virtual leadership style. Current scholarship of virtual leadership attests the goals of leadership have not changed, but what is relevant is how to implement those goals electronically on computer-mediated virtual teams that are dispersed over geographical space and time. (DasGupta, 2011). More research is therefore needed to better understand virtual team leadership. (Hambley, O'Neil and Kline, 2007). Motivated by this, the researcher has chosen to focus on virtual leadership styles and behaviours. This forms part of the entire virtual leadership system. The present study attempts to analyse this phenomenon from a gender perspective by adopting both the equity-view approach and complementary-contribution view of gender leadership styles.

Furthermore, it is concentrated on two interesting leadership styles, namely transformational and transactional. These leadership styles have been chosen for several because they have attracted extensive research attention since their inception; transformational and transactional leadership styles have been proved to impact virtual teams in meaningfully diverse ways; and finally, transformational, and transactional leadership styles can be translated into practical recommendations and suggestions for leadership training. (Hambley, O'Neil and Kline, 2007). With these two leadership styles in mind, the researcher intends to use the next paragraph to elaborate on the case organisations.

1.2 Case Organisations

This research is limited to two case organisations in the educational sector. These organisations are Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (HH), and Estonian Business School (EBS). The next segment provides a detailed elaboration on these case organisations.

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences (HH)

Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences is one of Finland's largest business schools. It is an open university of applied sciences, owned by a foundation run by Helsinki's business community. The school offers courses in business, information technology, sport and leisure education, hospitality, tourism, management assistant education, vocational teacher education programmes, journalism, marketing, and in languages. It has about 10,500 students and about 700 staff, of whom 400 are full-time teachers. Through education, research and development, the school prepares professionals for business and services. (Haaga-Helia, 2016).

Estonian Business School (EBS)

EBS is also one of the renowned business schools in Estonia, established in 1988. It was the first institution in Estonia to introduce diploma business education. It is the oldest privately owned business university in the Baltics, having a population of more than 1500 students. EBS's paramount goal is to provide people with academic knowledge, skills, and values for its successful application. The school offers degrees at Bachelor's, Master's as well as Doctoral levels, and it has 70 partner universities all around the world. (EBS, 2016).

1.3 Needs and objectives

Due to the influx of information communication technology, day-in and day-out teachers and researchers in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and Estonia Business School have been involved in series of online collaborative researches and projects, howbeit there is no noted research in exploring the virtual leadership styles and behaviours of teachers in either institution.

The main purpose of this study is to improve readers' understanding of the dynamics behind virtual team performance. It focuses on how gender differences, leadership styles

and behaviours influence virtual team performance among teachers in these two universities.

It also aims to identify whether leadership styles and behaviours vary due to gender differences and have dissimilar effects on virtual team performance.

Last but not the least, it intends to investigate whether gender diversity (i.e. differences) typically bring greater success to teams or working groups in a virtual learning environment.

1.4 Research Questions

Research question or problems are the fundamental core of every research study. They identify the phenomenon to be studied from different assertions and ideas amassed from the review process of a research study or project. In relation to this study, the following research questions have been deduced from the review process:

Main Research Question: How does gender and leadership style or behaviour influence virtual team performance of teachers?

Sub-Question 1: What is the leadership style and behaviours among staff when working in virtual environment?

Sub-Question 2: Are there inherent differences in their leadership styles and behaviours, if so, are these differences gender linked?

Sub-Question 3: Do these behaviours have positive influence on virtual teams?

Sub-Question 4: What kinds of virtual teams do teachers participate in?

Sub-Question 5: Do they prefer to be in gender diverse teams or male/female dominated teams?

Sub-Question 6: Does gender diversity typically bring greater success to teams or working groups in a virtual working environment?

These questions have been empirically addressed in the analyses part of this research. The table in page 73 (Table 10) is an exhibit of an overlay matrix depicting how these questions have been resolved from theoretical point of view to an empirical point of view.

1.5 The scope of the study

Most virtual team and leadership studies have centred on the comparison of leadership styles. Among these are comparisons of transformational against transactional; and participative against directive. (Zhang, Fjermestad and Tremaine, 2005). In a research study conducted by Ruggieri, Boca and Garro (2013), they made a comparison between transactional and transformational leadership on their effects in synchronous and a synchronous online teamwork. Another example is Hoyt and Blascovich (2003)'s research conducted to examine transformational and transactional leadership in both physical and virtual settings.

Despite the foregoing, the focus of this study is not about comparison between leadership styles but it intends to analyse two leadership styles and behaviours from a gender perspective. These are transformational and transactional leadership styles.

1.6 International aspects

The flatness of the world caused by internationalisation has given rise to homogeneity, collaborative ventures, alliance constellations, and other cooperative endeavours among organisations from different geographical locations. Defining the international aspects of research study is determined by its scope. With regards to the scope, one can say that this study is international in nature. The reason is that the case is centred on two academic institutions from different countries- Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences in Finland and, Estonia Business School in Estonia. The respondents are affiliated to these institutions. The interviewee is an independent person who has no connection with these institutions, however he has immense international experiences.

The international nature of this study is also evident in its communication aspects such as writing, interviewing, and reporting. In all these processes, the language used was English, an international language. The researcher used English language in order to avoid sensitivity issues such as linguistic and semantic disturbances since each of the two institutions has its own country of origin native language.

1.7 The structure of this study

The structure of this study is organised in chapters with corresponding sub chapters and sections. In all, it is divided into six main parts; Introductory, theoretical, empirical, discussion, assessment of the quality of the results, and conclusion.

The introductory chapter involves the general introduction, objectives, research problem setting, scope of the study, and the international aspects of the study.

The theoretical chapter is concentrated on literature review. In this part, related concepts such as leadership styles, gender diversity, virtual team leadership, and other related constructs are reviewed. Based on the review, a framework is developed for the study. References are made from secondary sources such as scientific journals, published leadership books, and articles.

The empirical chapter deals with chapters meant for methodology, the methods chosen; data analyses, presentation of the findings.

The discussion chapter is centred on summary of findings obtained from the empirical analyses.

The quality assessment chapter assesses the results in terms of validity and reliability (trustworthiness of the research); and ethical viewpoints.

Finally, the conclusion chapter focuses on the study's conclusion, suggestions for development or further work; and an evaluation of the thesis process and one's own learning.

2 Gender and Leadership Style in Virtual Environment

This part of the study presents review of literature and studies that are found to have direct bearing with the present case under study. The main purpose is to describe the relevant theories associated with leadership from a gender perspective, and virtual team. However, before that the researcher intends to address a common argument that has been in the spotlight over decades, i.e. the differences between leadership and management. Arguably, some perceive that management is distinct from leadership. Others perceive it to be the same whilst others think they are different but tends to overlap in functions and characteristics.

2.1 Comparison of Leadership and Management

Before the conception of the concept 'leadership', the root word of leadership (i.e. lead) has undergone series of transformations. The meaning of "lead" was to "cause or go along with oneself, to bring a person or animal to a place", but was later modified with other characteristics to form the concept of a leader, and later to leadership. (Nienaber, 2010; Grace, 2003).

Leadership is about influencing people to accomplish goals, and characterised with definitional traits such as self-confidence, enthusiasm, risk taker, future focus, and among others whereas management is about planning, organizing, budgeting, coordinating and monitoring activities which help an organisation to predictably do what it knows how to do effectively and efficiently. (Algahtani, 2014; Kotter, 2013). Furthermore, management deals with issues as problem-solving, performance evaluation, productivity, system, control, and measurement. Management enables organisations to have control of its day-to-day delivery of services and budget related issues.

Kotter (2013) views leadership as coping with change whilst management is about coping with complexity. He regards leadership as the process of taking an organisation into the future, finding opportunities and exploiting those opportunities. Leadership is therefore about vision, about people being in terms with the vision, about empowerment and behaviour. (Kotter, 2013). In as much as leadership copes with change, it also breeds change. Maccoby (2000) posits that leaders are change agents whereas managers are administrators.

Within the corporate world and research communities, management and leadership have been used and interpreted differently by different scholars and researchers. According to

Kotter (2013), people make mistakes in interpreting these two concepts. He points out mistakes such as people regarding leadership and management as synonymous terms; confining leadership to the people at the very top of hierarchies, calling the people in the layers below them in the organization “management” and then referring all the rest as workers, specialists, and individual contributors; and the thought of “leadership” in terms of personality characteristics (i.e. charisma).

Mintzberg (2004) is one of the researchers that regard leadership and management as synonymous terms. He posits that it is irrelevant to discuss management and leadership separately. In contrast, others like Kotter (2013) view them as two completely different terms. According to Northouse (2016, 13), the process of leadership is similar to management process. He stresses that the leadership process of working with people, goal accomplishment, and other functions of leadership is consistent with that of management. For instance, when leaders are involved in planning, organizing, budgeting, coordinating and monitoring activities for a group or organization, they are involved in management, and when managers are involved in influencing a group to achieve corporate targets, they are practicing leadership. (Northouse, 2016, 15). However, from a perspective of period of inception and purpose of these two concepts, he argues that they are distinctively different. From this perspective, he claims leadership was in existence before management was incepted, as a way to promote efficiency and effectiveness in organisations. Consistent with the view of Northouse but different in terms of period of inception, Grace (2003), argues that the root word of “leadership” dates back to 800 CE (Common Era), while the root word of “management” appeared in 1598 CE. The concept of management had appeared in the spotlight in 1809, 30 years before the concept “leadership” (Grace, 2003). According to Grace, the root word of ‘leadership’ was derived from Greek and Latin, whereas ‘management’ was derived from French.

Many researchers as well Northouse concede to the fact that there are some similarities and differences between leadership and management. Having similarities between the two concepts does not mean they are the same (Bass, 2010; Algahtani, 2014). Some people see them different without any interconnectedness. They have the presumption that good leader can never be a good manager and the vice versa. (Algahtani, 2014). Amiss all these discrepancies, Algahtani (2014) conducted a theoretical review on these two concepts and discovered that they are distinct functions. This means that they serve different, yet essential, functions. (Kotter, 2013). For instance, leadership had been found to be responsible in the determination of the future vision and destination of an organization, whereas management is responsible for the sustainability of quality service, innovation, and performance. (Toor and Ofori, 2008). Leaders have the ability to forecast into the

future in order to generate proactive measures to change existing status-quo. In contrast, managers act responsively by operating within existing systems and status-quo.

Indeed, there has been a long history of management and leadership but no clarity. The debate whether leadership is synonymous to management or not, continues. Some of the findings of those who argue for differences in functions between leadership and management are synthesised in table 1.

Table 1. Differences in functions between leadership and management (adapted from Northouse (2016, 14)).

Process	Leadership	Management
Vision and Direction	-Create vision -Set strategies -Clarify the big picture	-Set agendas -Set timetables -Allocate resources
Organising	-Create structure -Set rules and procedures -Make job placement	-Communicate goals -Seek commitment -Build teams
Problem Solving, Motivating, and Inspiring	-Develop incentives -Take corrective action -Generate creative solutions	-Inspire and energise -Empowerment -Satisfaction of unmet needs

2.2 Concept of Leadership

Prima facie, from time immemorial different definitions have sprouted out to define the concept of leadership and according to Finholm (2003, 1-13), the full nature of leadership remains elusive. He argues that leadership is context-related. This means that effective understanding of leadership is derived from the context of an event or issue, through careful observation and experience. He further argues that past models of leadership focused on skills, structure, and system, which are more inclined to management rather than leadership. However, he emphasises that more comprehensive dimensions and explanations of leadership are being formed day-in and day-out due to its evolving nature.

Leadership has been considered to embody some contextual factors, common values, aspects, and few personal characteristics. This has propelled researchers to define it from diverse perspectives- ranging from social, attitudes, and tasks contexts. (Finholm, 2003, 7). Leadership from a social context perceives leadership task to be interdependent and interactive between the leader and followers in a working group. Attitudinal perception posits that leadership is accompanied by attitudes and behaviours that support the leader to execute its roles. Finally, the tasks perception of leadership assumes leadership to be focused on tasks that defines the behaviour of the leader.

According to Mullins (1999, 373), leadership is about 'getting others to follow', 'getting people to do things willingly', or exhibiting authority in decision-making'. Getting people to do things willingly as spelt out in Mullins' definition is about influencing to achieve a common goal. Without influence, effective leadership cannot take place.

Memon (2014) also defines it as a process by which an individual influences the attitudes, actions, thoughts and behaviors of others. Memon's definition is in the same flavour as that of Northouse. Northouse (2013, 15) defines it as a process by which a person influences a team or group of individuals to accomplish a common objective. Influencing people involves inspiration and empowerment. Leadership therefore is not about manipulation and the pursuit of power. It is about empowering and inspiring people. The central feature of organisational performance and effectiveness is leadership.

Inferring from all these definitions, several components can be identified. These are: Leadership is a process; Leadership involves influence; Leadership revolves around people or team; Leadership involves the attainment of common objective. (Northouse, 2013, 5). Above all, one can describe leadership as beauty. The reason is that we can see beauty but describing it will depends on how the person making the descriptions sees it. This is the reason why there are diverging perspectives about the description of leadership.

Characteristically, leadership is either assigned or emergent. (Northouse, 2013, 15). Assigned leadership is the form of leadership that comes as a result of appointment. The CEO of an organisation or the project manager of an organizational assignment is a typical example of assigned leadership. In contrast, emergent leadership results from self-discovery. It is about what one pursues, characterised with the ability to attract followers. The leadership of Martin Luther can be described as an emergent leadership. He had a vision and with this vision was able to attract thousands of followers.

Last but not the least, related to leadership is the concept of power. (Northouse, 2013, 15). Power is what provides the leader the ability to influence the actions and thoughts of others. Without this ability, leadership responsibilities and roles will be a failure. Northouse (2013, 15) professes that there are two main kinds of power. These are position power, and personal power. Position power comes as a result of a leader occupying a position. In contrast, personal power is derived from followers due to the leader's competences and courtesies. Power lays an intricate part of leadership. However, arrogating power or leaving power in the hands of an individual is associated with human risks. (Zaleznik, 2004). Zaleznik have identified three main risks associated with the arrogation of power. These are the risk of equating power with the ability to obtain instant achievement of objectives; the risk of ignoring the legitimacy of power accumulation; the risk of losing self-discipline in the desire for power and fame.

From the foregoing discussions, it can be observed that leadership is multidimensional in nature. It is linked to old story of a group of blind men who were told to describe the elephant. Depending on the part of the elephant each person held, they described it differently. Leadership as a concept has been explained from contextual and situational viewpoints. This means that there is no conclusive view point or opinion. It has also been found to be associated with power. However, the extent to which the power is used is subjected to the person leading. Some leaders prefer to lord the power over followers, others prefer to share, and others also prefer to lease it out to followers. With this come the different leadership styles and behaviours.

2.2.1 Leadership of others

As managers have identities so are leaders. Leaders are people who have the responsible ability to influence people or group towards the achievement of organisational goals. According to Fairholm (2003), the responsibilities of leaders are centred on three core elements. They include- leading others, supporting followers to develop and mature, and maintaining the compatibility of the organisational culture and ethos. Leaders set values, goals, standards, and performance measurement systems for followers. (Fairholm, 2003, 10). They are committed to the set-goals and are relational or people oriented. The growth of teams, organisations, societies, and other social structures depend on leaders. This means the leader can make or unmake the development of teams, organisations, and institutional structures. Given the centrality of leadership to growth and success of teams, organisations, and other institutional structures, one can therefore distinguish between good leaders and bad leaders. Good leaders have the ability to work with work with their hearts rather than with their heads. They demonstrate this by showing empathy, compas-

sion or sense of feeling among followers. Organisational leaders that have low levels or are deficient of these qualities have the propensity to fail in issuing out their leadership responsibilities because followers will become emotionally upset. As a result, they cannot remember, stonewall, not able learn and make decisions properly. Leaders are the 'eye' of the organisation, and they have a soul. This means that they craft visions, and initiate passionate strategic actions for the growth of the organisation or team. In addition, leaders instill social harmony, companionship, bonding and networking among followers, thereby allowing members to take optimal advantage of the skills and creativity of each other.

2.2.2 Origin of Leadership

The emergence of leadership can be traced back from the period when civilisation started. According to Bass (1990), leadership is one of the oldest universal phenomena in human race. Throughout the ages, it has played an important role in developing groups, societies, and nations. (Choi, 2007). The efficacy of its roles has aroused the interests of many researchers to analyse it from different contexts. Among these are the trait approach, functional approach, style approach, behavioural approach, and situational approach. These approaches will be discussed thoroughly in the subsequent paragraphs.

Early studies on leadership concentrated on identifying the personality traits by assuming that successful leaders are 'born' and that they have certain inbuilt qualities which distinguish them from non-leaders. (Koech and Namusonge, 2012). These inbuilt qualities were assumed to be universal among all leaders and potential leaders. (Moran, 1999).

Typically, among these qualities are extraversion (sociable), agreeableness (warm), conscientiousness (reliable), emotional stability, and openness. A common theory associated with the trait approach was the great man theory. With this theory, leadership was thought as a phenomenon related to man, military and Western (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison, 2003). It focused on identifying the innate characteristics associated with great social, political, and military leaders. (North house, 2013, 19). The great man theory as well as personality trait approach to leadership are consistent with the belief that leaders are extraordinary people who have special gifts or traits. Based on these special gifts and traits, leaders are easily identified in communities, as well as in organisations.

According to the proponents of leadership based on personality traits, leadership is about people management and having the afore-mentioned traits causes leaders to know, understand their followers, and to attend to their needs. However, the difficulty in categorising and validating these characteristics led to the emergence of functional, style, and be-

havioural approaches to leadership who shifted the emphasis away from the characteristics of the leader to the functions of a leader, behavior, and style the leader adopted (Stodgill, 1948; Koech and Namusonge, 2012). According to critics, the trait approach has the inability to take into consideration situations. (Northouse, 2013, 31). Some say that the lists of possible traits tend to be lengthy and there is not always agreement on the most important. (Mullins, 2010, 377). Arguably, critics also proffers that the traits differ from individual to individual. Some leaders might have all the traits but another might have but not all. This means that the absence of a trait does not necessarily mean that the person is not a leader. According to series of researches conducted by these critics, it became apparent that there was little consistency in the results of the various leadership traits. Traits such as technical skill, friendliness, task motivation, application to task, group task supportiveness, social skill, emotional control, administrative skill, general charisma, and intelligence did appear more frequently than others. (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison, 2003). Thinking of leadership in terms of personality characteristics such as charisma, according to Kotter (2013) is one of the mistakes people make in contemporary times. He argues that since few people have great charisma, this leads logically to the conclusion that few people can provide leadership.

The functional approach to leadership ignores the personality traits of the leader but on the functions of leadership. It views leadership in terms of how the leader's behaviour affects, and is affected by the group of followers. (Mullins, 2010, 377). Unlike the trait approach to leadership, this approach believes that the skills of leadership (for example, technical skill, social skill, emotional control, administrative skill) can be learned, developed and perfected. (Mullins, 2010, 377). The functional approach was influenced by the work of John Adair (1979) on action-centred leadership. It focuses on the things leaders execute.'

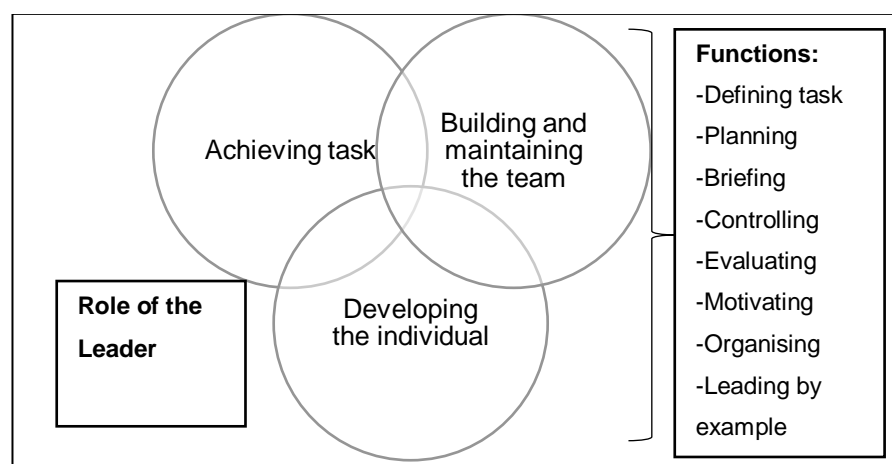


Figure 3. Functional approach to leadership (Adapted from Adair, 2007, 23)

The behavioural perspective perceives leadership to base on the behavior of the leader whilst leadership style explains leadership based on the style a leader exhibits in a position of power. The behavioural perspective of leadership was influenced by the work of McGregor known as McGregor's Theory X & Theory Y Managers. This theory influences the behaviour of leaders as well as managers in their relationship with followers and performance. After the behavioural, and style perspectives, there arose critiques. Critics argue that the behavioural and style perspectives ignored the situational or contextual factors. (Koech and Namusonge, 2012). They believe that apart from the behavior and style of a leader, the variable factor of context enhances the effectiveness of a leader. This brought to the fore the concept of situational leadership approach. It considers leadership to situational depending on the situation or context it is being exhibited. This means that within a particular project or working environment, there may be differences in required leadership styles at different levels and times. Situational concept of leadership requires that leaders have multiple leadership styles and adjusts these styles to the nature or maturity of followers and their needs. (Lee, 2014, 41). From the situational approach came forth situational leadership model developed by Hersey and Blanchard. (Northouse, 2016, 93).

Researchers perceived that situational approach ought to be refined to identify the situational variables that best predict the most appropriate or effective leadership style to fit the particular situation. (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison, 2003). This led to the evolution of contingency theories from a situational approach. Similar to situational leadership approach, contingency theories assume that there is no single style of leadership appropriate to all contexts or situations. It matches leadership style to the activity and like situational leadership, it adapts and apply the right leadership style to match the needs of the followers, situation and environment. Linked to the contingency approach is the path-goal theory. This theory stresses on how the leader motivates followers to accomplish goals. According to Northouse (2016,135), the effectiveness of this leadership is based on the fit between the leader's behaviour, followers' behaviours and task at hand. With respect to this theory, there are four different types of leaders. These are supportive leaders, directive leaders, participative leaders, and achievement-oriented leaders. (Lojeski and Reilly, 2010, 22).

After these contingencies perspectives, researchers have shifted their attention on how leaders could transform organisations and from this rose a number of articles and papers on the distinction between transactional leadership and transformational theories. Burns started this. Transactional leadership theory emphasises the importance of the relationship between leader and followers bounded by contractual agreement where followers are

rewarded in performing a task. (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison, 2003). In contrast, transformational leadership theory put emphasis on the role of leadership as a change agent.

Finally, the popular ones that are in the spotlight are inspirational leadership or visionary leadership, servant leadership, team leadership, and among others.

2.2.3 Leadership Models

Leadership Models define the requisite qualities of a leader and help to inform the leadership development process. (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison, 2003). Within the annals of leadership studies, all the theories through which leadership has been refined have their individual supporting models.

Major contingency models of leadership are Favourability of leadership situation (Fiedler, 1967), Quality and acceptance of leader's decision (Vroom and Yetton, 1974), Path-goal theory – House, 1971) and Readiness level of followers (Hersey and Blanchard, 1993). (Mullins, 1999, 384; Koech and Namusonge, 2012).

Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid (1964), McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y are some of the models related to the behavioural approach to leadership. The Managerial Grid developed by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton focuses on two things. It focuses on people, and results or task. (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, and Dennison, 2003). The leader focuses on followers' needs and areas of personal development in order to decide how best to accomplish a task. In contrast, McGregor's Theory X and Theory Y regulates the leader's behaviour towards followers. It focuses on the effects of followers' behaviour on the leader's behaviour or style.

Apart from the models discussed so far, three other models that are of interest to the researcher would be elaborated on from this point.

The first of the three models that is of particular interest to the researcher is the full range leadership model. (See figure 4 in the next page).

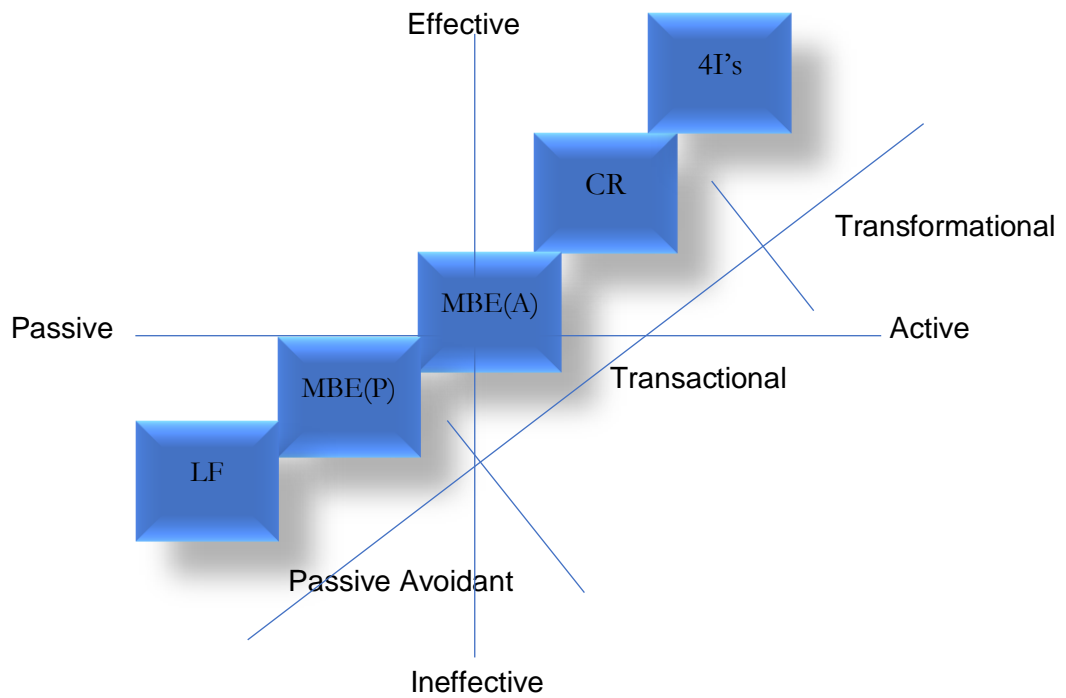


Figure 4. Full range leadership Model (Adapted from Bass and Avolio, 2004)

It is a model generated from the transactional and transformational approaches to leadership. This model was propounded by Bass in 1985 and later revised and updated by Bass and Avolio. (Hambley, et al 2007). The idea behind full-range leadership model is that there exists a combination of leadership styles, ranging from transformational, transactional, and avoidant leadership. These three typologies of leadership style are represented by eight distinct factors: four transformational (inspirational motivation - idealized influence, idealized influence behavior, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration), three transactional (contingent reward, management-by-exception active, management-by-exception passive) and one laissez faire.

The second model is known as leadership zone model. (Perrin 2010). It is touted as the 21st century model of leadership practices. The origin of this model came as a result of a study conducted by Perrin and Achieve Global research team on how leaders succeed in modern business environments. According to the results, there were 42 leadership practices – some behavioural, and others cognitive. They therefore sorted the 42 practices into six categories, or “zones,” to form the Leadership Zone Model. (See the figure 5).

The first zone is about reflection, where the leader does personal assessment. To the researchers, in order to succeed in this zone, leaders take responsibility for their own errors, seek the knowledge and support to enhance their vision, examine their roles, create room for sharing, build trust and confidence among team members.

The second zone is society. Succeeding in this zone requires leaders to apply ethical principles such as respect, recognition, fairness, concern for the wellbeing of team members and people, truthfulness, emotional intelligent, and tolerant. (Perrin, 2010).

The third zone is diversity. With this, it requires leaders to exhibit respect and leverage the differences that exist among working groups or teams. Leaders have to encourage collaboration among people from different groups, must be sensitive towards individual differences, open-minded about differential cultures, and other diversity related issues. (Perrin, 2010).

The fourth zone is ingenuity. By this, leaders create an enabling environment, support others to adapt, motivate team members to develop a shared picture of a positive future, engaging followers in decisions, mentoring and training of members with the aim of improving overall group capabilities and amongst others.

The fifth zone is people. Effective leadership is about connectivity. Thus, how a leader resonates with followers. In this zone, leaders establish strong communication ties with followers, are inspirational, people-oriented, compassionate, emotion-ally sensitive and intelligent to feelings of people, and amongst other people-related issues. (Perrin, 2010).

The last zone is business. This zone is about strategy development, implementation and organisation. Leaders clarify organisational vision and strategy, adaptable, are management oriented, and understand the working procedures and systems. (Perrin, 2010).

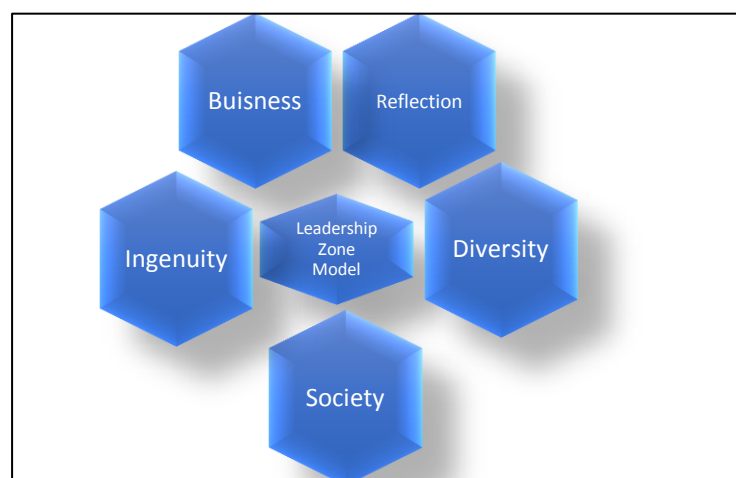


Figure 5. Leadership Zone Model (Adapted from Perrin, 2010)

Finally, the last among the three models is known as ambassadorial leadership model. This was propounded by Lojeski and Reilly (2007) in a Virtual Distance International Research (VDI). Per to the model, the leader is identified as an ambassador. As an ambassador, the leader alternate between virtual boundaries, bringing into notice virtual distances, associated challenges, and corresponding solutions. Such leaders have the capability to understand the cultural, organizational, sociological, and relationship factors that impact virtual distance.

As it can be deciphered from the foregoing discussion, identifying the concept of leadership stems from variety of theoretical models. According to Kayworth and Leidner (2002), most of the theories and models can be classified into one of the three traditions- trait, behavioral, or contingency theories. In sum, the difference between the early theories and the later ones is that the former tend to focus on the characteristics and behaviours of leaders, but the later shift the attention on the functions of followers and the contextual nature of leadership.

2.3 Leadership Style

Leadership style is a broad concept and for easier understanding, the researcher attempts to explain it by comparing and contrasting some of the definitions propounded by researchers.

Leadership style is the way in which the functions of leadership are carried out and spells out how a leader behaves towards members of the group (Muellin p 380). It is the social influence processes or behavioural patterns in which the leader seeks the voluntary participation of followers in an effort to accomplish a specific task. (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014; Northouse, 2013, 101).

Molero, Cuadrado, Navas and Morales (2007) describe leadership style as consistent set of behaviors in the form of structure initiation and consideration. Structure initiation is the ability of the leader to organize and plan. It encompasses the setting goals, set organizational expectations, allocation tasks and resources, defining mission and agendas, and other related matters. Consideration on the other hand, is the dynamic ability of the leader to associate himself or create effective rapport with followers or team members. Thus, being open, supportive, expert in managing team and organisational conflicts.

In another perspective, Memon (2014) defines leadership style as a means of providing direction, motivating people and implementing plans as a result of the philosophy, personality and experience of the leader.

These definitions put emphasis on the behaviour of the leader. They are in line with a definition proposed by Sahay and Baul (2014). They define leadership style as the combination of behaviors, skills and traits that a leader uses when he interacts with followers. According to them leadership style is either people centered or task centered.

Northouse (2013, 101) also clarifies leadership style by professing that it is a behavioural pattern of a person who influences others. This person is known as the leader and the people he influences are the followers. According to Northouse (2013), the behavioural pattern is both directive and supportive. Directive behaviour means that the leader assists followers to achieve objectives by providing directions such as setting schedules, providing instructions and responsibilities, coordination, and amongst others. Northouse (2013, 101). Supportive behaviour assists followers in diverse ways such as sharing tacit knowledge, listening, and appraising. As a result, these help followers to have a sense of belongingness. He went further by classifying the behavioural patterns into four distinct categories of directive and supportive behaviours. Exhibit of this is shown in table 2.

Table 2. Categories of directive and supportive behaviours (Adapted from Northouse, 2013, 101-102)

Directive and supportive behaviours	Functions
High-directive- low supportive behaviour (directing approach)	The leader spends much time on communication with little time on supportive roles
High directive- high supportive (coaching approach)	Attention of the leader is on both communication and supportive roles
High supportive-low directive behaviour (supporting approach)	The leader focuses on supportive roles to bring out the best in followers
Low supportive - low directive behaviour (delegating approach)	The leader releases control to followers and offers less supportive roles.

In addition to the views of Northouse, are participative, and achievement-oriented leadership behaviours. Participative leadership behaviour is whereby the leader consults followers and takes their opinions as well as suggestions. Achievement-oriented leadership behaviour identifies itself by challenging goals, seeking performance improvements, and instilling confidence in followers. (Lojeski and Reilly, 2010, 22).

2.3.1 Types of Leadership Styles

According to researchers, three styles of leadership based on the use of competence were first distinguished by Lewin. (Gonos, and Gallo, 2013). These are the autocratic (authoritative style) characterised by implementing the will of a leader, without taking into the consideration the opinion of subordinates; the democratic (participative style), characterised by two-way communication between the leader and the subordinates; and the liberal style where the leader only occasionally uses his or her power and assigns a significant level of freedom to subordinates, in order to perform their jobs.

Afterwards, Rensis Likert propounded four styles of leadership based on management systems. (Gonos, and Gallo, 2013). The first of the four is known as the exploitative. It is a style of leadership whereby decisions are promulgated by the leader. The second is termed as benevolent. It is a style of leadership where some aspects of decision are delegated. The third of the four is the consultative style of leadership where the leader provides room for the acceptance of the ideas and opinions of subordinates. Finally, the fourth one is touted as participative. It is a group style of leadership, an all-inclusive form of leadership where subordinates are fully involved in decision-making processes and extensive autonomy.

Transactional and transformational leadership styles are other sets of leadership styles that have attracted attention. Together with laissez-faire leadership style, they form the bases of full-range leadership model. The theoretical framework of this study is built around the full-range leadership model with emphasis on transactional and transformational leadership styles. The researcher has intended omit laissez-faire leadership style. According to scholars the afore-mentioned leadership styles (full range leadership) is widely accepted in the management and leadership literatures and has served as the conceptual bases for many studies of virtual team leadership (Hambley, O'Neil and Kline, 2007). The researcher provides comprehensive elaboration on these two leadership styles.

2.3.2 Transformational Leadership style

As the term suggests, transformational leadership style aims to transform followers. It is an idealized influence of leadership behaviour attributed to charisma. It encourages followers to view problems from new perspectives, provide support and encouragement, communicates a vision, stimulates emotion and identification. It integrates the elements of empathy, compassion, sensitivity, and relationship building with subordinates. (Men and

Stacks, 2013). In technical terms, transformational leadership is said to be people-oriented (consideration). (Kluger and Zaidel, 2013). It develops positive rapport with followers in order to strengthen individual, team and organisational performance. Leaders who exhibit this behaviour encourage followers to look beyond their individual needs but focus on the interests of the team and the entire organization as a whole. (Burke and Karen, 2001). It is about deployment rather than employment. Transformational leaders deploy followers by bringing out the best in them. This leadership style overrides follower distress and job dissatisfaction because it gives motivation to the followers, collaborate and attain better results. In sum, transformational leadership is concerned with people, emotions, standards, long goal orientation, values and ethics. (Northouse, 2013, 185).

Discernibly, there is an embedded thread of communication in transformational leadership. This kind of leadership is based on trust and relationship building, and in every relationship, there is a form of communication. Leaders of such caliber transform the personal values of followers to support the vision and goals of the organization by creating an environment characterized by trust and relationship building where visions are shared. (Stone, Russell and Patterson, 2004). The underlying emotional intelligence competence of transformational leadership can be said to be empathy and communication and the overall impact working environment tends to be strongly positive. (Goleman, 2000). Transformational leadership style is associated with attributes such as creativity, openness to novelty, innovativeness, propensity to risk, courage, belief in people, being value-driven, valuing life-long learning, pragmatism, nurturing, feminine attributes and self-confidence (Brandt and Edinger, 2015; Tichy and Devanna, 1990; Ross and Offerman, 1997). According to Lee (2014, 21), transformational leadership attributes can be summarised as the act of leading by example, inspiring through articulation of vision, leading ethically, being proactive, exhibiting confidence and optimism, and the willingness to take responsibility.

There are four behavioural constituents that forms transformational leadership behaviour, namely- idealized influence (or charismatic influence), inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (4I's). (Avolio et al. 1991). All these behavioural constituents are measured using MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) developed by Bass and Avolio (2000)

Idealized influence

Idealized influence is the charismatic element of transformational leadership whereby leaders become role models who are admired, respected, and imitated by subordinates (Avolio and Bass, 2002; Burke and Karen, 2001). As role models, leaders are willing to

take risks and through communication are able to share the risks and influence followers. The transformational leader behaves in admirable ways, displays convictions and takes stands that cause subordinates or followers to identify with him. (Odumeru and Ogbonna, 2013). Bass and Avolio (2000)'s MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) is used measure idealized influence to find out how a leader holds followers' trust, maintain their faith and respect, show dedication to them, appeal to their hopes and dreams, and act as their role model.(Bass and Avolio, 2000).An example item from the MLQ (Multifactor Satisfaction Questionnaire) item for the idealised influence attributed factor is "The leader reassures others that obstacles will be overcome".(Long, Mardhia, Kowang and Heng, 2014; Bass and Avolio, 2000).

Inspirational motivation

Being a role model, the leader inspires followers to see the big picture. He communicates expectations and demonstrates a commitment to goals and a shared vision. He therefore searches for ways to learn how to motivate and empower followers to exceed their own individual goals and work expectations. (Carlos, 2013, 127). According to Stone, Russell and Patterson (2004), transformational leader builds relationships with followers through interactive communication and sharing, which forms a cultural bond between the two respondents. Through communication, the leader's expectations are made known to followers, and they are inspired to pursue a common goal. According to Bass and Avolio (2000)'s MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) inspirational motivation is interpreted as a measurement of the degree to which a leader provides vision, use appropriate symbols and images to help others focus on their work, and try to make others feel their work is of essence. An example MLQ item for IM is "The leader provides appealing images about followers can do. (Long, Mardhia, Kowang and Heng, 2014; Bass and Avolio, 2000).

Intellectual stimulation

By taking and sharing of risks, transformational leaders challenge the status-quo by stimulating followers to be creative. They provide framework for followers to see how they connect to the leader, the organisation, each other, and the goal of the entire organizational set-up. (Odumeru and Ogbonna, 2013). They also communicate problems to followers and solicit their ideas and creative solutions. (Stone, Russell and Patterson, 2004). In reference to Bass and Avolio (2000)'s MLQ (Multifactor Satisfaction Questionnaire) intellectual stimulation demonstrates the degree to which a leader encourages others to be creative in looking at existing setbacks in new ways, create an enabling environment, and de-

ploy people to question their own values and beliefs and those of the organization. (Bass and Avolio, 2000). An example MLQ item for intellectual stimulation is “The leader gets others to gaze at setbacks from countless disparate angles”. (Long, Mardhia, Kowang and Heng, 2014; Bass and Avolio, 2000).

Individualised consideration

With a sense of empathy, the transformational leader devotes personal attention to followers based on the individual their needs for achievement and development (Avolio and Bass, 2002). He acts a mentor and a coach by accepting the followers’ individual differences thereby helping to nurture their potentials. By doing this, the leader fosters two-way communication through effective listening (Avolio and Bass, 2002; Stone, Russell and Patterson, 2004). Listening is a medium that enables a leader to become privy to the needs and desires of followers.). Individualized consideration from the perspective of Bass and Avolio (2000) signifies the degree to which a leader shows interest in the wellbeing of followers, assign individual projects, and show rapt concern to those who seem less involved in the team. An example MLQ item for IM is “The leader spends period teaching and coaching”. (Long, Mardhia, Kowang and Heng, 2014; Bass and Avolio, 2000).

2.3.3 Transactional Leadership Style

Transactional leadership style can be described as a directive leadership style in which leaders set the rules and objectives for followers to adhere to. It is job-focused unlike transformational leadership style which focuses on people development. (Kluger and Zaidel, 2013). This kind of behavior is demonstrated by leaders on a micro level, for example, daily tasks. (Gunzel-Jensen, Jain and Kjeldsen, 2016).

Distinguishably, transactional leadership behavior is an exchange process using organizational bureaucracy, policy, power, and researcherity to maintain control. (Men and Stacks, 2013). It establishes work standards, communicate them to followers, and let them be aware of the associated benefits if their performance is favourable. It encourages followers to complete assignments by clarifying responsibilities and setting vision. Comparatively, it is similar to control-related task leadership (Lee, 2014, 22). Followers have limited control to make decisions on their own. This means that followers’ rights of communication in deciding for themselves in certain issues are limited. It is based on compliance; therefore, the internal communication rights of subordinates are easily eroded, leading to lack of trust, commitment and negative perceived organizational reputation. The underlying emotional intelligence competence can be said to be the drive to achieve and the

overall impact working environment tends to be negative most of the times. (Goleman, 2000). However, it has been known especially in virtual teams that transactional leadership motivates followers to perform tasks, identify roles by developing emotional buy-in and personalisation of vision, reinforces vision through the development of vision to guide the course of the task. (Lee, 2014, 41).

It is known that transactional leaders exhibit behaviours associated with constructive and corrective transactions. The constructive style is termed as contingent reward and the corrective style is known as management-by-exception.

Contingent Reward and Contingent Penalisation

Contingent reward (also known as contingent positive reinforcement) and contingent penalization (also known as contingent negative reinforcement) are some of the behaviours associated with transactional leadership style. (Odumeru and Ogbonna, 2013). Contingent reward is about the provision of rewards to followers who are able to achieve favourable performance. Leaders establish constructive transactions by clarifying expectations and rewards to motivate individual and team effectiveness and performance. (West, 2012, 81). Contingent penalisation is also about the penalization of followers who fail to meet performance standards.

In sum, it can be said that transactional leadership behavior relies more about "trades" between the leader and follower by which followers are compensated for meeting specific goals or penalized for failure. (Nanjundeswaraswamy and Swamy, 2014). It does not expect or encourage employees to exceed defined goals or to change the status quo. However, it promises followers a tangible reward for great performance. (Gunzel-Jensen, Jain and Kjeldsen, 2016). According to Bass and Avolio (2000)'s MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire), contingent reward shows the degree to which a leader tells others what to do in order to be rewarded, set down expectations, and recognize their accomplishments. An example of MLQ item for contingent reward is, "The leader tells others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work". (Bass and Avolio, 2000).

Active Management-by-Exception and Passive Management-by-Exception

With active management-by-exception (MBE-A), the leader set up rules, monitor the behaviour of followers for mistakes and takes take corrective action when deviations occur. (West, 2012, 81). The leader is seen to be more proactive and responsive work related uncertainties.

Passive management-by-exception on the other hand, is an entrenched form of behaviour whereby the leader waits for until a deviation has occurred before action is taken. The leader is seen to be inactive when compared with Active (MBE-A).

Conclusively, Management-by-Exception (Active Management-by-Exception and Passive Management-by-Exception) within the perspective of Bass and Avolio (2000)'s MLQ (Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire) is an assessment of whether a leader tells followers the job requirements, are content with standard performance, and are a believer in "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." (Bass and Avolio, 2000). An example of MLQ item for Management-by-Exception is, "The leader is satisfied when others meet agreed upon standards".

2.3.4 Differences between Transformational and Transactional Leadership Styles

Transactional Leadership is a responsive management theory focusing on work at hand. It works within existing corporate culture or status-quo. Leaders who are transactional place premium on extrinsic motivational needs of followers. They adopt measures such as rewards to stimulate followers to perform a function or task. Transformational Leadership on the other hand, is a proactive relationship theory showing concern on the entire wellbeing of followers. It works to change existing status-quo by the development and implementation of new systems. Unlike transactional leadership, it focuses on the intrinsic motivational needs of followers by adopting measures such as coaching, sharing and involvement of followers in decision making process, and the like.

Table 3. Comparison of transactional and transformational leadership (Adapted from Odumeru and Ogbonna, 2013)

Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership
Leadership is responsive	Leadership is proactive
Works within the organisational culture	Works to change the organisational culture by implementing new and innovative ideas
Followers achieve objectives through rewards and punishments set by the leader	Followers achieve objectives through higher ideals and moral values performance

Motivates followers by appealing to their own self interest

Motivates followers by encouraging them to put group interests first

Maintain the status quo but provide corrective measures when needful.
(Management-by- exception)

Find new ways to change or modify existing status quo and implement systems

It shows much concern for the job at hand.
Thus, it is job-focused

It is employee or follower-focused form of leadership style

2.4 Gender Diversity and Leadership Style

This section presents evidence from theories the concept of gender diversity and leadership style. It first brings to the limelight the meaning of gender, gender stereotypes in leadership, and finally concludes with the differences in leadership styles between gender (male and female).

2.4.1 Meaning of Gender

Mostly, the thought of gender diversity relates to sex- male and female. In contrast, there have been proven researches that establish clear differences between gender and sex. To these researchers, sex represents the biological characteristics of a person- male or female. Conversely, they define gender as the set of socially and culturally constructed roles and relationships, personality characteristics or traits, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the sexes on a differential basis. (Esplen and Jolly, 2006). According to these researchers, gender is relational and refers not simply to male or female as people think but to the relationship that exist between them. It is a multidimensional phenomenon associated with different aspects. Amongst these aspects are intra-psychic perspective such as gender schemas and stereotypes; gender-role identity and gender-role traits, attitudes, and values (Memon, 2014).

2.4.2 Gender Stereotypes in Leadership

Gender stereotype is a generalised perception about characteristics that are or ought to be peculiar with men and women. Within certain spheres of working life, gender stereotype is being used to allocate women and men to specific roles and responsibilities. Stereotyping is central to the proposition why gender is often perceived to be linked to leadership style. (Lakshmi, 2015).

In leadership studies, considerable research has been conducted on gender stereotypes. (Kelli, Matkin and Fritz, 2004). Down the lanes of history, there was a generalisation that leadership implies maleness and that, since women were not men, they lacked the traits that are necessary to be leaders. (Moran, 1992).

Women are stereotyped by traits psychologists as communally oriented, having characteristics such as being weaker vessels, nurturing, warm hearted, nice, and empathetic (Lynch, 2013). On the contrary, men are seen to possess agentic traits such as aggression, decisiveness, ambition, egoistic, directive, competent, domineering and individualism. Women who have these latter characteristics are often viewed by people as harsh or self-centered. (Lynch, 2013). Most of the time, people's stereotypes about leaders are more similar to their stereotypes about men and women. Due to the stereotyped views about women, people assume that they are less qualified than men for leadership, especially in male-dominated environment and its associated roles. Defining who should be a leader based on stereotype tends to be biased. According to implicit theory of leadership, a person's idea or stereotype of what effective leadership is has a large impact on leadership ratings. (Kelli, Matkin and Fritz, 2004). Leadership ratings in this context means how one is rated based on certain leadership characteristics.

2.4.3 Differences in Leadership Styles between Gender

For the past decades, gender differences in leadership styles have been the most intensely studied topics in the field of leadership, especially as more women have begun to assume leadership positions in various capacities. (Moran, 1992; Burke and Karen, 2001).

In all the topics studied, there have been series of inconsistencies because some view that there are no differences in leadership styles between women and men leaders. Conversely others think that there are differences.

When we consider women in management, two contrasting views have been propounded. These are the equity view, and complementary-contribution view. The equity view perceives similarity between men and women contributions and aims to provide equal platforms for both genders. Proponents of the equity view perspective argue that organizational roles override gender roles when it comes to leadership positions. (Kanter, 1977; Mushtaq and Qureshi, 2016). This means that men and women in equivalent leadership or managerial positions behave similarly, suggesting no gender differences in leadership styles. Typically, among these researchers are social scientists who empirically have found that there are no reliable differences between men and women who occupy leadership positions in organisations. (Moran, 1999).

Conversely, the complementary-contribution view assumes sharp difference between men and women contributions. (Adler and Izraeli, 1988; Mushtaq and Qureshi, 2016). According to Mushtaq and Qureshi (2016), the recognized differences have implications for differences in leadership styles. Some researchers are of the view that researchers of non-technical books with extensive experience in organizations are mostly the proponents of sex differences in leadership styles. (Moran, 1999).

From a psychological perspective, researchers have propounded a theory known as social role theory of leadership to distinguish male and female leaders. According to this theory, women are more likely to show concern about the welfare of people whereas male leaders are characterized with traits that reinforce competition and hierarchy. (Eagly and Carli, 2007; Cumming, Leung and Rui, 2015). Showing concern about the welfare of people represents a communal view of leadership. In contrast leadership marked with assertive, goal directed, and reinforcement of competition and hierarchy represents an agentic view of leadership. According to Eagly (1987), these two qualities are valuable to study gender differences. In totality, men and women differ psychologically by the way they behave, communicate and relate to others. This in effect, affects their leadership styles.

In another vein, researchers who claim there are differences in leadership style between gender (women and men) support their argument with an intuitive reasoning which suggests that early socialisation patterns develop different qualities in men and women that would likely result in variations in leadership styles. (Burke and Karen, 2001). Early socialisation patterns start from childhood. During childhood, children learn about the social expectations, attitudes and behaviours typically associated with boys and girls. As a result, these attitudes and behaviours become part of their personalities, and are often translated into their leadership behaviours.

Statham (1987) in his research on managerial styles of men and women asserts that there is a sharp difference between men and women leadership styles (i.e. women are both task and people oriented, while men appear to be image engrossed and autonomy invested). In a similar vein, according to a study conducted by Rosener, men in the study were typically “transactional” and women “transformational” leaders. Unlike men, women have the ability to coerce subordinates to transform their own self-interest into the interest of the larger group and they ascribe their power not to their position within the organization but to their own personal characteristics. Schmidt and van Engen (2003) assert that women leaders are more transformational than men leaders and also engaged in more of the contingent reward behaviors that are a component of transactional leadership. Men leaders on the other hand exhibit a transactional leadership (active and passive management by exception) and laissez-faire leadership style. From a contingency approach, one will argue that such results are contextual because there is not only one leadership style or behavior and sometimes the circumstance or the situational factors will determine the kind of leadership style a leader whether man or woman will use. This assertion is in line with the result obtained by Wolfram and Mohr (2010) in a research study conducted. They found that the frequency of transformational behaviour is not dependent on gender. (Brandt and Edinger, 2015).

In all these arguments and inconsistencies, there is lack of evidence that gender diversity typically brings greater success to groups and organizations. (Eagly, 2013).

2.5 Virtual Working Environment

With the emergence of technological advancement and information communication technology, coupled with online social networks, instant messaging, web and video conferencing, blogs and other online communication and collaboration tools, there is an ongoing change in work processes and styles. This concept represents a seismic shift in the overall organisational processes of corporations. It is a reality and will become more prevalent in the future than it is now. (Cascio, 2000).

With doubt shred of doubt, one can say that information and communications technology (ICT) has flattened the boundaries within organisations and between organisations. Most researches and collaborative projects which used to be organised in a traditional workplace environments are now organised remotely within the virtual working environment. These organisations and institutions have reaped benefits such as increased in productivity, synergy, improved team working processes, accessibility to talents and the like. How-

ever, certain times there are drawbacks such as high maintenance cost, conflict of cultures, isolation, and lack of trust in the sharing of tacit knowledge.

Virtual working environment is a web-based remote access and collaboration technology where workers operate remotely from each other and from leaders. (Cascio, 2000). It is not limited by geographical location or distance. This means that workers travel less but work more effectively and flexibly. Organisations or corporations that conduct their activities in a virtual work environment are termed as virtual organisations. (Cascio, 2000). According to Cascio (2000), virtual organisation is a group of businesses, experts, and contractors that have formed alliance to utilise complementary expertise in executing a common objective. Within the context of this definition, universities and research institutions could be described as virtual organisations depending on situational factors and the nature of research or project being executed.

Virtual work environment or workspace is a component of different elements. Within every virtual workspace, there are elements such as groups, sub groups, individuals, norms and values, power structures, and communication practices. Power structures determines the level of control and authority. In the same line, norms and values regulates the functionality and behaviours of work groups operating the environment. Among work groups and individuals operating in a virtual workspace, one thing we cannot overlook is communication practices. A particular communication practice is chosen depending on the type of virtual workspace. In some virtual workspace, the choice of communication could be in a form of text (writing, chatting, blogging, etc.), others by verbal chatting or conversation, or both. The figure below is a typical example of a virtual workspace.

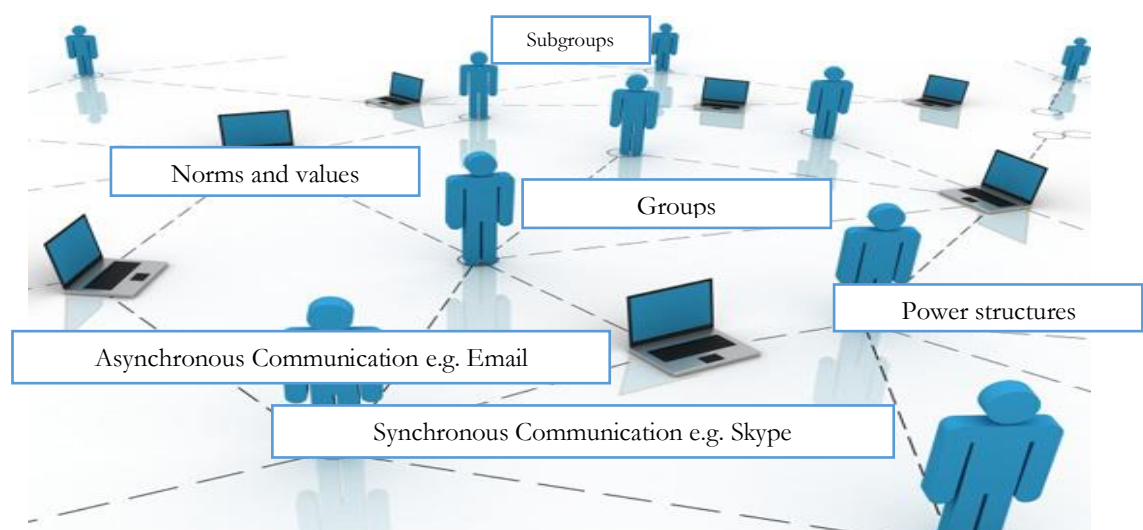


Figure 6. Virtual Work environment

To be effective as a virtual organization or to operate in a virtual work environment, Cascio suggests that leaders and managers place premium on output rather than time, and exhibit high sense of supervisory skills. Time differences are major characteristics which not handled well can distort the progress of a virtual project. However, when much attention is placed on it, the temptation that the leader loses sight of the actual project outcome is high. In another vein, the flexibility nature of virtual work environment when not controlled will generate imbalances in work processes. If members in a virtual work environment are not supervised, and empowered to make decisions, the technology that enhances their collaboration and sharing will have minimal effect.

Through reviews from virtual teams' articles, the researcher found several kinds of virtual work environments. These are virtual teams, teleworking, hoteling, hot desking, and telework centres. Virtual teams are groups of interdependent people who work or collaborate online to achieve an objective. A general overview of this concept will be explained in the subsequent section. Teleworking is a process of collaboration whereby project or work is carried remotely outside the office. With teleworking, members never meet but are able to collaborate electronically. However, Cascio propose that teleworking assumes other forms such as hoteling, hot desking, and telework centres. Hoteling is a knowledge sharing environment whereby members or group of people use workstations and meeting rooms by the process of reservation. With this method, members or team members do not have permanent workspaces. Meeting members of a project or a team and using a workspace is on reservation basis. Hot desking is another form of work or knowledge sharing environment where team members or groups share workspaces with other teams. Unlike the former, this does not involve reservations. Finally, telework centres are also workspaces located in residential areas close to the residents of members, offering cutting-edge benefits and facilities than members have at home.

2.5.1 Virtual Teams

The emergence of virtual workplace or environment brought forth the concept of virtual teams. It has been defined that virtual teams are groups of individuals who communicate electronically, share common work goal, mostly without physical interaction or brick-and-mortar boundaries. (Lee, 2014, 2). Virtual teams are made up of people in different physical or geographical locations. People in virtual teams use varying frames from which to interpret and assign meaning to others' actions, thoughts, gestures and words. Armed with computers, Wi-Fi, and mobile devices, such people can execute their responsibilities from anywhere. The effectiveness of virtual teams has been assessed by different researchers. These researchers have propounded thoughts in different dimensions that

when embraced would ensure the effectiveness of virtual teams. Few of these thoughts would be analysed in this section.

Ferrazzi (2014), propose that there are four must-haves that every virtual team should possess. These are the right team, the right leadership, the right touchpoints, and the right technology. With emphasis on right team, Ferrazi states that people enlisted in virtual teams should have qualities such as good communication skills, high emotional intelligence, an ability to work independently, and awareness of and sensitivity to other cultures. Having the right leadership in a virtual team means that having a leader who is able to foster trust (respect and empathy), encouraging open dialogue, developing specific guidelines for team interaction, and insurance of ongoing process of relationship building. The next one as already mentioned is the team having the right touchpoints. By this, Ferrazzi means that virtual teams should come together in person at certain times. e.g. during kickoff, onboarding (meeting or welcoming newcomers face to face), meeting together to celebrate the achievement of short-term goals or to provide solutions to problems. The last element that Ferrazzi stresses is technology. He elicits that the right technology is a must-have for every effective virtual team. For example, conference calling, one-on-one and group videoconferencing, direct calling and text messaging, and discussion forums or virtual team rooms. When virtual teams possess all the four 'must-haves' elements above, they become effective leading to greater efficiency in processes.

According to Gibson and Cohen (2003, 4), for a team to be considered virtual to some degree, it must have three attributes. The first one is that the team should be a functioning team. The second clarifies that members of the team must be geographically dispersed. The final one is that the team relies on technology-mediated communications rather than face-to-face interaction to accomplish their tasks. Technology-mediated communications are achieved through the use of technological gadgets such as telephone, faxes, teleconferences, e-mail, videoconferences (Skype, Facebook etc.), collaborative design tools, and among others.

Watkins (2013) also thinks that for a team to qualify as virtual, it must be characterised with two attributes. He argues that such a team must have some core members who interact primarily through electronic mediated systems, and are engaged in interdependent tasks or project.

One thing that runs through the three propositions is the channel of interaction (technology). They all stress on electronic mediated communication system. This is a major thing that distinguishes a virtual team from face-to-face team.

In sum, unlike traditional face-to-face teams, one can clarify virtual teams as collection of people who are geographically dispersed but still work together closely through a computer-mediated information systems or a wireless connectivity to achieve an organizational project or task. (Zhang, Fjermestad and Tremaine, 2005). However, it is characterised with minimal face-to-face interactions depending on the tasks or the goal of the group. Often in organisations and research communities, virtual teams consist of cross-functional members working on inter-dependent tasks across time, space, organisational boundaries and sharing responsibility for team outcomes. (Malhotra, Majchrzak, and Rosen, 2007).

Virtual teams offer a wide range of benefits for organizations such as access to previously unavailable competences, knowledge know-how and enhance cross-functional interaction and creativity in solving problems. (Zhang, Fjermestad and Tremaine, 2005). However, they also pose significant challenges such as cultural indifferences, geographical time differences, lack of trust, maintenance of high work motivation due to reduced face-to-face interaction, differences in perception of what cannot be seen, and differences in perceived status- a mention of few. According to Lojeski and Reilly (2010), these challenges are caused by improper management of virtual distance. Virtual distance embodies physical distance (factors that are based on real location differences in both space and time); operational distance (loss of psychological connection among team members or gaps that grow due to the many day-to-day problems that arise in the workplace); affinity distance (the emotional disconnection or loss of interpersonal contact among team members in the virtual team). (Lojeski et al, 2010, 142). By these distance dimensions, Lojeski et al (2010) propounded a model known as virtual distance model. They profess that understanding this virtual distance model is a paramount step that leaders can take to be more effective in leading in virtual environment.

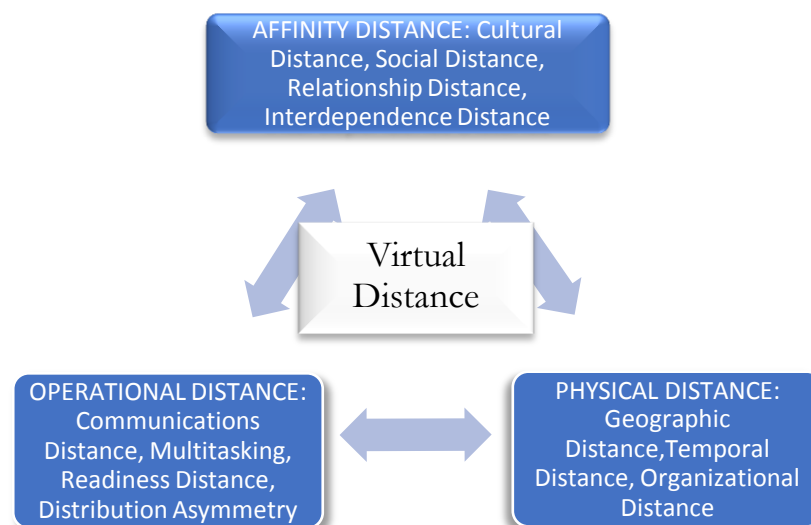


Figure 7. Virtual Distance Model (Adapted from Lojeski et al, 2010, 150)

2.5.2 Types of Virtual Teams

There are different kinds of virtual teams. Depending on the task at hand, most people work for just one team, some in multiple teams, and some at the fringes of other teams to provide expert advice. The level or the number of virtual teams one is working in determines the level of connectivity and interactions.

Knowing the different types of virtual teams enables an organisation to better identify and define the needs for type, frequency and support of collaboration between participating members. Different writers have categorized virtual teams from different dimensions. Among such writers are Edwards and Wilson (2003), Schlenkrich and Upfold (2009), and Lee (2014).

According to Edwards and Wilson (2003, 6), there are three types of virtual teams. They are project teams, service teams, and process teams. Project teams are teams formed for the purpose of accomplishing a project within a specific period of time. Usually in a project team, members come together based on the duration of the project, draw on the skills of members to accomplish a task. Just as collocated project teams, tasks are usually non-routine, and the results are specific and measurable. Virtual project teams are common among research institutions, corporate bodies, and academic institutions. Virtual service teams are also teams formed across boundaries with the intention of providing a service or resolving a service disorder. Information technology (IT), technical and customer support are typical examples. Depending on the task or service on board, team members may work within a finite time or an infinite period of time. However, they may not work together directly on a regular basis as their attention will be focused on service problems and people outside the team itself. (Edwards and Wilson, 2003, 7). The last category that Edwards and Wilson talks about is virtual process teams. According to them, process teams are teams that collaborate over an undefined period to respond to ongoing needs within a certain domain. Members collaborate to achieve a common goal or purpose. However, membership is frequently diffuse and fluid. This means that people will be called upon depending on the challenges the team is facing at any particular time. (Edwards and Wilson, 2003, 7). Often times, process virtual teams are not limited by time function, it is constantly evolving. Teams perform regular and ongoing tasks.

Lee (2014, 2) identifies virtual team categories from two dimensions. The first dimension is according to organizational type. With this comes matrix virtual team, virtual reporting, and extended. Matrix virtual team embodies individuals who perform several functional roles across different teams. Virtual reporting team involves individuals who belongs to

multiple teams but spend part of their time working in the team. Finally, extended teams are virtual teams involving external stakeholders of an organisation who collaborate. The second dimension identified by Lee (2014) is the categorisation according to type. They are network teams, parallel teams, product teams, work teams, service teams, action teams, and offshore teams.

From another perspective, Schlenkrich and Upfold (2009) and other virtual team researchers identify different types of virtual teams by categorising them according to the characteristics that a particular team has. They propose that teams, which possess more virtual characteristics, are positioned higher on a continuum of virtuality than teams with least virtual characteristics. From this, emerged the following types of virtual teams- action team, management team, service team, work team, project development team, parallel team, networked team, community of practice, and executive team. Below is the continuum of virtuality and the associated types of virtual teams.

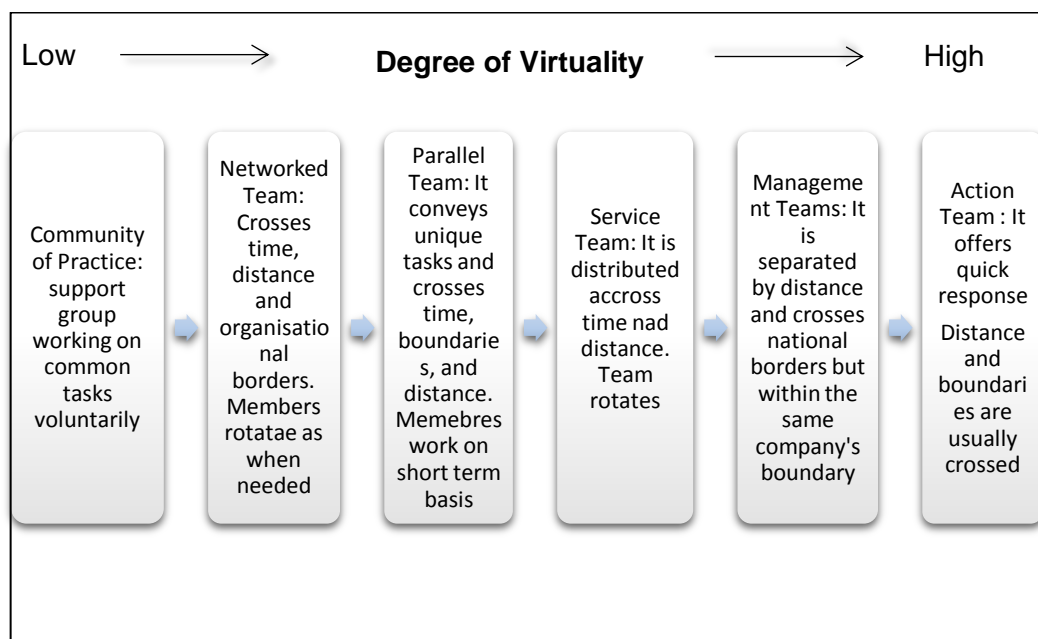


Figure 8. Types of Virtual Teams and Degree of Virtuality. (Adapted from Schlenkrich and Upfold, 2009)

Finally, Cascio and Shurygailo (2003) in their own way, classify virtual teams based on two primary variables. These variables are the number of locations and the number of managers or leaders. By these variables, they generated four categories of virtual teams. They are teleworkers (one location with one manager), matrix teleworkers (one location with multiple managers), remote team (multiple locations with one manager), and matrixed remote teams (multiple locations with multiple managers). At the next page is a representation of their classification.

Table 5. Forms of Virtual Teams (adapted from Cascio and Shurygailo, 2003)

	Managers		
		One	Multiple
Locations	One	Teleworkers	Matrixed Teleworkers
	Multiple	Remote Team	Matrixed Remote Teams

The different forms of virtual teams reviewed in this write-up are being underpinned by different underlying principles. However, they point to the same direction, emphasising on the same thing whilst at the same building upon each other.

2.5.3 Virtual Leadership Model

Virtual leadership also known as e-leadership by researchers is the leadership of teams, projects or working groups that are not collocated. This kind of leadership is of essence in virtual business or project environments where activities are transacted through computer-mediated technologies. Leading in a virtual business or project environment is often associated with leadership challenges such as communication, influencing, decision making, and managing. (Lee, 2014, 5). According to a research conducted by Virtual Distance International (VDI), building trust, innovating in virtual space and developing effective leadership skills are the three major challenges facing virtual leadership in virtual teams. (Lojeski, Dominick, and Reilly, 2007).

Virtual leaders therefore ought to understand the differences that exist between collocated leadership model and virtual leadership model. Leadership in the virtual environment embodies diverse components. It involves the leader himself, component of technology, working with others (people), virtual meetings, language, culture, differential time zones, and generations (Generation X, Y, Z and others, i.e. age demographical differences). (Pul-lan, 2016, 7). (See figure 9). Combining these components forms the virtual leadership model. This model clarifies our understanding of what virtual leadership represents or means. The effectiveness of the virtual leader is affected by these components. These components determine the level of collaboration or distance that exist between the virtual leader and followers, as well as among followers. In the article of Lojeski et al (2007), they list plethora of distances that are prevalent in virtual working environments. These include spatial (geographic location), temporal (differences in time zones), technical, cultural, or-

organisational and social-emotional distances. They are known to shape the perceptions of individuals engaged in collaborative learning and projects. (Lojeski et al, 2007).

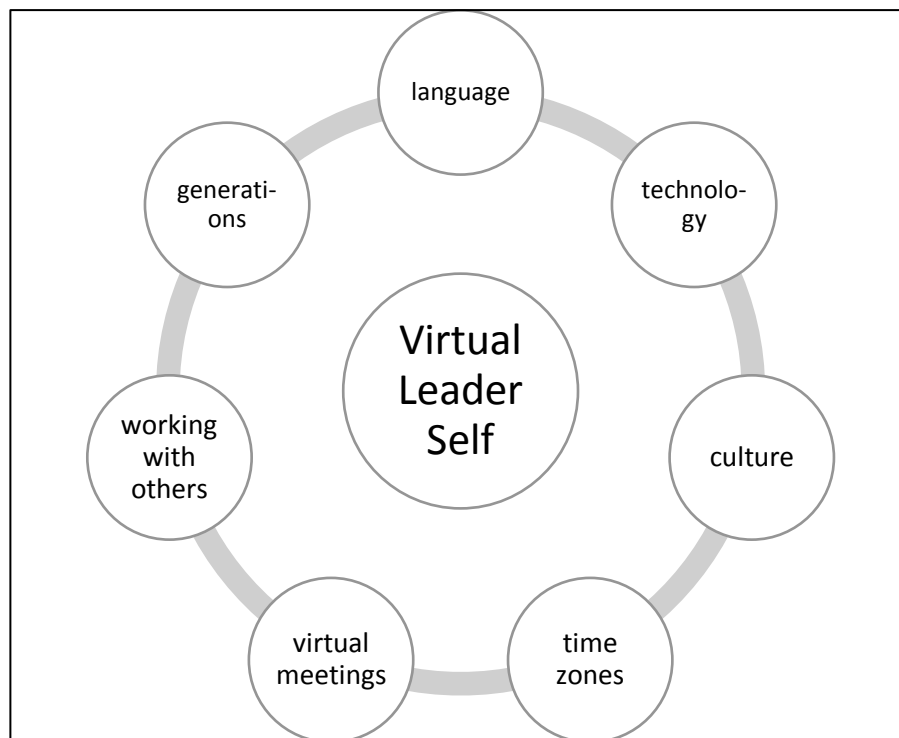


Figure 9. Virtual Leadership Model (Adapted, Pullan, 2016, 7)

2.5.4 Virtual Leadership Styles

The complexity of virtual teams demands effective leadership style. The virtual leader can be efficient when they use the appropriate leadership style depending on the competency of the team. There is not a single form of leadership style and every situation has its own style of virtual leadership. All forms of leadership responsibilities such as communication, intellectual stimulation, empowerment, re-warding, and among others must be adapted to suit the nature of the virtual team and the environment.

Researchers argue that the leadership style has greater effects on the effectiveness of virtual teams as compared to that of face-to-face teams. (Kai-Tang, 2013). Traditional teams mostly rely on face-to-face meetings in problem solving process but virtual teams are characterized by team members located in different geographies and time zones using a computer mediated interface as a channel of interaction and problem solving. In face-to-face or collocated teams, leaders communicate with followers through face-to-face conversation, facial expression, gestures, body language and other symbolic cues but in virtual teams or virtual working environments, leaders communicate and work synchro-

nously or asynchronously through computer-mediated communication systems. (Kai-Tang, 2013; Warkentin, Sayeed, and Hightower, 1997). It has been argued by researchers like Avolio, Kahai, and Dodge (2000) that the nature of leadership is the same, whether in face-to-face or virtual context. The only thing that changes is the mediating technology device for communication and interaction.

Arguably, one can also say that mediating technology device is a key differentiator between virtual teams and face-to-face teams but it is not the only differentiator as proffered by some researchers. Attitudes and behaviours are worth to be considered. In virtual working environment or teams, there are range of attitudes and behaviours that every virtual leader should portray. Attitudes such as respect, openness, integrity, equality and fairness, caring and empathy, confidence, commitment, friendly and approachable, practice reciprocity, patience, courage, comfortable with ambiguity, listening, enthusiasm, curiosity, organized, and calm under stress. (Pullan, 2016, 39-45).

To end it all, outstanding virtual leadership starts with self-values, knowledge about personal identity (tangible and intangible), attitude, skills, behaviour and the mindset to lead and express oneself virtually. (Pullan, 2016, 54). These virtual leadership characteristics are linked to transformational and transactional leadership styles. It has been found that leaders who inspire goals and objectives (motivational skills) for virtual teams portray the transformational style of virtual leadership. In contrast, leadership that provides role and clarify expectations reflects transactional style of virtual leadership. (Lee, 2014, 23).

2.5.5 Leadership Styles and Virtual Team Performance

Virtual team leadership with its associated style is considered highly important to virtual team performance and effectiveness. (Hambley, O'Neil and Kline, 2007; Hertel, Geister, and Konradt, 2005). A number of studies have indicated favorable effects of transformational leadership behaviour on group performance relative to transactional leadership behaviour (Zhang, Fjermestad and Tremaine, 2005) and as a result, it has been regarded by most as the better option. Gamut of researches have propounded that transformational leadership is more effective than transactional leadership. (Hambley, O'Neil and Kline, 2007; Bass, 1997). For example, Hoyt and Blascovich (2003) conducted a study to examine transformational and transactional leadership in both physical and virtual settings, and found that transformational leadership was associated with decreases in quantitative performance but increases in qualitative performance, leadership satisfaction, and group cohesiveness.

Regarding transformational leadership style or behavior as the best option in virtual working teams, is not conclusive because according to the full range leadership model, one leadership style or behaviour cannot be regarded as suitable in all situations. Virtual team research based on situational perspectives of leadership suggests that transformational leadership is effective than transactional leadership in situations involving anonymity. (Ruggieri, Boca and Garro, 2013). It is viewed that transformational leaders are able to establish higher levels of trust, performance and job satisfaction compared to those of transactional leadership within groups associated with anonymity in virtual working environments. (Hoyt and Blascovich, 2003; Ruggieri, 2009; Ruggieri, Boca and Garro, 2013).

Researchers of transformational leadership theory posit that idealized influence, motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration generate shared vision, team commitment, empowered team environment and functional team conflict. (Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, and Spangler, 2004). These positively affects team communication and performance.

In conclusion, whether transformational or transactional leadership style, the success of virtual teams depends on how well the leader demonstrates their leadership style or behaviour, how communication is eased, how roles facilitate coordination, how roles expectations are clarified, how common team culture is built, and how the available infrastructure support information sharing, instills trust, work planning, feedback, information sharing, and decision making.

2.6 Impact of Gender Diversity in Virtual working environment

This part of this write-up brings into the spotlight, the influence that gender diversity has on virtual team performance. It first focuses on clarifying the meaning of diversity, and then proceeds on gender impacts on virtual team leadership.

2.6.1 Meaning of Diversity

The late Roosevelt Thomas, Jr. a former president of the American Institute for Managing Diversity tout diversity as characteristics such as age, personal and corporate background, education function, personality, sexual preference, geographic origin, status, tenure with organization, and management or non-management. (Von Bergen, Soper and Forster, 2002). Researchers like Loden and Rosener (1991) categorises these qualities into primary and secondary characteristics. Primary dimensions are things that we cannot change. They include age, race, ethnicity, gender, physical qualities and sexual orienta-

tion. In contrast, secondary characteristics are the traits one can modify. They include income, education, religious beliefs, experience, geographic location, parental status and marital status.

Diversity spells out the differences that exist among individuals within an organization. It is about the individual not a group, as well as how one sees the other. The differences encapsulate and encompasses race, cognitive style, gender, ethnic group, age, personality, tenure, responsibilities, skills-set, education, background and more. Handling or managing diversity among work groups and teams in a virtual environment is a delicate issue because it has gotten its bright sides and its corresponding dark sides.

On the bright sides, diversity among work groups in a virtual environment creates variety in terms of skill development and team work. This as a result stirs up creativity and innovativeness in problem solving activities. It also provides a broader base of successful project outcomes. Furthermore, diversity among work groups engenders community engagement within the virtual working environment. It creates equal opportunities to every group member or worker. In such an environment, common issues like racial discrimination, hatred, abuse, stonewalling etc. are relegated to the background. However, these challenges could turn their ugly heads if diversity is not properly managed. Contrastingly, issues such as individuals' unconscious biases, differential cultures and languages affect individuals' rapport with fellow group or team members. Sometimes individual perception might cause one to feel inferior or superior over others, resulting into hatred; internal wrangling; low morale, confusion, and competition among group members.

2.6.2 Gender Diverse Virtual Teams

Diverse virtual teams are nonhomogeneous teams. A team of this calibre consists of different people associated with diverse characteristics such as gender, age, race, status, and the like. Inferring from this explanation, one can therefore define a gender diverse team as a team consisting of both males and females, i.e. mixed gender team. In contrast, non-gender diverse teams are teams that are either dominated by females or males. According to researchers, nonhomogeneous teams such as gender diverse teams are smarter and they are able to alter the way that entire teams digest information needed to make decisions. (Rock and Grant, 2016).

2.6.3 Gender Diverse Virtual Team and Performance

Gender diversity is the difference between male and female. Based on empirical evidence it has been proven that mixed gender teams are more hardworking and women in such teams perform better by building meaningful rapport and creating successful work processes. (Hoogendroom, Oosterbeek, and van Praag, 2013).

Diversity is associated with higher team performance. Teams characterized with diversity in terms of skills, expertise, ethnicity, race, and other related factors generate positive outcomes. Paradoxically such teams can also be characterised with challenges such as increased conflict, communication difficulties, free riding, and among others. It has been proven that gender is one of the variables associated with team performance and cohesion. (Boiney, 2001). According to a survey of 245 members of actual work groups completing projects for a global information technology professional services firm employing over 6,000 people and specializing in the delivery of customized software and systems integration in a virtual setting, it was found that gender diversity strongly has positive influence on team performance. (Boiney, 2001). One can conclude that teams with an equal gender mix perform better than male-or female dominated teams (Hoogendroom et al, 2013). Gender diversity can therefore perform a mediating role between leadership style and virtual team performance. This means that it can be a cause of team performance if either transformational or transactional leadership style is adopted. Though it might be true in a particular context but it cannot be generalised in all settings. Whilst gender diversity has influence on team performance in a particular context or serve as a mediating variable between leadership style and virtual team performance, in another context it might be the opposite. Kankanhalli, Tan and Wei (2007) confirm that people like to be associated with others in the same social category; therefore, gender diversity can potentially create weaknesses and result in conflict among team members, which in the end will have adverse effects on performance. Others also argue that it is diversity of leadership styles that improves performance, not merely diversity of gender.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

Strong theoretical evidence has been elaborated this chapter that gender diversity and leadership styles and related behaviours have influence on virtual team performance. With this underlying evidence, the researcher has generated the following structure to support the theory of this research study. (See figure 10 at the next page).

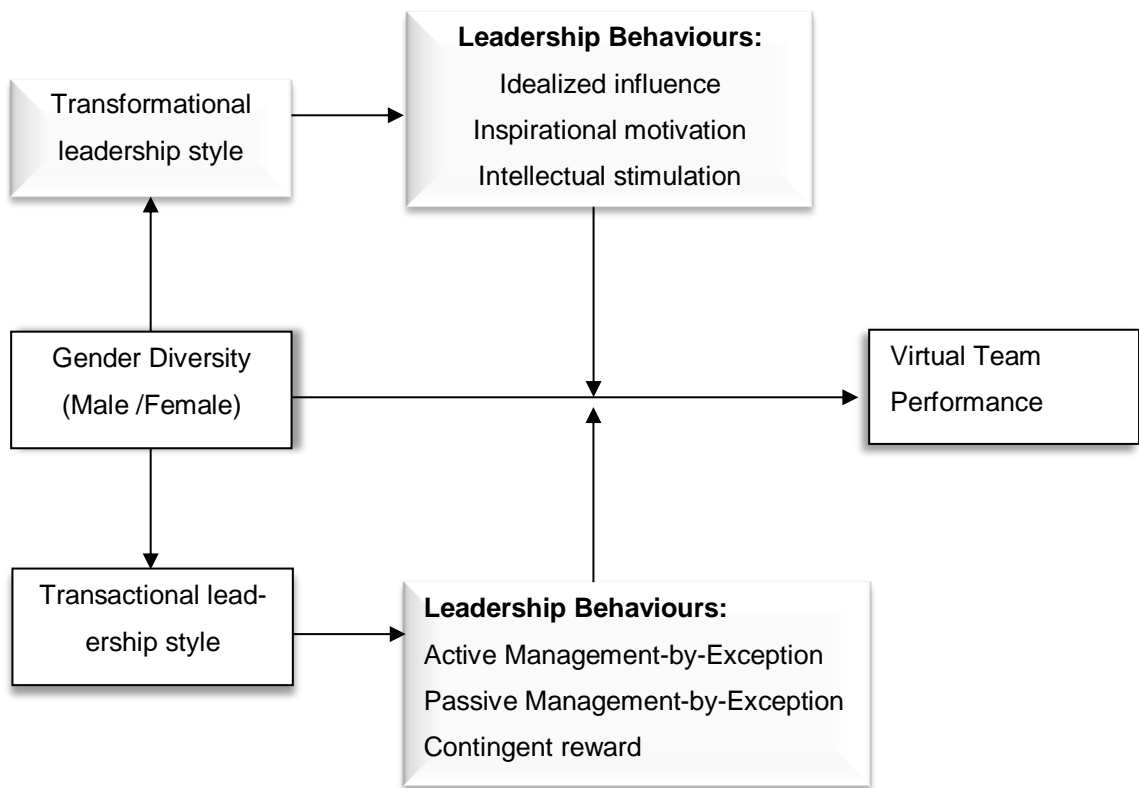


Figure 10. Theoretical framework of the study

3 Methodology and methods

Methodology and methods part of this study is the foundation on which the findings on the study are grounded. It concentrates on the research processes and empirical aspects of the study. It brings into fore the research philosophy, strategy, approach, methods, data collection and analyses. These themes are exhibited in the research onion below. The following discussion captures the afore-mentioned themes.



Figure 11. Research Onion (Adapted from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016)

3.1 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016, 124), research philosophy involves the development of knowledge in a specific field. It is based on three main research assumptions. These are ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The research philosophy is the starting point of the intended research. From these assumptions, this research the research philosophy is a constructionist approach which also can be known as interpretivist. Based on the afore-mentioned philosophical standpoint, the researcher has chosen the research methods and designs for the study.

Ontology and Epistemology

Ontological assumption is concerned with the nature of reality (Saunders, et. al., 2016, 127). It discusses how researchers see or think about the way the world works. An ontological position can be classified into two ways of conceptualizing reality. They are objectivist position and constructionist position. An objectivist position implies that social entity

is considered to be independent and separate from social actors (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p 23). On the other hand, constructionist asserts that social entity arises from the perceptions and actions of actors (Bryman and Bell, 2007, 22).

Epistemology is concerned with what should be considered as acceptable knowledge in a field of study and how the knowledge can be communicated (Saunders, et. al, 2016, 127). Epistemology can be divided into two aspects; positivism and interpretivism. Positivism takes a scientific view in studying social reality, objective and relies on data analyses and quantification. On the other hand, interpretivism takes social science view in studying social reality, and is subjective. (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.16-17).

From the ontological and epistemological perspectives discussed so far, this research falls within the constructionist/interpretivist context because it attempts to investigate for leadership styles from the perspectives of social actors (university lecturers). According to Mackenzie and Knipe (2006), in studies as like this, qualitative methods predominate. However, in this study the researcher intends to use a combination of qualitative and quantitative method, i.e. mixed method.

3.2 Research Strategy

The research strategy that has been adopted is survey. According to Saunders et al (2016, 181), research strategy is often used to answer what, where, how much, and how many questions. Since the main research question is centred on how, the researcher had no option than to choose a survey research strategy. Another reason in using a survey strategy is to have a holistic real life view about the phenomenon that is being studied. This method will enable the researcher or any other third-party to generalise the outcome to all other organisations or institutions of the same type.

3.3 Research Approach

There are basically two alternative ways to approach research, namely deductive and inductive. Deductive aims to test existing theory whereas inductive approach aims to build and develop theory from observation and findings of research (Saunders, Lewis and Thronhill, 2016, 145). Actually, neither of the two suits the research theme because the research does not focus on testing hypothesis or developing new theories. The researcher will therefore opt for the abductive form of research approach (a combination of deductive and inductive). With this method, the researcher intends to explore the phenomenon

under study, identify themes and patterns which in the tail end can be used to modify or add to existing theory.

3.4 Research Method

In every research, it is mandatory for the researcher to make a methodological choice between a quantitative, qualitative or multiple methods design. In the same way, the researcher needs to choose one or more research strategies and specify a time frame for the study. (Saunders et al, 2016, 57). Research strategies ranges from experiment, case study, survey, grounded theory, and amongst others, just a mention of few. Time frame for a research can either be longitudinal or cross-sectional. According to Saunders et al (2016, 200), longitudinal time frame in research design establishes that the research is conducted in series extending over a period of time. In contrast, cross-sectional time-frame study a particular phenomenon a specific time. Usually, studies that are cross-sectional in nature adopt a survey research strategy process. (Saunders et al, 2016).

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative (mixed approach) focusing on a descriptive survey research strategy, associated with a cross-sectional time frame. With this method, lecturers in both institutions (Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, and Estonia Business School) have been sampled for the study. Simple random sampling technique was used in the process. In this sampling technique, each unit in the universe had equal chance of being selected for the study. This means that the researcher had no criteria in selecting the respondents from the research population. The time frame or horizon (cross-sectional) is based on interviews and questionnaires over a two-week period.

3.5 Data Collection

Collection of data in research is derived from two sources. These are primary and secondary sources. Primary data source provides raw data or original data. Examples are interviews, questionnaire, opinion polls, observations, case studies, and the like. With respect to this study, face-to-face interview method of data collection, and electronic questionnaire were used. The interview was used to gather expert opinion on gender diversity and how it impacts virtual team performance. Data on leadership styles and behavior were collected by the usage of an adapted version of Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) and self-designed questions created by the researcher.

Conversely, secondary data source refers to existing data. Examples are articles, journals, scientific publications, statistical collections, and among others. The secondary data

source of data collection for this study is from leadership journals, gender diversity researched articles, and other scientific publications.

Besides the foregoing discussion on data collection, this section introduces the processes that were involved in procuring responses for the questionnaires and the interview

3.5.1 On-line Questionnaire Process

On the 8th of January, 2017 the questionnaires were sent electronically by means of webropol software to the mails of teaching staff in both institutions (Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, and Estonia Business School). It took two weeks for the researcher to collate the responses. Simple random sampling method was used to select the sample. Before the actual data collection, a pilot study was conducted to refine scale items and identify ambiguous statement and terminologies. The reasons for performing the pilot study is to assess the feasibility of the steps that will take place as part of the main study, to assess the time and budget problems that can occur during the main study, and to identify potential human and data optimization problems. (Van Teijlingen, Rennie, Hundley and Graham, 2001). In conducting the pilot study, 10 respondents were contacted. According to discussions and studies on pilot studies, the sample size recommendation for survey research is 10 to 30 respondents. (Hill, 1998; Isaac and Michael, 1995). Selecting 10 respondents for this study is therefore in line with the recommendation made by researchers. The feedback obtained from the pilot study enabled the researcher to modify the questionnaire. In effect the questions became more understandable and accurate without any semantic disturbances and errors. It was prepared in English language. The reason was to have across-board participation since the common language between the two institutions was English.

3.5.2 Interview Process

Before the actual interview began, the researcher contacted one expert in the field of gender diversity and virtual team leadership. The interview was arranged and conducted on the 30th of January 2017. It took approximately an hour. At the beginning of the interview, the researcher made the effort to build a trust and congenial atmosphere throughout the interview, giving the interviewee the assurance that there is no wrong or right answer. Following a structured interview guide, he gave the interviewee the free space to elaborate on his points without any form of interruption.

3.6 Data Analyses

The data collected is analyzed using a mixed approach (quantitatively using SPSS analyses software, and qualitatively using textual analyses). Quantitative research analysis is known to quantify (usage of numeric and statistical analyses), and examine relationship between variables. (Charles, 1995). On the other hand, qualitative analysis uses patterns or common themes that emerge around specific items in the data to analyse and present data (narrative style).

This section provides a thorough analyses of the collected data during the survey. It is divided into two phases. The first phase is meant for quantitative analyses. Thus, analysing the data collected through the online questionnaire process from a quantitative perspective. It first presents descriptive analyses of the respondents, and then proceeds to the main responses derived from the questionnaire. Data have been analysed descriptively using frequencies and cross-tabulation. Numerically, the values that are used are a combination of absolute values and percentages. Furthermore, it uses supplementary figures and tables to synthesise the results that were achieved in the data collection processes

The second phase is meant for qualitative analyses. By this approach, a thematic presentation of the opinions obtained from the face-to-face interview process was made. Opinions obtained from the interview were transcribed to avoid losing part of the information. The researcher adopted an inductive method of thematic analyses to extract themes from the obtained information. As a precautionary measure, he made sure that the themes were linked to the information without trying to fit the according to his analytical preconceptions or interest.

3.6.1 Quantitative Analyses

This section is a presentation of quantitative analyses of this study. It introduces the reader to the sample description, and empirical answers to the research questions.

Description of Survey Sample

The analyses reported herein are based on a sample of 38 respondents from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences, and Estonia Business School. They encapsulate Finnish Estonian and other nationals. The characteristics of the sample are based on the following variables: gender (nominal, 2 categories- Male and Female), nationality (nominal, 3 cate-

gories- Finnish, Estonian, and others), institution (nominal, 2 categories- Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences and Estonia Business School), and forms of virtual teams (nominal, 6 categories- project teams, service teams, process teams, network teams, parallel teams, and others. The next segment provides empirical analyses of these variables.

Gender:

Table 6 below is an exhibit of a frequency distribution of male and female who participated in the survey. Observing from the table, it can be seen that among the sample of 38 respondents, 18(47,4%) were males whilst 20(52,6%) were females. This shows a slight balance of gender equity, although the females were more than the men by a margin difference of 2.

Table 6. Frequency distribution of gender

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	18	47,4	47,4	47,4
Female	20	52,6	52,6	100,0
Total	38	100,0	100,0	

Nationality:

Table 7 demonstrates the origin of the respondents in the survey. Among the 38 respondents, 29(76,3%) were Finns, 6(15,8%) Estonian, and 3(7,9%) other nationalities. Based on figures, one can conclude that more Finns participated in the survey as compared with other nationals.

Table 7. Frequency distribution of the origin of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Finnish	29	76,3	76,3	76,3
Estonian	6	15,8	15,8	92,1
Others	3	7,9	7,9	100,0
Total	38	100,0	100,0	

Institution:

With this background question, the researcher wanted to know the university that respondents originated from.

Table 8 below is a frequency distribution of the institutions by which respondents are affiliated to. Having a glimpse from the table, it can be seen that with a total of 38 respondents, 28(73,7%) are affiliated to Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. In contrast, 10(26, 3%) were affiliated to Estonia Business School. These results proved an unbalance level of participation between the two institutions. Respondents in Haaga-Helia University of Sciences were more than those from Estonia Business School. In situation of imbalances in response rate as in this case, it can lead to poor coverage bias.

Table 8. Frequency distribution of Institutions that respondents are affiliated to

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences	28	73,7	73,7	73,7
Estonia Business School	10	26,3	26,3	100,0
Total	38	100,0	100,0	

Forms of Virtual Teams

The above item was touted as Question 4 in the questionnaire. With this question, the researcher wanted to know the forms of virtual teams that respondents have participated in before.

Figure 12 in the next page is a pie chart showing the forms of virtual teams that respondents have participate in their academic careers. It was found that 32(84,2%) have participated in project teams, 3(7,9%) process teams, 2(5,3%) network teams, and 1(2,6%) others.

From the results, one can conclude that more of the academic virtual teams are project oriented. Significantly, the participant who answered 'others' posited that he has work in all project teams, process teams, network teams, as well as parallel teams.

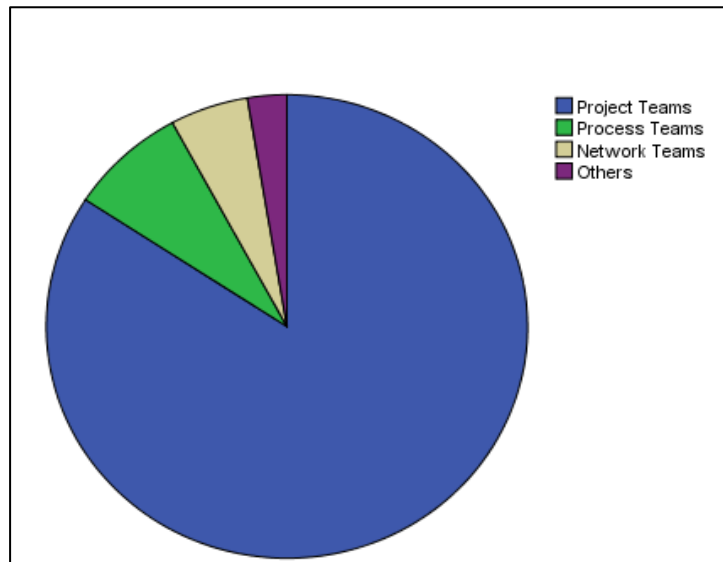


Figure 12. Forms of Virtual Teams Respondents have participated in before

Common Leadership styles and behaviours

This section reports the results obtained from the sample about their leadership behaviours in virtual teams. These behaviours are classified under transformational leadership style, and transactional leadership style. Under these leadership behaviours, respondents were given the option to rate their virtual leadership behaviours on a Likert scale of 'Strongly Agree, Agree, Neither Agree nor Disagree, and Disagree'.

Transformational Leadership Style

The leadership behaviours exhibited under transformational leadership are idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration. Details of these are explained in the subsequent lines.

Idealised influence:

Respondents were given the option to rate their virtual leadership behaviours in relation to the following statements.

- Question 5: I make others feel good to be around me.
- Statement 6: I make others have complete faith in me.

- Question 7: I make others proud to be associated with me

With respect to Question 5, it was found that more of the respondents have the ability to influence and make others feel good to be around them. According to the results as it can be deciphered from figure 7, 13% of the respondents strongly agree that they make others feel good to be around them virtually, 79% Agree, 3% Neither Agree nor Disagree. Significantly none of the respondents disagreed but 5% attested they totally disagreed to the statements. This means that they are not able to make others feel good around them in virtual environments.

Responding to Question 6, it was seen that majority of the respondents agreed that they make others have complete faith in me. From the results in figure 7, 82% agreed, 18% strongly agreed, none either disagree or strongly disagreed. (See figure 13). This proves that respondents (males and females) have the ability to influence people to have faith in them when leading or working in a virtual environment.

Finally, with regards to Question 7, none strongly agreed that they make others proud to be associated with them virtually. However, 74% agreed whilst 26% tended to be neutral (Neither agree nor disagree). Significantly, none either disagree or totally disagreed. (See figure 13). This proves that majority of the respondents; males as well as females have the influence to spur people to be proud to be associated with them in virtual working environments.

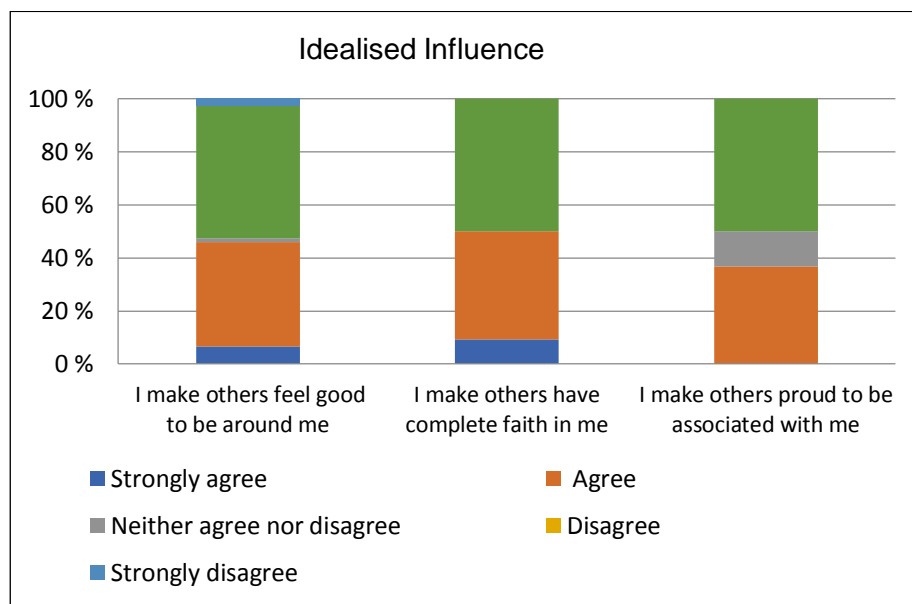


Figure 13. Idealised influence behavior of respondents

Inspirational Motivation:

The leader's ability to inspire team members was tested by asking respondents to rate their behaviours with respect to the subsequent statements (Question 9, 10, 11).

- Question 9: I express with a few simple words what we could and should do.
- Question 10: I provide appealing images about what we can do.
- Question 11: I help others find meaning in their work.

In response to Question 9, it was found from the analyses that 66% of the respondents agreed that they express with few simple words what they could and should do in a virtual learning environment. In the same line, 32% of the respondents strongly agreed. When we combine these two observations, it could be said that majority of the respondents express with simple what they could and should do in leading or working with others in a virtual environment. Contrastingly, none of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree. To crown it all, 3% of the respondents were neutral, they neither agreed nor disagreed.

With reference to Question 10, one can see from figure 8 that majority of the respondents (68%) agreed they provide appealing images about what of what team members can do. 32% strongly agreed and 21% neither agreed nor disagreed. In contrast, none disagreed nor totally disagreed.

With regards to Question 11, 66% agreed that they help others find meaning in their work. 5% disagreed and none (0%) totally disagreed. From a neutral perspective, 24% responded they neither agree nor disagree. (See figure 14). Conclusively, one can therefore profess that more of the respondents motivate team members when leading or working in a virtual environment.

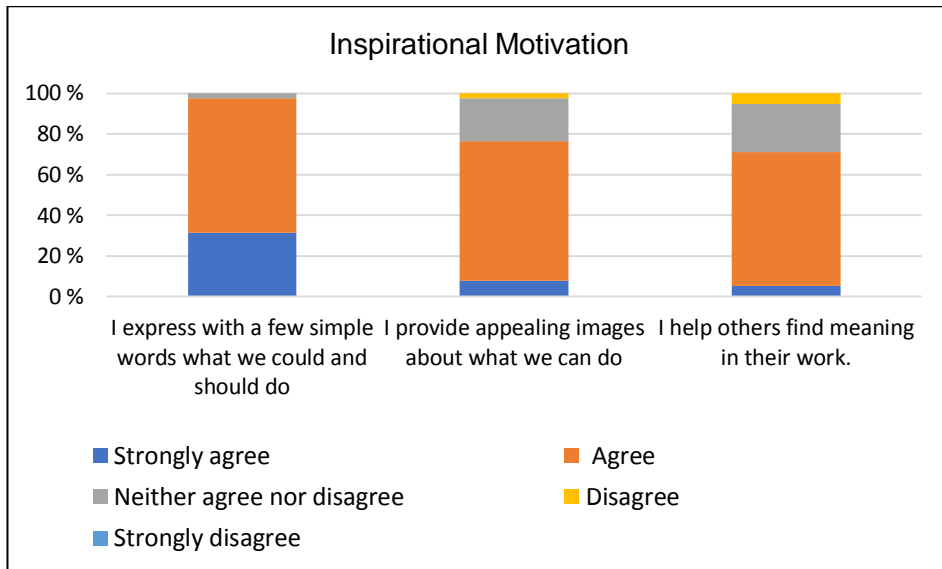


Figure 14. Inspirational Motivational behaviours of respondents

Intellectual Stimulation:

In assessing the intellectual behaviours of respondents, they were given the following statements to respond to. These statements embody Questions 13, 14 and 15.

- Question 13: I enable others to think about old problems in new ways.
- Question 14: I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things.
- Question 15: I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before.

With respect to Question 13, majority of the respondents confirmed they enable others to think about old problems in new ways. Among these respondents, 74% agreed and 18% strongly agreed. Conversely, none (0%) disagreed or strongly agreed. The foregoing analyses can be inferred from figure 9.

Moving on to Question 14, 82% agreed, 16% strongly agreed, whilst 3% neither agreed nor disagreed. Significantly, none (0%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. (See figure 15). From critical observation, one profess that majority of the respondents provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things in a virtual working environment.

In response to Question 15, almost all the respondents get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before when leading or working in a virtual environment. Ac-

According to figure 9, 78% agree, 76% strongly agree, 5% neither disagree nor strongly disagree. In contrast, none (0%) either disagree or strongly agree.

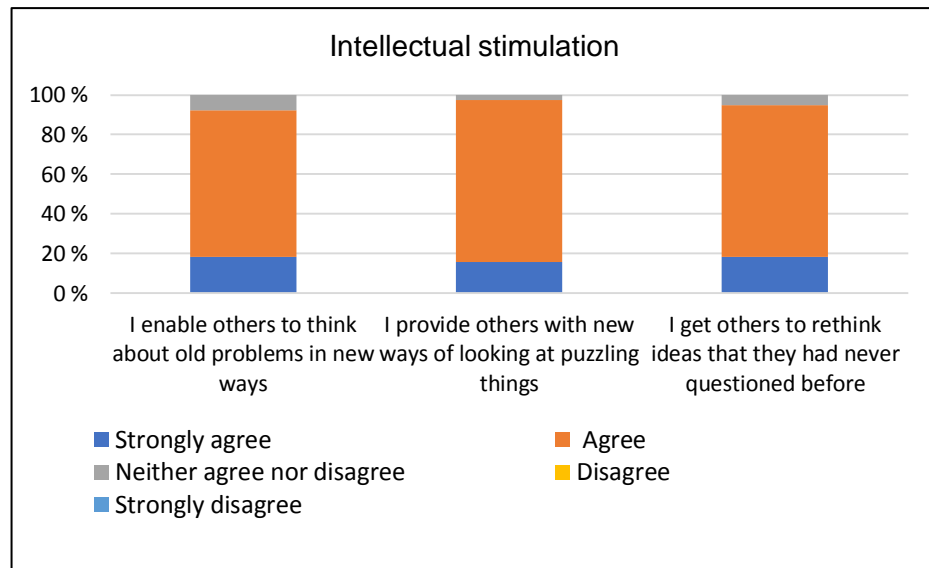


Figure 15. Intellectual stimulation behaviours of respondents

Individualised Consideration:

The individualised consideration behaviour of respondents were tested by allowing them respond to three statements. These statements are Question 17, 18, and 19.

- Question 17: I help others develop themselves
- Question 18: I let others know how I think they are doing
- Question 19: I give personal attention to others who seem rejected.

With regards to Question 17's statement, 18% strongly agree, 76% agree, 5% neither agree nor disagree, 0% disagree, and 0% strongly disagree. On the whole, almost all the respondents provide personal attention to others who seem sidelined in a virtual project or task. (See figure 16).

When one considers the statement in Question 18, there is clear evidence that majority of the respondents let team members know how they think they are doing. Observing from figure 20, 74% agree, 5% strongly agree, 21% neither agree nor disagree, 0% disagree, and 0% strongly disagree. (See figure 16).

Finally, with respect to the statement in Question 19, more of the respondents (68%) agreed they provide personal attention to others who seem sidelined in virtual team or task. Inferring from figure 9, 5% strongly agree, 21% neither agree nor disagree. However, none (0%) disagree or totally disagree. (See figure 16).

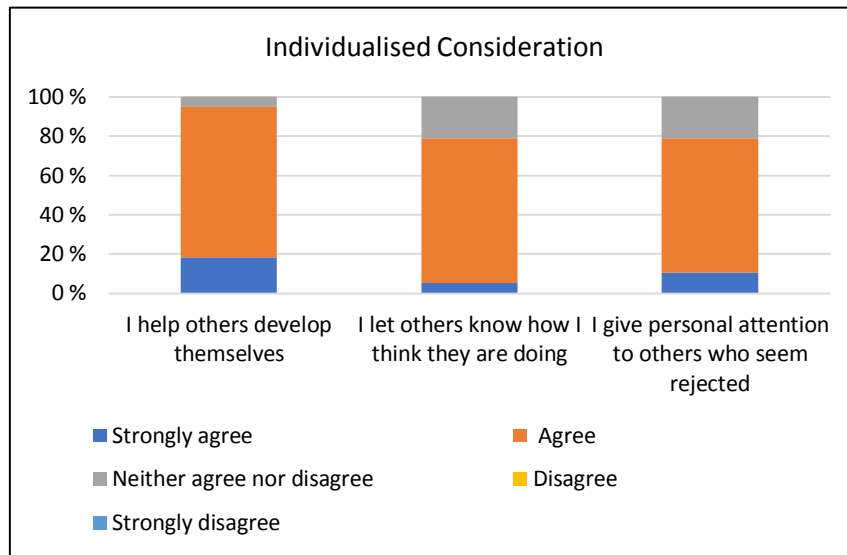


Figure 16. Individualised consideration behaviour of respondents

Transactional Leadership Style

The leadership behaviours exhibited under transformational leadership are contingent reward, and management-by-exception. The foregoing discussion brings to bear empirical analyses of the outcomes that fall under this kind of leadership.

Contingent Reward:

The contingent reward behaviour of respondents was tested by allowing them respond to three statements. These statements are Question 21, 22, and 23.

- Question 21: I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work.
- Question 22: I provide recognition when others reach their goals.
- Question 23: I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish.

Inferring from the results obtained from the respondents in relation to the statement in Question 21, more than half of the respondents (71%) agreed they tell others what to do if

they want to be rewarded for their work. 26% were neutral, 3% disagreed, and none (0%) strongly disagreed. (See figure 17).

According to the results obtained from the respondents in relation to the statement in Question 21, none (0%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. However, 53% agreed, 37% strongly disagreed, and 11% were neutral. Comparatively, it could be seen that most of them agreed that they provide recognition when others reach their goals. (See figure 17).

Finally, according to the results derived from the respondents with respect to the statement in Question 23, 68% agreed and 37% strongly agreed. However, 26% were neutral (neither agree nor disagree) whereas none (0%) either disagree or strongly disagreed. (See figure 17).

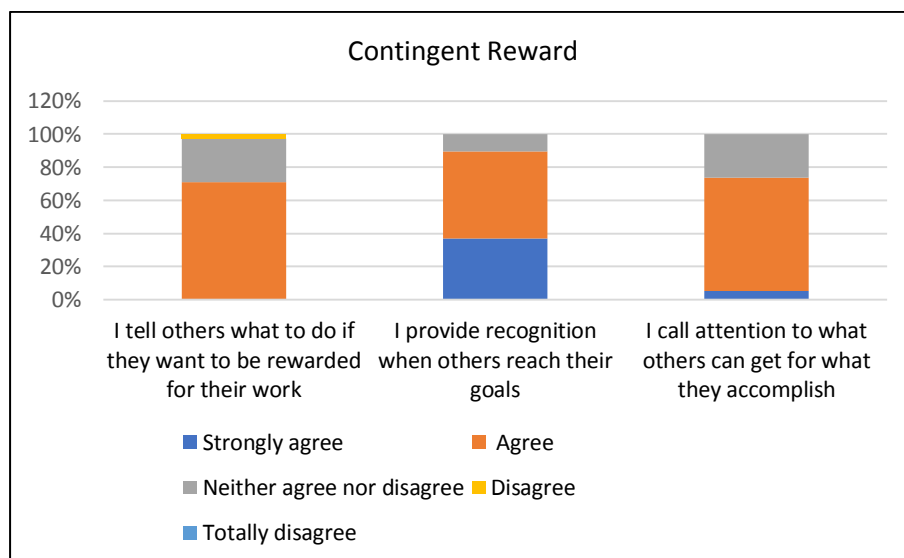


Figure 17. Contingent reward behaviours of respondents

Management-by- Exception:

Management-by- Exception behaviours of respondents were tested by allowing the respondents to respond to three statements. These statements are Question 25, 26, and 27.

- Question 25: I am satisfied when others meet agreed upon standards.
- Question 26: As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything.
- Question 27: I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work.

From figure 11, 5% of the respondents were neutral, whereas 55% agreed and 39% strongly agreed they are satisfied when others meet agreed standards and objectives. In contrast, none (0%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed to the afore-mentioned statement.

With respect to Question 26, neither of the responses were above 50%. One can therefore proffer that the individual responses were below average. In totality, 34% agreed and 5% strongly agreed they do not alter anything as long as things are working. Significantly, 39% disagreed to the statement. 29% were neutral but none (0%) strongly disagreed.

In response to Question 27, majority (71%) of the respondents agreed to the statement that they inform others the standards they have to know to execute their work 13% strongly agreed, 16% were neutral, and none (0%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed. (See figure 18).

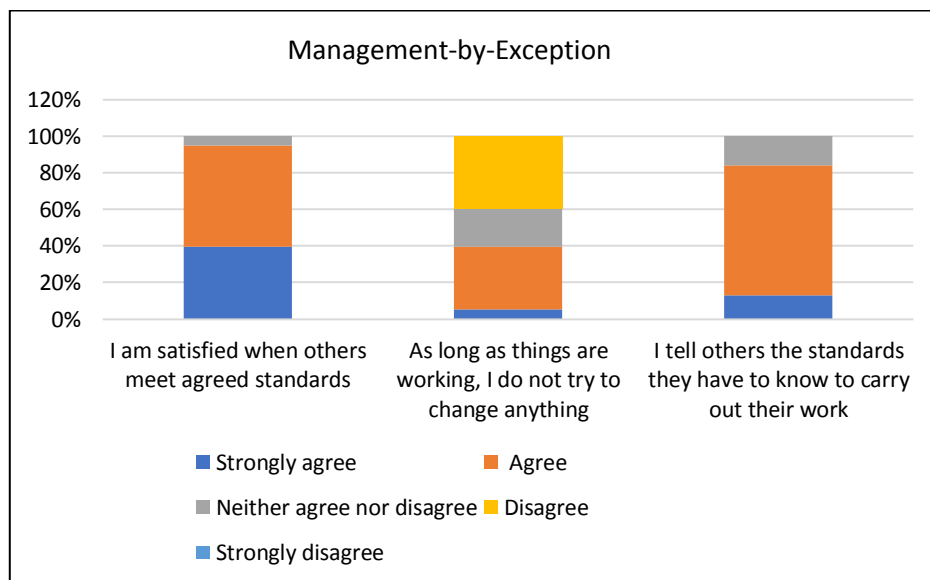


Figure 18. Management-by-exception behaviours of respondents

Differences in Leadership Styles and Behaviours

This segment intends to bring to the fore the differences in leadership behaviours between male and female respondents. Both transformational and transactional leadership behaviours are analysed in this section.

Transformational Leadership and Transactional Leadership

Detailed analyses on the differences between gender (male and female) in relation to transformational leadership behaviours (i.e. idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration), and transactional leadership behaviours (i.e. contingent reward, and management-by-exception) are presented in the subsequent paragraphs.

At this section, the researcher decided to find out the gender differences that exist in relation to these behaviours using cross tabulation analyses. In order to get a clear distinction between the responses, the responses' variables have been recoded where strongly disagree and disagree have merged together to become 'Agree'; Neither agree nor disagree (neutral) have been maintained; and strongly agree and agree have been merged to become 'Agree'.

Figures 19 to 36 in the subsequent pages are graphical representation of the responses obtained from a cross tabulation analyses. (See appendix 3 for a cross tabulated version of the graphs).

Observing from these figures in the next page, it can be seen that there are no clear differences in leadership behaviours between males and females. The individual differences are minimal. They make us to understand that both genders agree that they exude both transformational leadership behaviours (i.e. idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, and transactional leadership behaviours (i.e. contingent reward, and management-by-exception).

Idealised influence behaviours

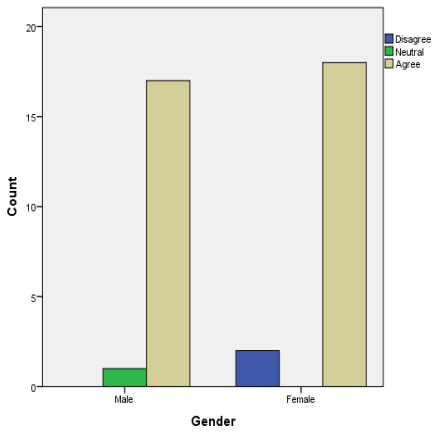


Figure 19. Responses to the statement- “I try to make others feel good around me”

Inspirational motivation behaviours

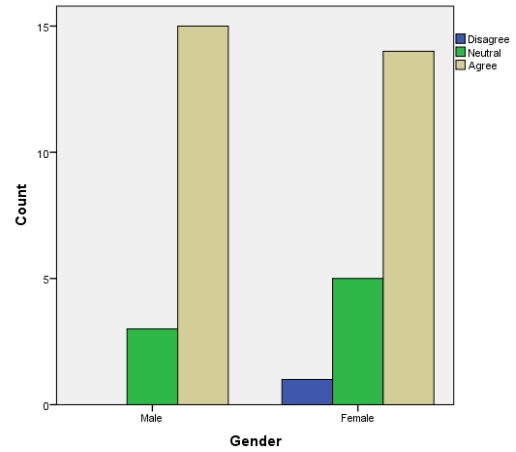


Figure 22. Responses to the statement- “I express with few simple words what we could/ should do”

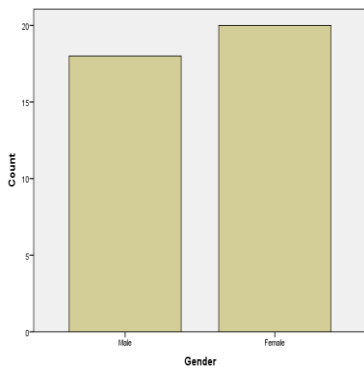


Figure 20. Responses to the statement- “I make others have complete faith in me”

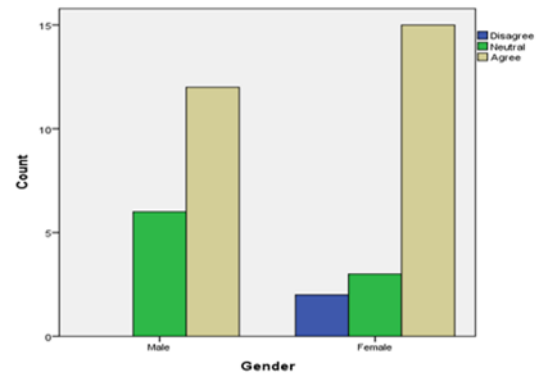


Figure 23. Responses to the statement- “I provide suggestions about what we can do”

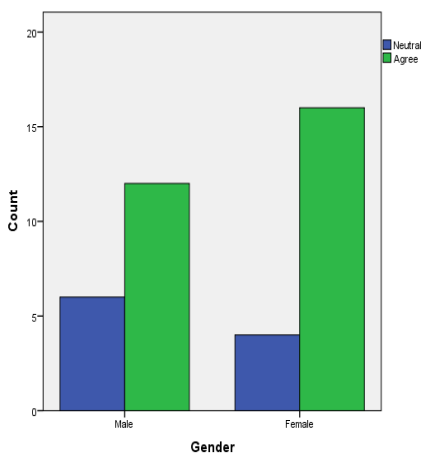


Figure 21. Responses to the statement- “I make others proud to be associated with me”

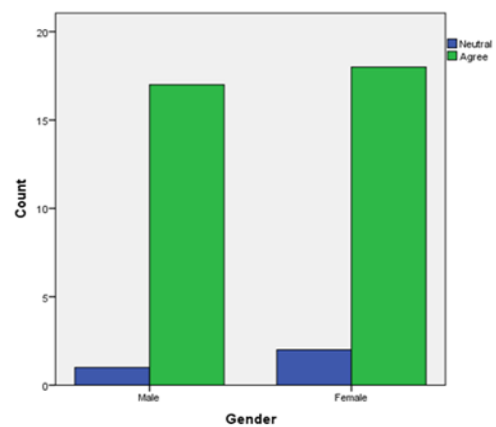


Figure 24. Responses to the statement- “I help find meaning in their work”

Intellectual stimulation

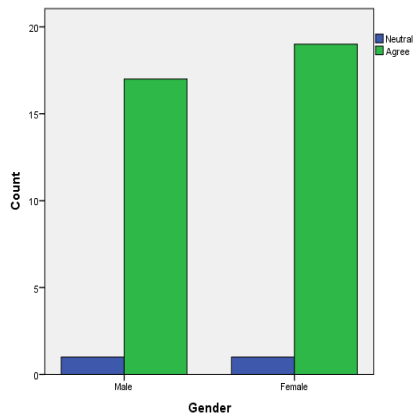


Figure 25. Responses to the statement- “I enable others to think about old problems in new ways”

Individualised consideration

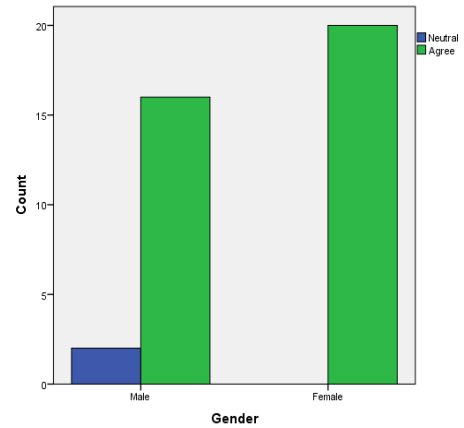


Figure 28. Responses to the statement- “I help others develop themselves”

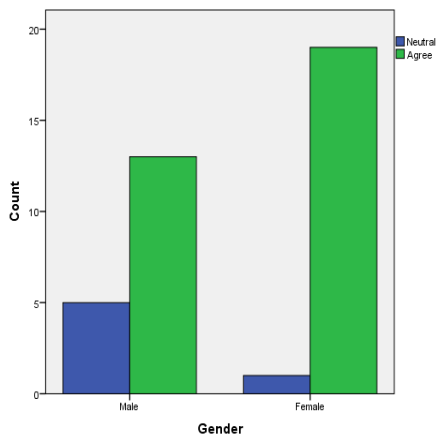


Figure 26. Responses to the statement- “I provide with others new ways of looking at puzzling things”

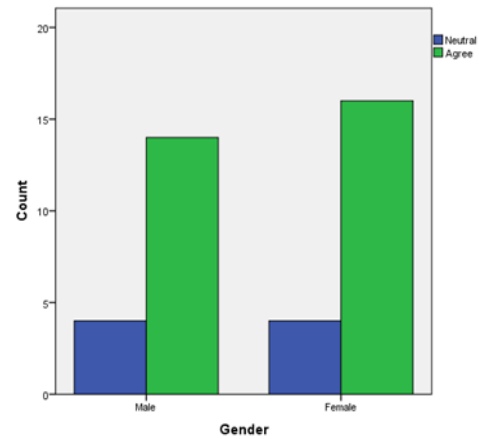


Figure 29. Responses to the statement- “I let others know how I think they are doing”

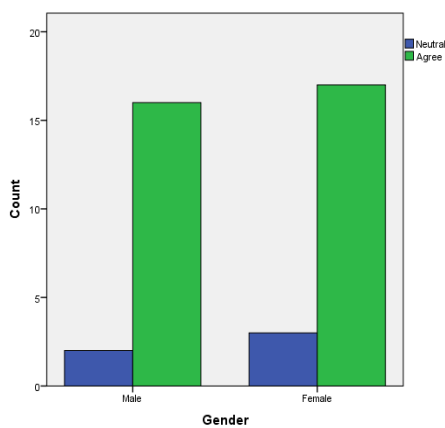


Figure 27. Responses to the statement- “I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before”

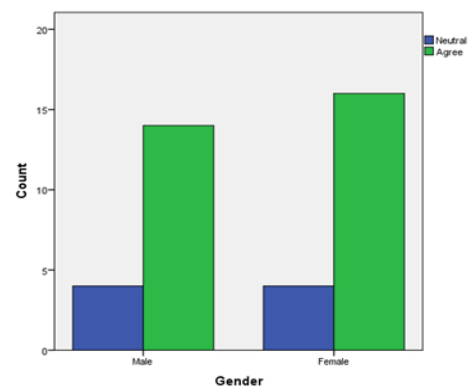


Figure 30. Responses to the statement- “I give personal attention to others who seem rejected”

Contingent reward

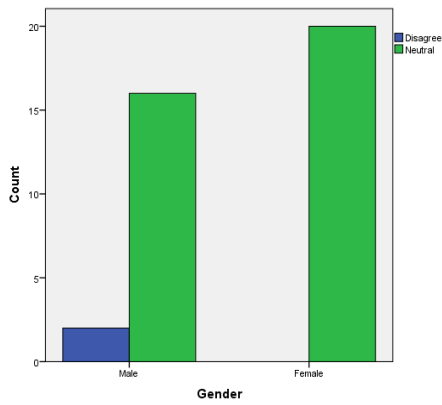


Figure 31. Responses to the statement- “I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work”

Management by exception

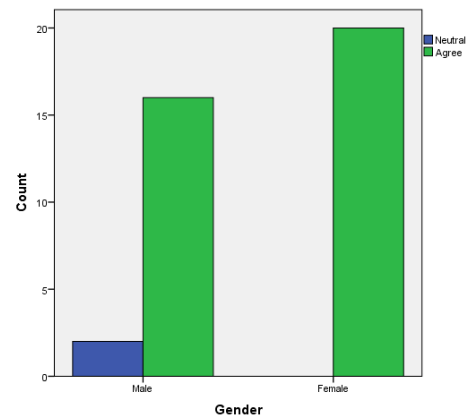


Figure 34. Responses to the statement- “I am satisfied when others meet agreed upon standards”

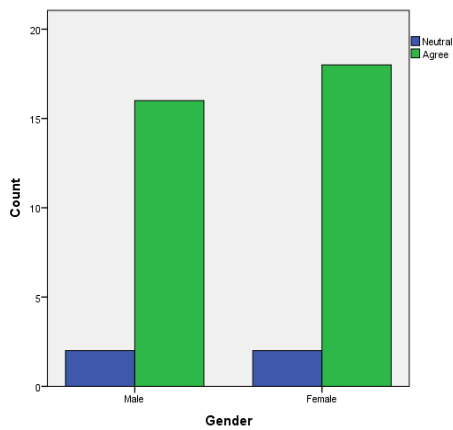


Figure 32. Responses to the statement- “I provide recognition when others reach their goals”

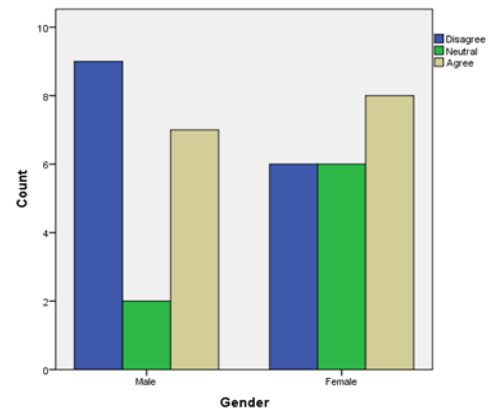


Figure 35. Responses to the statement- “As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything”

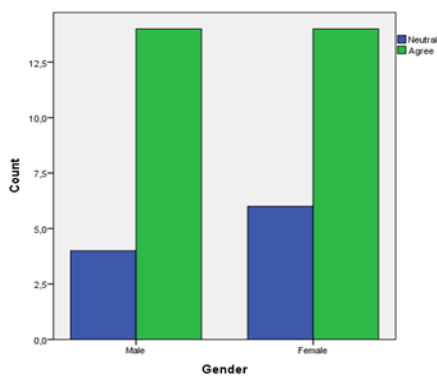


Figure 33. Responses to the statement- “I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish”

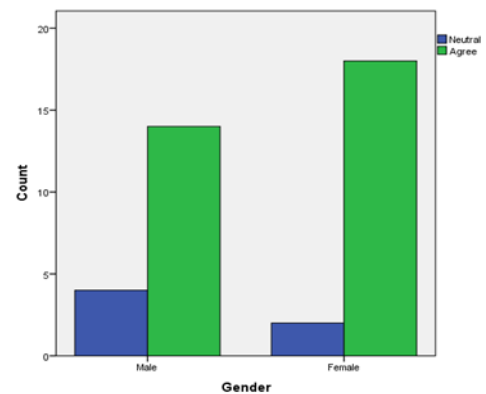


Figure 36. Responses to the statement- “I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work”

The influence of leadership behaviour on virtual teams

Among all the leadership behaviours tested in this research, it was found that they all have positive influence on virtual teams.

Starting from the behavior of idealised influence, it was found that out of a grand total 38, 25 (65,8%) agreed, and 12 (31,6%) strongly agreed that the idealised behaviours tested have positive influence on virtual team performance. (See analyses at appendix 2a).

The next behavior is inspirational motivation. Inferring from appendix 3, 31 (81,6%) agreed, and 6 (15,8%) strongly agreed that the inspirational behaviours tested have positive influence on virtual team performance. (See appendix 2b).

The next behavior is intellectual stimulation. According to results obtained, 32 (84,2%) agreed, and 6 (15,8) strongly agreed that the intellectual influence behaviours tested have positive impact on virtual team performance. (See appendix 2c)

The next behavior is individualised consideration. Per to this behaviour, having a grand total of 38 respondents, 33 (86,8%) agreed, and 3 (7,9%) strongly agreed that individualised consideration behaviours have positive impact on virtual team performance. (See appendix 2d).

The next behaviour is contingent reward and contingent penalisation. According to the results obtained, with a grand total of 38 respondents, 28 (73,7%) agreed, 6 (15,8%) strongly agreed that contingent reward and contingent penalisation behaviours have positive influence on virtual team performance. (See appendix 2e).

The final behaviour is management-by-exception. The results indicated that out of a grand total of 38 respondents, 30 (78,9%) agreed, and 2 (5,3) strongly agreed that management-by-exception behaviours have positive influence on virtual team performance. (See appendix 2f).

Gender Diverse Team and Non-Gender Diverse Team

In Question 29, respondents were asked of the virtual team they would like to associate themselves with. According to results as shown in table below (i.e. Table 9), having a grand total of 38 (100%) respondents, 18 (48,6%) males and 19 (51,4%) females preferred gender diverse teams. In contrast, 1 (100%) female preferred only female dominat-

ed virtual teams. Comparing the figures, one can conclude all the respondents preferred to be in gender diverse teams, with exception of one person who was a female.

Table 9: Virtual Team Preferences

			In which virtual team would you like to associate yourself with		Total
			Only Female work group or team	Gender diversified team	
Gender	Male	Count	0	18	18
		% within Gender	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% within In which virtual team would you like to associate yourself with	0,0%	48,6%	47,4%
		% of Total	0,0%	47,4%	47,4%
	Female	Count	1	19	20
		% within Gender	5,0%	95,0%	100,0%
		% within In which virtual team would you like to associate yourself with	100,0%	51,4%	52,6%
		% of Total	2,6%	50,0%	52,6%
Total		Count	1	37	38
		% within Gender	2,6%	97,4%	100,0%
		% within In which virtual team would you like to associate yourself with	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	2,6%	97,4%	100,0%

Success of Gender Diversity to Virtual Teams

In Question 30, which was the last question in the questionnaire, respondents were provided an open-ended question to express their opinions on how gender diversity bring greater success to teams in virtual learning environment. In accordance to the results that were obtained, they were coded into themes. Subsequently the themes in response their rates of occurrences were used to construct a bar graph. (See Figure 37 in the next page).

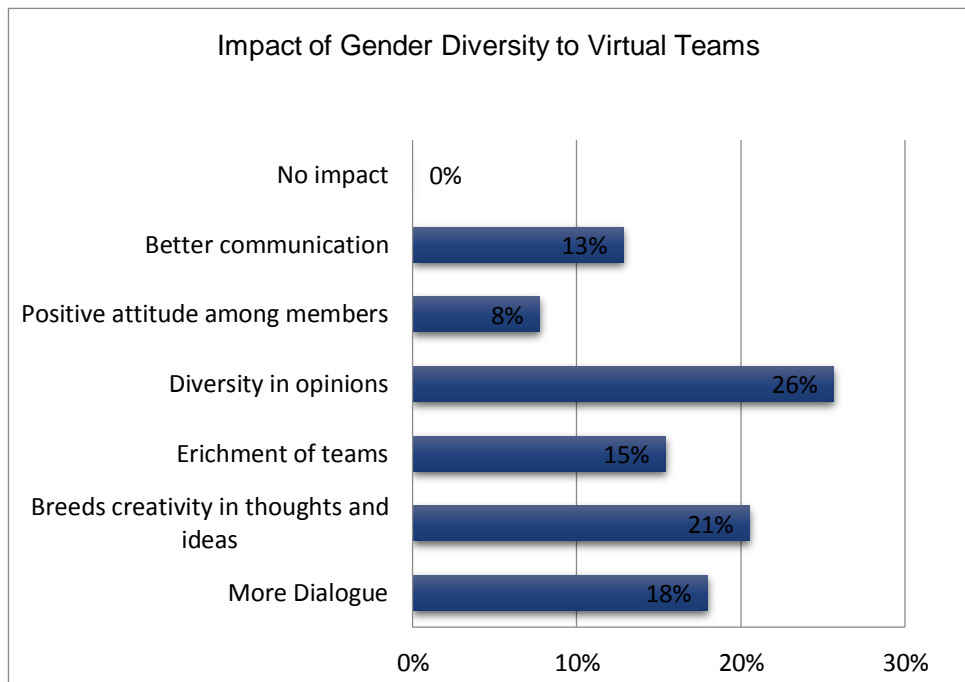


Figure 37. Impact of gender on virtual teams' success

From figure 37, among the respondents, 26% of them expressed that gender diversity breeds diversity in opinions. This was the highest among all the responses. The second popular opinion expressed was that gender diversity breeds creativity in thoughts and ideas. Some expressed it generates more dialogue (18%), enrichment of teams (15%), better communication (13%), and positive attitude among members (8%). In contrast, none expressed it had no impact. From these outcomes, one can conclude that gender has an impact on virtual teams' success.

3.6.2 Qualitative Analyses

Previous section covered the analyses of quantitative study of this thesis. As has been demonstrated in the beginning of the chapter four, mixed-methods research that combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches was adopted as the research method in this thesis. This section presents analyses of the qualitative aspect of the study. It is an interview that was conducted by the researcher to solicit for expert opinion about the research phenomenon under-study. The aim was to address this phenomenon at different levels and also assist in information gathering.

Background of Interviewee

The interviewee is an expert in diversity management and leadership. As an organisational role, he lectures students and professionals. Throughout his lecturing career, he has

had a lot of experiences in virtual team leadership. For the sake of privacy and anonymity, the researcher decided not to mention the name. He is an Englishman, working in a renowned university in a University in Finland. The interview took place in the office in Helsinki on the 30th of January 2017, approximately lasting for an hour.

Interview questions with Interviewee:

1. What forms of virtual teams have you been involved before?
2. Having experienced of being involved in different forms virtual teams; do you think men and women differ in their virtual leadership styles and behaviours? If yes, what are some of the differences?
3. Does gender diversity typically bring greater success to teams or working groups in a virtual learning environment?
4. Would you like to work in gender diverse team or male dominated team?

Reporting

At this point, the researcher provides a detailed narrative-style report of the responses obtained from the interview. All the four responses have appportioned under headings.

Forms of Virtual Teams

In response to question one, the interviewee expressed that he has been involved in series of virtual teams such as project teams, process teams, network teams, management teams, and community of practice. Involvement in these teams, clearly demonstrates the level of competences the interviewee has in virtual team leadership.

Virtual Leadership Styles and Behaviours among Males and Females

In question two, the interviewee stressed that males and females have different characters and personality dynamics and claims women are more organised and committed to the needs of team members (transformational) but there is always the danger of stereotyping too much. In contrast men are result-oriented (transactional).

The Impact of Gender Diversity

In question three, the interviewee categorically stressed that most of the time homogeneous teams seems compatible at the beginning but unproductive in long run. He therefore

elicited that gender diverse virtual teams are more productive, dialogical, and creative in long run. He added that gender diversity balances out viewpoints and also there is often better communication because women tend to be more detailed-oriented whereas men are often more generalists in terms of information.

Conversely, he stated that sometimes gender diversity might not have an impact on virtual teams based on factors such as the actual target being set, the type project, and the definition of project.

Gender Diverse Team and Non-Gender Diverse Team

With respect to question four, the interviewee positively expressed that leadership is about a person, and at the same time it is a person to person process. Although males and females' dynamics are different, as a male he preferred to work in mixed gender teams.

4 Summary of Findings

The summary of the analyses obtained in this research is based on the following themes. They are leadership style and behaviours in virtual environment; differences and similarities in leadership styles and behaviours among males and females; influence of leadership styles and behaviours virtual teams; forms of virtual teams; virtual team preferences from the perspective of gender, and impact of gender diversity on virtual teams.

4.1 Leadership style and behaviours in virtual environment

Transformational and transactional leadership styles were identified by the researcher to be the perfect match for this research. The various categories of leadership behaviours that fall under these leadership styles have been explored from a gender perspective within the domain of virtual environment. The analyses were a mixture of divergent opinions. Some agreed to most of the statements, whilst others strongly agreed, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree.

However, throughout the analyses, it was discovered that most of the respondents agreed to exhibit the following leadership behaviours when working in a virtual team - idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, inspirational motivation, contingent reward, and management-by-exception. In contrast, some were neutral, meaning they were not fully sure whether they exhibit such behaviours or not. In addition, few of the respondents both strongly disagree and agree to these behaviours. The individual behaviours that fall under the two leadership styles had different scores. Some obtained high score, moderate, and others low. For instance, in response to statement- *I inform others the standards they have to know to execute their work (management-by-exception)*, majority (71%) of the respondents agreed to the statement that they inform others the standards they have to know to execute their work 13% strongly agreed, 16% were neutral, and none (0%) either disagreed or strongly disagreed.

4.2 Leadership styles and behaviours among males and females

After the analyses, two opposing evidences showed forth. In the quantitative analyses, there was no clear evidence of differences between gender (male and female) in relation to transformational leadership behaviours (idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualised consideration) and transactional leadership behaviours (contingent reward, and management-by-exception). According to the cross-tabulation figures obtained, it was seen that both males and females agreed that they ex-

ude these leadership behaviours. Although, the individual percentage score were not the same, however it was evident that both genders are inclined to these behaviours. This result is in contrary to views of Schmidt and van Engen (2003). They assert that women leaders are more transformational than men leaders and also engaged in more of the contingent reward behaviors that are a component of transactional leadership whilst men leaders on the other hand exhibit a transactional leadership (active and passive management by exception) leadership style. Comparing the views of Schmidt and van Engen (2003) et al, one will argue that nature of leadership style and related behaviours is contextual. This means that there is not only one leadership style or behavior. Often times, the situational factors will determine the kind of leadership style and behaviour a leader whether man or woman will use. As support to this argument, Wolfram and Mohr (2010) in a research study found that the frequency of transformational behaviour is not dependent on gender.

In the qualitative analyses aspects of this study, there was clear evidence of differences between men and women. It tends to support the views of Schmidt and van Engen (2003). According to the results, women are more organised and committed to the needs of team members (transformational) whereas men are result-oriented (transactional).

4.3 Influence of leadership styles and behaviours on virtual teams

Among all the leadership behaviours that were empirically tested in this research, more than half of the respondents revealed that their leadership behaviours have positive influence on virtual teams. These findings were revealed by respondents when they were asked to strongly agree, agree, be neutral, disagree, or strongly disagree that their leadership behaviours positively influence virtual team performance. Good as it seems, but a question someone would ask is, "is it diversity of leadership styles that improves performance, or the diversity of gender?" One can argue from a complementary-contribution perspective of view gender leadership style that it is the diversity of leadership styles but these leadership styles are gender linked. Convincing as it seems, the researcher also thinks from an equity perspective view of gender leadership style that it is the diversity of leadership styles but are not linked to gender. According Schein (1989), although there are differences between males and females, the differences between them are fewer than the differences within each gender. This supports the argument that leadership styles are not gender linked per to this research study (i.e. quantitative study).

4.4 Forms of virtual teams

Virtual teams have been classified in different forms and dimensions by different researchers. In correspondence to the findings obtained in the analyses, it was discovered majority of the respondents participates or have participated in project teams, few participates in process teams 3(7,9%), and network teams 2(5,3%). In sum, one can conclude with confidence that more of the academic virtual teams are project oriented.

4.5 Virtual team preferences from the perspective of gender

Issues about preferences are often dependent on prevailing factors such as the personality of the individual, present situation, experience, and other related factors. From the analyses, it has been discovered that all with exception of one respondent do not prefer to be in gender diverse team. Being a female, she prefers to be in a female dominated virtual working team. The main reason was not covered by the questionnaire. However, one can assume that it can be from a past experience she had had from a male dominated team, from emotions, personal habit or other matters. In sum, based on the figures obtained from the contingency table, the researcher can conclude with surety that both males and females prefer to be in gender diverse team. Evidently, this sounds convincing when one considers the profession and the environment where the respondents work. They are teachers and researchers, and as a matter of fact sharing of knowledge is of essence. Therefore, working in gender diverse teams enables the respondents to have access to assortment of knowledge and skills from males as well as females.

The foregoing findings contrast with the opinions of Kankanhalli, Tan and Wei (2007). They assert that people like to be associated with others in the same social category; therefore, gender diversity can potentially create weaknesses and result in conflict among team members, which in the end will have adverse effects on performance. Empirically, this study has proven that gender diversity generates positive effects on performance.

4.6 Impact of gender diversity on virtual teams

Some researchers claim there is lack of evidence that gender diversity typically brings greater success to groups and organizations. (Eagly, 2013). In contrast this study has joined the stream of researches that claim that gender diversity greater success to teams or groups. From a virtual team studies perspective, it has been discovered from the analyses without any controversy that gender diversity has an influence on virtual teams' performances. Males and females attack projects and problems differently. According to re-

search study, women are both task and people oriented, while men appear to be image engrossed and autonomy invested. (Statham, 1987). In addition, males are more focused on goals and derive their drive from them. In contrast, females tend to be more focused on process on that leads to the achievement of goals. Therefore, having a team that is gender diverse generates diversity in opinions, breeds creativity in thoughts and ideas, generates more dialogue and discussions, enrichment of teams, better communication, and positive attitude among members. Furthermore, such teams are more productive in the long run.

5 Assessment of the quality of the results

The authenticity of every research is achieved by quality assessment. This means that one cannot claim that a research study is of high quality standard without undergoing rigorous scientific assessment. In statistical analyses and research studies, the key essential and fundamental characteristics of any measurement procedure used to assess the quality of a research study are reliability and validity. They determine the scientific worth of a particular study. This section provides a thorough discussion on these two concepts.

5.1 Validity

Validity determines whether a research or means of measurement truly measures that which it was intended to measure. (Williams A.C., 2003). It also ensures that a research instrument tests what intends to measure. (Cohen and Swerdlik, 2004). According to Saunders et al. (2009, 157), validity is concerned with whether the findings are really about what they appear to be about. There are two types of validity. These are internal validity and external validity.

Internal validity is the extent to which the outcomes can be attributed to interventions rather than any flaws in the research design process. (Saunders et al. 2009, 593). This means that the researcher has evidence that what he did in the study caused what he observed (i.e., the outcome) to happen. To ensure the internal validity of this study, from the onset, the researcher identified the topic of the study (problem identification) and through review of existing literature, formulated the research problem. In addition, the population for the study was correctly formulated by the researcher making sure that the right sample size is selected to show a true reflection of the research problem. Formulating it was not difficult for the researcher because the study was a joint collaborative project between two institutions. More so, data collection technique adopted for the study worked well for the researcher and as a matter of fact the researcher did not encounter any difficulty. Before the data collection, the researcher did a pilot test to review the questionnaire items. Finally, during data analyses and presentation, measurements that have been used for this study are devoid from personal biases or external factors; and findings are presented as they have happened. In sum, the internal validity of this research can be summarised in the overlay research matrix exhibited in page 73 (Table 10).

Table 10: Overlay Matrix

Investigative Question	Connection with theoretical framework or	Results	Connection with Questionnaire items
Sub-Question 1	Section 2.3.2, 2.3.3, 2.3.4 addresses the re-search question	Results are found in section 3.6.1	Question 5-7, 9-11, 13-15, 17-19, 21-23, 25-27 from the questionnaire
Sub-Question 2	Sections 2.3, 2.4.3, 2.5.4, 2.5.5 address the research question	Results are found in section 3.6.1	Question 1, 5-7, 9-11, 13-15, 17-19, 21-23, 25-27 from the questionnaire
Sub-Question 3	Section 2.5.5 addresses the re-search question	Results are found in section 3.6.1	Question 8, 12, 16, 20, 24, 28 from the questionnaire
Sub-Question 4	Section 2.5.2 addresses the re-search question	Results are determined in section 3.6.1	Question 4 from the questionnaire
Sub-Question 5	Section 2.6.2 addresses the re-search question	Results are found in section 3.6.1	Question 29 from the questionnaire
Sub-Question 6	Section 2.6.2 addresses the re-search question	Results are found in section 3.6.1	Question 30 from the questionnaire
Interview Question 1	Section 2.5.2 addresses the re-search question	Results are determined in section 3.6.2	Question 1 from the interview guide
Interview Question 2	Sections 2.3, 2.4.3, 2.5.4, 2.5.5 address the research question	Results are found in section 3.6.2	Question 2 from the interview guide

Interview Question 3	Section 2.6.2 addresses the re- search question	Results are found in section 3.6.2	Question 3 from the interview guide
Interview Question 4	Section 2.6.2 addresses the re- search question	Results are found in section 3.6.2	Question 4 from the interview guide

External validity on the other hand is the extent to which the research results from a particular study are generalisable to other contexts, settings or larger population (Saunders et al. 2009, 592). In simple terms, it refers to how well research outcomes from one setting apply to another. The findings cannot be generalise because of the sample size. The sample size is not large enough to serve as a true representation of the two institutions. Furthermore, the findings obtained in response to gender differences in leadership styles cannot be generalise as well. From this study's findings and from other writings, there are diverging opinions. Some claim there are clear evidence of differences between men and women, others think there are not. This means that there is not only one leadership style or behavior. Often times, the situational factors will determine the kind of leadership style and behaviour a leader whether man or woman will use.

5.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which data collection techniques, analysis procedures or measures will yield similar results under consistent conditions (Saunders et al. 2009, 156). It is the consistency or repeatability of measures. Empirically, the researcher has followed the rigorous scientific research process pragmatically and had made sure that the research is done right. General methods, procedures and data collection methods have been utilised effectively to ensure consistency in their measurements, thereby ensuring that the same results are generated under the same conditions by further studies. Questionnaire as well as the interview guide was well structured to correspond to the research questions. They were piloted in order get rid of semantic disturbances (choice of words and grammatical inaccuracies), technical errors and inconsistencies. Furthermore, with the use of SPSS statistical tool and thematic method of analyses, the analyses can be termed as reliable. Using the same tools, same sample, and processes, it will equally generate the same result, all things being equal.

5.3 Role of Researcher, Ethics and Values

From the onset of the research process, the researcher has independent of the actual research process. He kept himself at a distance. However, because he used a mixed research approach, at a point in time he had a direct contact with one of the respondents. The contact with this respondent was meant for face-to-face interview.

Professionally, ethical issues such as academic honesty (non-plagiarism), maintenance of anonymity of respondents, respect of the rights of respondents, and the avoidance of offensive language usage in the interaction with respondents were of particular importance to the researcher. In the interview process, the researcher took a reserved position by allowing the interviewee to express his opinions. Taking a reserved position in this context means that the researcher did not interrupt the interviewee, had listening ears, and gave the interviewee the free room to express his opinions. Even, before the interview day, the researcher allowed the interviewer to fix the interview day, place, and time. This was to ensure that the interview process does not coincide with the interviewee's schedule.

Furthermore, with respect to the electronic questionnaire that was sent to respondents, the researcher did not put pressure on them to fill them but rather gave them time to respond during their own convenient hours. In sum, it can be also said that this research is value laden, devoid from personal biases. The findings obtained were the opinions from people not the researcher's.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has provided an interpretive view of gender and leadership styles in virtual environment. The objectives for this study were in three-folds. The main objective among them was to improve readers' understanding of the dynamics behind virtual team performance. The dynamics behind virtual team performance includes processes such as knowledge sharing, team formation, collaboration processes, cultural orientation, diversity and leadership processes, communication processes and the like. With regards to this research, it has focused on gender diversity and virtual leadership processes- how gender differences and their related leadership styles and behaviours influence virtual team performance among teachers in University of Applied Sciences, and Estonia School of Business. Transformational as well as transactional leadership styles with their associated behaviours such as idealised influence, intellectual stimulation, individualised consideration, inspirational motivation, contingent reward, and management-by-exception have been found by this study to be exhibited by teachers when working in virtual teams or tasks. Evidentially, these behaviours have proved to have positive influence on virtual team performance.

The second objective aimed to identify whether leadership styles and behaviours vary due to gender differences and have dissimilar effects on virtual team performance. From a quantitative research approach perspective, this study has demonstrated that transformational and transactional leadership styles and their associated behaviours are not gender linked. This means that leadership styles and behaviours in terms of gender differences. All the male and female respondents in this study were known to demonstrate them in virtual working environments. Evidentially, this supports the equity view of gender leadership style which serves as one of the underlying theories for this study. In contrast to the qualitative analyses aspects of this study, it has been known that leadership styles are gender linked. It therefore means that there are differences between male and female leadership styles. This finding supports the complementary-contribution view of gender and leadership style. Besides these inconsistencies, all these leadership styles and their associated behaviours have been empirically demonstrated to be linked to positive virtual team performance. Obtaining two diverging results is not new in gender and leadership research. There are series of related studies characterised with diverging opinions and outcomes. This means that research on differences in gender leadership styles remains inconclusive with diverging opinions. It is characterised with ambiguities and paradoxes.

Last but not the least, it intended to investigate whether gender diversity (i.e. differences) typically bring greater success to teams or working groups in a virtual learning environment.

Considering all the differences and similarities between males and females, almost all the respondents for this research show preference to be in gender diverse virtual working environment. One would assume that since there is an absence of physical interaction, a gender diverse team or work group is inconsequential. However, it has become evident that having a team that is gender diverse generates diversity in opinions, breeds creativity in thoughts and ideas, generates more dialogue and discussions, enrichment of teams, better communication, increase in productivity, and positive attitude among members. These are just a few that can be made mentioned of. In essence, these derived benefits of gender diversity have been demonstrated by this study to yield positive impact to virtual teams or working groups performances. Without any shred of doubt, the researcher views that this finding has invalidated the thought patterns of people who claim gender diversity does not typically bring success to groups and organisations. However, the researcher also thinks that one should not over generalised because it can also be argued that it is the diversity of leadership styles that improve virtual performance, not merely diversity of gender.

To end it all, mapping the findings to the objectives of the study's theoretical framework, the following structure was developed. It explains the dynamic processes that go on behind virtual team performance.

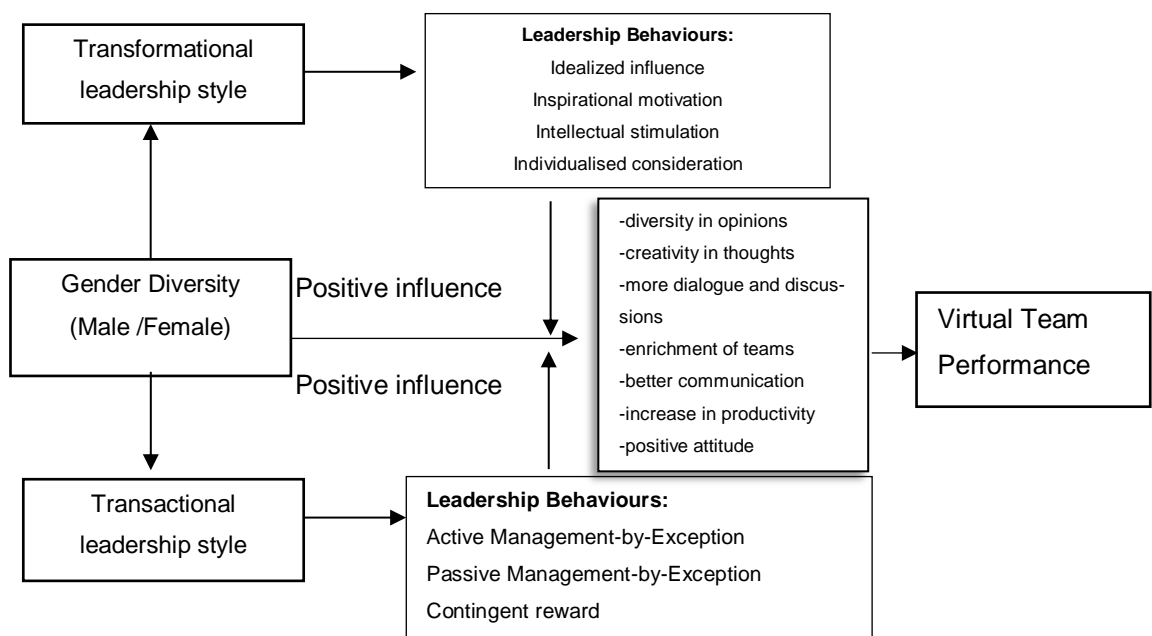


Figure 38. Findings mapped unto the study's theoretical framework

6.1 Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, based on questionnaire responses and additional comments provided by the respondents, the following recommendations are deemed worthy:

Firstly, it is evident in this study that one of the foundations for the improvement and success of virtual teams, groups or projects is the element of gender diversity. As it has been known in this study that having gender diverse team or working group generates benefits, this study therefore recommends educational or research institutions should create teams or groups that are gender diverse.

Secondly, it has been discovered in this study that there is clear preference to gender diverse teams or work groups among respondents. As a form of recommendation, this study suggests that both institutions should put emphases on gender diversity when forming virtual teams or working groups.

Finally, according to the opposing views that showed up in the findings of this study, the researcher concludes that there is not only one leadership style or behavior. Often times, the situational factors will determine the kind of leadership style and behaviour a leader whether man or woman will use. In view of this, the study recommends the avoidance of gender stereotyping when creating virtual teams or working groups. What we have to know is to consider first the abilities of people rather than as simply members of one gender or the other. (Moran, 1992).

6.2 Theoretical Contribution

According to Zhang, Fjermestad and Tremaine (2005), knowledge about specific relationships between virtual leadership behaviors and team outcomes are inadequate. This study therefore contributes to this emerging but inadequate research area by bringing to the spotlight the influence that gender and leadership styles have on virtual team performance.

Theoretically, this study has come to join the pool of researches in the area of gender diversity in leadership styles. There have been a number of studies devoted to this theme but there are still inconclusive opinions. Some studies claim there are differences in gender leadership styles; others no differences; and to others, slight differences.

All in all, the researcher emphasises that this study provides basis for future theory development and also serves as a reference material for future researches within academia

6.3 Value of this study for Haaga-Helia and Estonia Business School

The success of a research study is dependent on the value it generates to the stakeholders or the receiving parties. Valuably, this study has carefully elucidated the dynamics behind virtual team performance and success among academic staff. Areas known to be behind the success of virtual teams such as leadership styles of staff, virtual team preferences, and gender diversity have been espoused in this study. This will therefore serve as a fundamental reference material or knowledge for staffs in both institutions when creating virtual teams or working groups.

By empirical revelation, this study has proven that staffs in both institutions prefer to be involved in gender diverse virtual teams. Most of the time when forming teams for projects, people do not consider diversity in terms of gender. However, from this study it has been proven it cannot be relegated to the background. This discovery will therefore play a contributing factor among research committees and staffs when they are forming virtual teams.

Most at times people tempted to believe that leading virtual teams is easy. However, it has been proven by this study and other existing studies that there are series of dynamics that have considerable influences. The findings in this study are therefore important when applying virtual team principles to research and learning in both corporate and educational environments.

6.4 Limitations and Suggestions for further research

This study has some limitations that should worth considered in future theoretical studies on gender leadership styles and virtual team performance.

Firstly, the study was limited to two institutions- Estonia School of Business, and Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. In addition, the sample was not large enough as a true representation of two institutions due to the low turn-outs in the filling of questionnaires. In view of this limitation, future research can broaden the scope by finding ways to attract more respondents. Having more respondents will enhance the generalisability of findings.

Secondly, showing preference for something depends on salient factors such as the personality of the individual, present situation, experience, values, and other related factors. Accordingly, with the exception of one person, it was discovered in the study's findings that the respondents preferred gender diverse teams but the main reason or factor why someone prefers or dislikes was not covered by the questionnaire. Consequently, future research study should therefore put emphasis on the reasons or the factors behind the preference or dislike of gender diverse teams.

Thirdly, qualitative study of this study was centred on the opinion of one person. Though, this interviewee was an expert in field of gender diversity and had outstanding experience in virtual teams, his opinion lacks generalisability. Future research centred on mixed approach should concentrate on involving more than one person in their qualitative study.

Fourthly, most studies have used transformational Leadership to study either collocated teams or organizations that are culturally and organizationally homogeneous. (Lojeski and Reilly, 2007). However, this study has detached from the masses by using transformational leadership and transactional leadership styles and behaviours to study virtual teams. As this study, has done, the researcher suggests that future researches should be conducted to reexamine and reconceptualise how old leadership models may or may not apply to today's virtual teams and global workforce.

Finally, the researcher conducted the study using a survey method of data collection with regards to the quantitative aspect. In the future, a similar study can be conducted but with a use of different data collection method like action research. The researcher views that when action research approach is used for this study, it will enhance the response rate. The collaborative and empowering nature of action will serve a medium of engagement for the respondents. It will bring all those who isolated themselves together around the research problem.

6.5 Reflections on own learning

This research study has been conducted in partial fulfillment of master's degree programme in International Business in Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences. There is a dictum that 'well began half finished'. It started on a good note, and sweet by and by, has manifested in reality. It has gradually emanated from the abstract world into the concrete world. Procedurally, the process leading to the success of this involves idea conceptualisation, drafting and presentation of proposal, and writing of the actual thesis.

It has contributed a major factor towards the development of the researcher's research capabilities. Right from the conception of the topic till the end of the findings, many have been the encounters and lessons that the researcher had amassed. My tacit knowledge has been broadened in the area of leadership studies and research. In as much as the positive benefits, the researcher also came across drawbacks. Few of them will be highlighted in the subsequent paragraphs.

Actually, since the study is a research collaborative project between two institutions, the researcher was given the theme of the research area (i.e. Leadership in Virtual Working Model). From this, he was allowed to conceive a relevant gender related topic around it. Formulating a topic around this theme was very challenging from the onset but through referrals and reviews from literature the current topic under study was conceived. Reviewing literature exposed the researcher to diverse theories related to gender leadership styles, which he never knew. Theories such as, equity view of gender leadership style, complementary-contribution view of gender leadership style, and other related concepts such as leadership, management, gender stereotype, etc. The literature review process has stirred up the passion of the researcher towards gender and leadership research, an area that has become a major focus among researchers, with the emergence of more females ascending to the top of organisational hierarchies. Reviewing different articles and related published literatures have paid off. It has provided the researcher the opportunity to develop his thinking capability and problem-solving skills, sense of initiative and independence towards learning.

During the data collection stage, the researcher encountered some challenges such as late responses to questionnaire, low response rate, resource constraint, imbalance between academic life and family life, and other personal related issues. However, with respect to the bright side, the researcher had the opportunity to use convenient and user-friendly data collection software to collect the data. This data collection tool is webropol. Webropol gave the respondents to respond to the questionnaire at their own convenient times. The researcher amassed plethora of insights and knowledge from the use of webropol for the first time.

After the data collection, another stage where the researcher benefitted was the data analyses part. In the analyses, the researcher made use of two statistical tools- SPSS and Microsoft Excel. Combining these tools enhanced the accuracy of the analyses. They also provided the researcher with options as to which one to choose at a particular point in time. Beneficially, the researcher was able to learn from these two different kinds of tools. For example, when and how to apply them, their functionalities and practical applications.

As afore-mentioned, from the starting of this thesis till the end, there have been numerous challenges and experiences. However, in all these, the researcher saw them as opportunities for personal development and intellectual growth.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Frequency distribution of forms of virtual teams

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Project Teams	32	84,2	84,2	84,2
Process Teams	3	7,9	7,9	92,1
Network Teams	2	5,3	5,3	97,4
Others	1	2,6	2,6	100,0
Total	38	100,0	100,0	

Appendix 2: The influence of leadership behaviour on virtual teams

- 2a. Individualised influence

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	1	2,6	2,6	2,6
Agree	25	65,8	65,8	68,4
Strongly Agree	12	31,6	31,6	100,0
Total	38	100,0	100,0	

- 2b. Inspirational motivation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Neither Agree nor Disagree	1	2,6	2,6	2,6
Agree	31	81,6	81,6	84,2
Strongly Agree	6	15,8	15,8	100,0
Total	38	100,0	100,0	

- 2c. Intellectual stimulation

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	32	84,2	84,2	84,2
Strongly Agree	6	15,8	15,8	100,0
Total	38	100,0	100,0	

- 2d. Individualised consideration

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither Agree nor Disagree	2	5,3	5,3	5,3
	Agree	33	86,8	86,8	92,1
	Strongly Agree	3	7,9	7,9	100,0
	Total	38	100,0	100,0	

- 2e. Contingent reward

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither Agree nor Disagree	4	10,5	10,5	10,5
	Agree	28	73,7	73,7	84,2
	Strongly Agree	6	15,8	15,8	100,0
	Total	38	100,0	100,0	

- 2f. Management by exception

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Neither Agree nor Disagree	6	15,8	15,8	15,8
	Agree	30	78,9	78,9	94,7
	Strongly Agree	2	5,3	5,3	100,0
	Total	38	100,0	100,0	

Appendix 3: Crosstabulation of responses to statements related to gender/leadership behaviours

			I make others feel good to be around me			Total
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	0	1	17	18
		% within Gender	0,0%	5,6%	94,4%	100,0%
		% within I make others feel good to be around me	0,0%	100,0%	48,6%	47,4%
		% of Total	0,0%	2,6%	44,7%	47,4%
	Female	Count	2	0	18	20
		% within Gender	10,0%	0,0%	90,0%	100,0%
		% within I make others feel good to be around me	100,0%	0,0%	51,4%	52,6%
		% of Total	5,3%	0,0%	47,4%	52,6%
Total		Count	2	1	35	38
		% within Gender	5,3%	2,6%	92,1%	100,0%
		% within I make others feel good to be around me	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	5,3%	2,6%	92,1%	100,0%

			I make others have complete faith in me	Total
			Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	18	18
		% within Gender	100,0%	100,0%
		% within I make others have complete faith in me	47,4%	47,4%
		% of Total	47,4%	47,4%
	Female	Count	20	20
		% within Gender	100,0%	100,0%
		% within I make others have complete faith in me	52,6%	52,6%
		% of Total	52,6%	52,6%
Total		Count	38	38
		% within Gender	100,0%	100,0%
		% within I make others have complete faith in me	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	100,0%	100,0%

			I make others proud to be associated with me		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	6	12	18
		% within Gender	33,3%	66,7%	100,0%
		% within I make others proud to be associated with me	60,0%	42,9%	47,4%
		% of Total	15,8%	31,6%	47,4%
	Female	Count	4	16	20
		% within Gender	20,0%	80,0%	100,0%
		% within I make others proud to be associated with me	40,0%	57,1%	52,6%
		% of Total	10,5%	42,1%	52,6%
Total		Count	10	28	38
		% within Gender	26,3%	73,7%	100,0%
		% within I make others proud to be associated with me	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	26,3%	73,7%	100,0%

			I express with a few simple words what we could and should do			Total
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	0	3	15	18
		% within Gender	0,0%	16,7%	83,3%	100,0%
		% within I express with a few simple words what we could and should do	0,0%	37,5%	51,7%	47,4%
		% of Total	0,0%	7,9%	39,5%	47,4%
	Female	Count	1	5	14	20
		% within Gender	5,0%	25,0%	70,0%	100,0%
		% within I express with a few simple words what we could and should do	100,0%	62,5%	48,3%	52,6%
		% of Total	2,6%	13,2%	36,8%	52,6%
Total		Count	1	8	29	38
		% within Gender	2,6%	21,1%	76,3%	100,0%
		% within I express with a few simple words what we could and should do	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	2,6%	21,1%	76,3%	100,0%

			I provide appealing images about what we can do			Total
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	0	6	12	18
		% within Gender	0,0%	33,3%	66,7%	100,0%
		% within I provide appealing images about what we can do	0,0%	66,7%	44,4%	47,4%
		% of Total	0,0%	15,8%	31,6%	47,4%
	Female	Count	2	3	15	20
		% within Gender	10,0%	15,0%	75,0%	100,0%
		% within I provide appealing images about what we can do	100,0%	33,3%	55,6%	52,6%
		% of Total	5,3%	7,9%	39,5%	52,6%
Total		Count	2	9	27	38
		% within Gender	5,3%	23,7%	71,1%	100,0%
		% within I provide appealing images about what we can do	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	5,3%	23,7%	71,1%	100,0%

			I help others find meaning in their work		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	1	17	18
		% within Gender	5,6%	94,4%	100,0%
		% within I help others find meaning in their work	33,3%	48,6%	47,4%
		% of Total	2,6%	44,7%	47,4%
	Female	Count	2	18	20
		% within Gender	10,0%	90,0%	100,0%
		% within I help others find meaning in their work	66,7%	51,4%	52,6%
		% of Total	5,3%	47,4%	52,6%
Total		Count	3	35	38
		% within Gender	7,9%	92,1%	100,0%
		% within I help others find meaning in their work	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	7,9%	92,1%	100,0%

			I enable others to think about old problems in new ways		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	1	17	18
		% within Gender	5,6%	94,4%	100,0%
		% within I enable others to think about old problems in new ways	50,0%	47,2%	47,4%
		% of Total	2,6%	44,7%	47,4%
	Female	Count	1	19	20
		% within Gender	5,0%	95,0%	100,0%
		% within I enable others to think about old problems in new ways	50,0%	52,8%	52,6%
		% of Total	2,6%	50,0%	52,6%
Total		Count	2	36	38
		% within Gender	5,3%	94,7%	100,0%
		% within I enable others to think about old problems in new ways	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	5,3%	94,7%	100,0%

			I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	5	13	18
		% within Gender	27,8%	72,2%	100,0%
		% within I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things	83,3%	40,6%	47,4%
		% of Total	13,2%	34,2%	47,4%
	Female	Count	1	19	20
		% within Gender	5,0%	95,0%	100,0%
		% within I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things	16,7%	59,4%	52,6%
		% of Total	2,6%	50,0%	52,6%
Total		Count	6	32	38
		% within Gender	15,8%	84,2%	100,0%
		% within I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	15,8%	84,2%	100,0%

			I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	2	16	18
		% within Gender	11,1%	88,9%	100,0%
		% within I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before	40,0%	48,5%	47,4%
		% of Total	5,3%	42,1%	47,4%
	Female	Count	3	17	20
		% within Gender	15,0%	85,0%	100,0%
		% within I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before	60,0%	51,5%	52,6%
		% of Total	7,9%	44,7%	52,6%
Total		Count	5	33	38
		% within Gender	13,2%	86,8%	100,0%
		% within I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	13,2%	86,8%	100,0%

			I help others develop themselves		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	2	16	18
		% within Gender	11,1%	88,9%	100,0%
		% within I help others develop themselves	100,0%	44,4%	47,4%
		% of Total	5,3%	42,1%	47,4%
	Female	Count	0	20	20
		% within Gender	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% within I help others develop themselves	0,0%	55,6%	52,6%
		% of Total	0,0%	52,6%	52,6%
Total		Count	2	36	38
		% within Gender	5,3%	94,7%	100,0%
		% within I help others develop themselves	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	5,3%	94,7%	100,0%

			I let others know how I think they are doing		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	4	14	18
		% within Gender	22,2%	77,8%	100,0%
		% within I let others know how I think they are doing	50,0%	46,7%	47,4%
		% of Total	10,5%	36,8%	47,4%
	Female	Count	4	16	20
		% within Gender	20,0%	80,0%	100,0%
		% within I let others know how I think they are doing	50,0%	53,3%	52,6%
		% of Total	10,5%	42,1%	52,6%
Total	Count	8	30	38	
	% within Gender	21,1%	78,9%	100,0%	
	% within I let others know how I think they are doing	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	21,1%	78,9%	100,0%	

			I give personal attention to others who seem rejected		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	4	14	18
		% within Gender	22,2%	77,8%	100,0%
		% within I give personal attention to others who seem rejected	50,0%	46,7%	47,4%
		% of Total	10,5%	36,8%	47,4%
	Female	Count	4	16	20
		% within Gender	20,0%	80,0%	100,0%
		% within I give personal attention to others who seem rejected	50,0%	53,3%	52,6%
		% of Total	10,5%	42,1%	52,6%
Total	Count	8	30	38	
	% within Gender	21,1%	78,9%	100,0%	
	% within I give personal attention to others who seem rejected	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	
	% of Total	21,1%	78,9%	100,0%	

			I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work			Total
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	1	5	12	18
		% within Gender	5,6%	27,8%	66,7%	100,0%
		% within I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work	100,0%	50,0%	44,4%	47,4%
		% of Total	2,6%	13,2%	31,6%	47,4%
	Female	Count	0	5	15	20
		% within Gender	0,0%	25,0%	75,0%	100,0%
		% within I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work	0,0%	50,0%	55,6%	52,6%
		% of Total	0,0%	13,2%	39,5%	52,6%
Total		Count	1	10	27	38
		% within Gender	2,6%	26,3%	71,1%	100,0%
		% within I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	2,6%	26,3%	71,1%	100,0%

			I provide recognition when others reach their goals		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	2	16	18
		% within Gender	11,1%	88,9%	100,0%
		% within I provide recognition when others reach their goals	50,0%	47,1%	47,4%
		% of Total	5,3%	42,1%	47,4%
	Female	Count	2	18	20
		% within Gender	10,0%	90,0%	100,0%
		% within I provide recognition when others reach their goals	50,0%	52,9%	52,6%
		% of Total	5,3%	47,4%	52,6%
Total		Count	4	34	38
		% within Gender	10,5%	89,5%	100,0%
		% within I provide recognition when others reach their goals	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	10,5%	89,5%	100,0%

			I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	4	14	18
		% within Gender	22,2%	77,8%	100,0%
		% within I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish	40,0%	50,0%	47,4%
		% of Total	10,5%	36,8%	47,4%
	Female	Count	6	14	20
		% within Gender	30,0%	70,0%	100,0%
		% within I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish	60,0%	50,0%	52,6%
		% of Total	15,8%	36,8%	52,6%
Total		Count	10	28	38
		% within Gender	26,3%	73,7%	100,0%
		% within I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	26,3%	73,7%	100,0%

			I am satisfied when others meet agreed standards		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	2	16	18
		% within Gender	11,1%	88,9%	100,0%
		% within I am satisfied when others meet agreed standards	100,0%	44,4%	47,4%
		% of Total	5,3%	42,1%	47,4%
	Female	Count	0	20	20
		% within Gender	0,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% within I am satisfied when others meet agreed standards	0,0%	55,6%	52,6%
		% of Total	0,0%	52,6%	52,6%
Total		Count	2	36	38
		% within Gender	5,3%	94,7%	100,0%
		% within I am satisfied when others meet agreed standards	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	5,3%	94,7%	100,0%

			As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything			Total
			Disagree	Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	9	2	7	18
		% within Gender	50,0%	11,1%	38,9%	100,0%
		% within As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything	60,0%	25,0%	46,7%	47,4%
		% of Total	23,7%	5,3%	18,4%	47,4%
	Female	Count	6	6	8	20
		% within Gender	30,0%	30,0%	40,0%	100,0%
		% within As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything	40,0%	75,0%	53,3%	52,6%
		% of Total	15,8%	15,8%	21,1%	52,6%
Total		Count	15	8	15	38
		% within Gender	39,5%	21,1%	39,5%	100,0%
		% within As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	39,5%	21,1%	39,5%	100,0%

			I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work		Total
			Neutral	Agree	
Gender	Male	Count	4	14	18
		% within Gender	22,2%	77,8%	100,0%
		% within I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work	66,7%	43,8%	47,4%
		% of Total	10,5%	36,8%	47,4%
	Female	Count	2	18	20
		% within Gender	10,0%	90,0%	100,0%
		% within I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work	33,3%	56,3%	52,6%
		% of Total	5,3%	47,4%	52,6%
Total		Count	6	32	38
		% within Gender	15,8%	84,2%	100,0%
		% within I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%
		% of Total	15,8%	84,2%	100,0%

Appendix 4: Questionnaire

Cover Letter:

Dear Respondent,

As part of a joint collaboration research project between Haaga-Helia and Estonia Business School, I am writing my master thesis on the theme: Leadership in distributed virtual working model. I kindly entreat you to take few minutes of your time to fill one of my questionnaires for me. Confidentiality of your responses is assured.

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (adapted)

Instructions: How would you describe your leadership style in a virtual working environment? This questionnaire provides a description of your leadership style. Descriptive statements are listed below.

1. Gender: Male Female

2. Nationality: Finnish Estonian Others

3. Institution: Estonia Business School Haaga-Helia UAS

4. What form of virtual team have you being involved before?

- Project teams

(Project teams are teams formed for the purpose of accomplishing a project within a specific period of time)

- Service teams

(Service teams are formed across boundaries with the intention of providing a service or resolving a service disorder.)

- Process teams

(Process teams are teams that collaborate over an undefined period to respond to ongoing needs within a certain domain)

- Network teams

(Network Teams cross time, distance and organisational borders. Members rotate as when needed)

- Parallel teams

(Parallel Teams convey unique tasks and crosses time, boundaries, and distance. Members work on short term basis)

- Others Specify.....

Judge how frequently each statement fits you. The word "others" mean group or team members.

Scale: 1= Strongly disagree; 2= Disagree; 3= Neither agree nor disagree; 4= Agree; 5= Strongly agree

Transformational leadership behaviours

Idealized Influence:

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. I make others feel good to be around me. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6. Others have complete faith in me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. Others are proud to be associated with me | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. These behaviours have positive influence on virtual team performance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Inspirational Motivation:

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9. I express with a few simple words what we could and should do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I provide appealing images about what we can do. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I help others find meaning in their work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. These behaviours have positive influence on virtual team performance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Intellectual Stimulation:

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13. I enable others to think about old problems in new ways. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I provide others with new ways of looking at puzzling things | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I get others to rethink ideas that they had never questioned before. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. These behaviours have positive influence on virtual team performance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Individualized Consideration:

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 17. I help others develop themselves | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I let others know how I think they are doing | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I give personal attention to others who seem rejected | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. These behaviours have positive influence on virtual team performance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Transactional Leadership Behaviour

Contingent Reward:

- 21. I tell others what to do if they want to be rewarded for their work. 1 2 3 4 5
- 22. I provide recognition/rewards when others reach their goals. 1 2 3 4 5
- 23. I call attention to what others can get for what they accomplish. 1 2 3 4 5
- 24. These behaviours have positive influence on virtual team performance 1 2 3 4 5

Management-by-exception:

- 25. I am satisfied when others meet agreed upon standards. 1 2 3 4 5
- 26. As long as things are working, I do not try to change anything. 1 2 3 4 5
- 27. I tell others the standards they have to know to carry out their work. 1 2 3 4 5
- 28. These behaviours have positive influence on virtual team performance 1 2 3 4 5

Gender Diversity and Teamwork

29. In which virtual team would you like to associate yourself with?

Choices (select one by ticking)	Tick as appropriate
Only Male work group or team	
Only Female work group or team	
Gender diverse team	

30. In your own opinion; how does gender diversity typically bring greater success to teams or working groups in a virtual learning environment?

Ans:.....

Appendix 5: Interview Guide

1. What forms of virtual teams have you been involved before?
2. Having experienced of being involved in different forms virtual teams; do you think men and women differ in their virtual leadership styles and behaviours? If yes, what are some of the differences?
3. Does gender diversity typically bring greater success to teams or working groups in a virtual learning environment?
4. Would you like to work in gender diverse team or male dominated team?