Overview

• The primary objective of this study was to examine how transgender (trans) individuals are perceived as leaders.
• We examined how a leader’s expressed gender, presence or absence of transgender label, and agentic vs. communal behaviors interact to influence personal and expected societal general impressions of leadership.

Background

• We hold prototypes of leaders and engage in prototype-matching when evaluating leaders.
• The better the match with the leader prototype, the better the impressions of a target’s leadership abilities.
• This is particularly problematic for trans leaders, since stereotypes of trans people are generally negative.
• Additionally, leadership is viewed in a gendered way more in line with the male gender role than female gender role.
• Even when female leaders behave in line with the male leadership prototype, they are penalized due to violations of their gender role.

Method

• 336 workers (38.1% female) living in the U.S. completed the study online via MTurk.
• 2x2x2 between-subjects, experimental design
• Leader expressed gender: Male vs. Female
• Leader behaviors: Agentic vs. Communal
• Transgender label: Present (trans) vs. Absent (cis)
• Press release about hiring of new (fictitious) CEO
• Measures:
  • Leadership impressions. Adapted GLI Scale→ 2 factors (GLI Self & Society)
  • Control Measures. Social dominance orientation (SDO), religiosity, attitudes towards gender identity minorities (ATTI), age
  • All Cronbach’s alphas > .70

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Transgender leaders will be rated lower than leaders not described as transgender. (Partially Supported)

Hypothesis 2: Transgender women will be more penalized for the transgender label than transgender men. (Not Supported)

Hypothesis 3: Transgender leaders will be more penalized for using gender-role-violating leader behaviors than cisgender leaders (Partially Supported)

Results

Effects of Manipulations on GLI (Society) and Gli (Self)

Note: GLI = general leadership impressions; $F$ = $F$-ratio; $p$ = significance level; $\eta^2$ = partial eta-square; $M$ = mean; $SD$ = standard deviation.

Results:

- GLI Society ($M = 3.27, SD = .97$)
- GLI Self ($M = 3.91, SD = .89$)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>GLI Society</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
<th>GLI Self</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>$\eta^2$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-trait Dominance</td>
<td>2.78 .86</td>
<td>16.36***</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>3.30 .69</td>
<td>3.30**</td>
<td>.11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Con-trait Dominance</td>
<td>2.27 1.28</td>
<td>6.05**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>39.66***</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>2.38 .98</td>
<td>12.16**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>11.65**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Atti</td>
<td>2.25 .06</td>
<td>8.09**</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>31.47***</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>36.54 10.03</td>
<td>12.18**</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transgender</td>
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<td>77.38***</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>1.24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
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<td>7.37**</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<td>Agentic Behavior</td>
<td>.30 .20</td>
<td>22.01***</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Transgender X Female</td>
<td>-- --</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transgender X Female X Agentic Behavior</td>
<td>-- --</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>5.66*</td>
<td>.02</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Dashed lines indicate gender role violating behaviors

Discussion

• Suggested there may be differences in individuals’ personal reactions vs. expectations of society’s reactions to trans leaders.
• Expected society to view transgender, communal, and female leaders more negatively than cisgender, agentic, and male leaders respectively—reflecting the male, agentic, cis leader prototype.
• Personal reactions depended on a confluence of characteristics with communal transgender men rated the lowest as leaders.
• Limitations include that only gendered leadership behaviors were utilized in the vignette, and that participants viewed “paper” leaders.
• This study informs practical social issues as well as serves as a critical first step for advancing the science of transgender leadership.

*References available upon request from authors.