Full Length Research Paper

Some Ethiopian Women Leaders' Perceptions about Their Leadership

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This research aimed at exploring the perceptions of women leaders on their performance on three key areas of leadership - on ten leadership qualities, type of power they use and their leadership performance - as perceived and assessed by the leaders themselves. A total of 45 women leaders 15 each from public, NGO and private sectors participated in the study. Two questionnaires were distributed each consisting of two parts. The first part solicited information, among others, about a participant's organization, position in and number of years in the organization as well as years in current position, educational level and whether or not she has participated in leadership training programs. The second part of the questionnaire contained three sets of questions on the three key leadership areas. The findings of the study show that with minor differences among them, private sector leaders seem to possess the ten leadership qualities better than and followed by NGO and public sector leaders. Both in terms of individual and group performance, NGO leaders seem to use power of the person to the highest degree followed by private sector leaders and last come public sector leaders. NGO leader seem to be more able to work with and through other people (Stateswomanship) followed by both private and public sector leaders. The overall average performance rating for all sectors in the three performance types puts NGO women leaders at the top followed by private and public sector leaders. The overall findings indicate that the relatively higher performance of women sectoral leaders in the study could be attributed to their corresponding high levels of educational qualification, over all work experience and experience in leadership positions, and training on leadership.

Keywords: women leaders, key leadership areas, NGO, GO, private sector, self-reflection

Introduction

Much research has been conducted on women's leadership styles in for-profit and non-profit government settings worldwide (Goleman et al., 2002; Kamensky & Morales, 2005; Michaels, 2005). However, there seems to be no research on this topic in Ethiopia. In the Ethiopian context, though there is a growing interest in both government and non-government actors to increase the number of women in decision –making, a lot remains to be done. The same is true in research into gender and leadership in Ethiopia. There have been attempts to study gender – related issues such as gender and HIV/AIDS, gender analysis and mainstreaming, gender and leadership in some public sectors.

This research studies a hitherto investigated issue of women's leadership effectiveness in the public/government, private/for-profit and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as viewed by the leaders themselves. Some studies have investigated the leadership style differences of male and female leaders using instruments that included both sexes. Such studies have obviously shed light into leadership practice of women. But there are no studies that assess leadership effectiveness through self-reflection in Ethiopia.

Review of Related Literature
Gender and Leadership

An organization's greatest resource is human knowledge and the talent that makes use of it. A significant part of an organization's resource, women, (particularly in terms of their performance as leaders) is misunderstood, often being measured and benchmarked against male performance criteria and behaviour (Helgesen & Williams, 2004). This seems also to apply in the Ethiopian context. The real issue in leadership differences lies in the equity in selecting the right person with the appropriate skills and qualities to ensure the effectiveness and success of the organization (Bass & Avolio, 1994). It has

been argued that the integration of women in leadership roles is not a matter of "fitting in" the traditional models, but "giving in" the opportunities for them to practice their own leadership styles. Since organizations have been mostly occupied by men, some women have chosen successful male leaders and their styles as their role models (Appelbaum & Shapiro, 1993).

Recognizing women's styles of leadership represents an important approach to equity as long as they are not stereotyped as "the" ways women lead but as "other" ways of leading. The feminine leadership styles are not better or worse than the traditional male-oriented ones, they are just different. According to Shakeshaft (1993, p. 105), "The point of examining these differences is not to say one approach is right and one is wrong, but rather to help us understand that males and females may be coming from very different perspectives, and that unless we understand these differences, we are not likely to work well together".

Literature on leadership and gender often focuses on the influence of the latter to emphasize certain dimensions of leadership over others (Pounder & Coleman, 2002). Feminine leadership styles are described in general terms as interpersonal-oriented, charismatic and democratic (Eagly& Johnson, 1990; Freeman &Varey, 1997) and related to gender because of stereotypes of women as being sensitive, warm, tactful and expressive (Olsson and Walker, 2003; Van Engen et al., 2001).Earlier thinking emphasized that women who had achieved leadership positions were imitators of male characteristics, but contemporary theories recognize feminine leadership styles (Helgesen, 1990; Stanford et al., 1995). Like any new trend in traditional settings, it takes years to develop styles until these styles are understood and accepted. Meanwhile, women face several barriers that prevent them from been considered leaders or leadership candidates (Still, 1994). Obstacles with this origin have been described as "the glass ceiling" as a metaphor of an invisible top that halts women in moving up the career ladder at a certain point (Oakley, 2000).

Nonetheless, the increasing participation of women in the labor market in the last half century, and their movement to managerial positions has changed the definition of leadership. Female leadership tends towards a style defined as "interactive leadership" (Rosener, 1990, p. 126) that involves: encouraging participation; sharing power and information; enhancing self-worth; changing self- interests for an overall good; relating power to interpersonal skills; and believing in better performance when feeling good. As Hall observes, women leaders value having influence more than having power (Hall, 1994).

Laboratory experiments suggest that women leaders are often evaluated more negatively than male leaders, holding performance constant. These studies (Eagly & Karau, 2002) normally either provide written description of leadership

situations, varying the sex of the leaders, or use trained actors to lead, allowing the experimenter to control the degree of success the leader achieves. Women are typically judged to have less leadership abilities than men with similar characteristics, and the same actions performed by men and women in leadership situations are evaluated more negatively when women are the leaders. This evidence stands in contrast with survey data, which suggest that women leaders are seen as more effective and less likely to be corrupt. For example, a survey of 800 people in 8 countries in East Africa by the British council (British Council, 2002) found that more than 70% of people thought women performed better than or as well as men, and more than half of the people interviewed thought that women politicians were less corrupt and cared more about basic needs of the community than men.

Leadership focus in for-profit, public, and non-profit organizations
Billing and Alvesson (2000) drew attention to the dangers of essentialism in debates about gender where all women are viewed as homogenous, reinforcing traditional stereotypes. The proposition that there might be sector-based differences in leadership competencies stems from the apparent differences between the sectors themselves. Organizations in the private and public/non-profit sector vary in terms of goals, structure, accountability, budgets, and ownership, to name but a few areas of distinction. Fottler (1981) emphasized that values, incentives, and internal and external constraints are key institutional differences between the private and public sectors.

Research findings show that women adopt democratic and participative leadership styles in the corporate world and in education. Transformational leadership is the preferred leadership style used by women. The characteristics of transformational leadership relate to female values developed through socialization processes that include building relationships, communication, consensus building, power as influence, and working together for a common purpose (Trinidad & Normore, 2005).

Effectiveness of leadership, among other things, is characterized by the abilities to motivate people, build relationships and influence outcomes. The behaviour that is modeled by the leader and the top management profoundly shape and thereby determine competency level of their juniors. A transformational leader as compared to transactional leader has a major impact on the quality and efficiency level of subordinates (Burns, 1978; Bass, 1985; Bycio, Hackett & Allen, 1995).Transformational leadership is characterized as inspirational leadership, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration and charisma and transactional leadership refers to contingent rewards and management–by-expectation). What distinguishes these *transformational* leaders from transactional leaders is their relatively greater passionate commitment to a new vision for the organizations' future and their ability to share that vision.

Current research on leadership emphasizes the importance of inspiring passion in others. Some of the characteristics that leaders can embody to stimulate this passion are: a positive vision, inspiring core values, emotional intelligence, courage, and an engaging and inclusive leadership style (Bilimoria and Godwin, 2005). This approach to transmitting effective leadership is seen more typically in the business leadership literature. In particular, theories of charismatic (House, 1977), transformational (Bass, 1985), and visionary leadership (Sashkin, 1988) have inspired volumes of research and numerous training programs for business managers. A transfer of these passion-inspiring approaches to the public sector is seen only to a limited degree.

However, the literature on non-profits has grabbed onto these theories, recommending them as a way to transform the organization (Santora et al., 1999). Finally, some of the more recent literature on leadership in non-profit and public organizations has focused on participative management as a way for leaders to improve organizational performance and employee satisfaction (Kim, 2002). All over, women internventionists, in their capacity as leaders, are working through many NGOs towards gender empowerment and development. As leaders, they are actively involved in the process which requires them to perform a variety of functions at different levels within the organizational structure of the NGOs. Effectiveness in delineating these functions, among other things, is directly related to leadership qualities expected of these women leaders at different levels vis-à-vis the competencies possessed by them. In an NGO, which practices openness, participation, delegation and transparency, transformational leadership at the top could be clearly visible. This promotes and develops their transformational leadership traits and develops the behavioural competencies in their span of control. It leads to matured and effective leadership among women leaders working at these various levels down the line. It enhances credibility and effectiveness of the NGO in terms of its ultimate objectives such as development of gender, empowerment of women, improvement in the quality of life at large, etc.

The for-profit sector leadership has been examined to a far greater extent than has leadership in the public and non-profit sectors. The dimensions of leadership studied in each sector show great similarity. In fact, current texts for for-profit and non-profit leaders all seem to use the findings from the for-profit sector leadership research as the basis for their prescriptions for effective leadership. We see substantial overlap in the key attributes and skills associated with effective leadership. There is also the standard division of behaviors into the task-oriented and relationship-oriented categories. With regard to the importance of leadership to achieving results, a study asked women leaders "On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being very low and 10 being very high, how much do you believe leadership skills are important to achievement of

results? " On this survey item, the answers were very similar. The average response for for-profit leaders was 8.9 and the average response for public/non-profit leaders was 8.7, a negligible difference. The results suggested that both types of leaders view leadership skills as very important to achieving results, regardless of the organizational setting (Thach & Thompson, 2007).

Leaders as reflective practitioners
The main premise that informs the current research is the view that leadership is an art that can be developed through the mastery of key leadership areas of success which can be learned and improved through self-reflection. Self-reflection or introspection is self-examination or a reflective examination of one's beliefs and motives in order to know oneself. Why ask women to reflect on their leadership? To begin with, learning is deeply personal. Learning occurs when we test what we have learned through application and reflection. According to Branch & Paranjape (2002, cited in http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reflective_practice), "Reflection leads to growth of the individual – morally, personally, psychologically, and emotionally, as well as cognitively". Moreover, it can lead to personal growth, professional growth all leading to meaningful change. Secondly, and more specifically, through the process of reflection leaders can better understand their strengths and weaknesses, identify and question their underlying values and beliefs, acknowledge and challenge possible assumptions on which they base their ideas, feelings and actions and identify possible inadequacies or areas for improvement**.**

Leaders have been encouraged to become reflective practitioners (Argyris & Schon, 1978, 1996 cited in Grisoni & Beeby, 2007) to learn from their own and others' experiences and helping people to interpret the meaning of events. The leader as reflective practitioner is the leader as personal sense-maker.Reflection is usually related to action or practice, thus, the phrase 'reflective practitioner'. Reflection is, in Luhmann's (1982, p. 327) definition "the process through which a system establishes a relationship with itself ... [a] form of participation". Reflection is thought turning back to itself in an autopoetic process of 'auto-evaluation'. Action, on the other hand, requires that something happen; it is an engagement to transform what is to what it may become.

In addition to leadership qualities, appropriate use of power and performance, leaders are also encouraged to know themselves thoroughly if they want to become the leaders they aspire to become. Regarding leadership competencies in any type of organization, Bennis (1987) said, there are a few areas that have been proven time and again as mandatory for effective leadership. These include the competency clusters of vision and goal-setting, interpersonal skills, self-knowledge, and technical competence regarding the specifics of the business in which the leader works.

The Brazilian educational theorist Paulo Freire (1973) argued that we apprehend the objective data of our reality through reflection. In like manner, taking time to reflect can help leaders identify approaches that have worked well, and in that way reinforce good practice. By combining action and reflection, we create what Freire called praxis —a set of practices informed by reflection. Thus our actions are not random or haphazard but informed and deliberate and we are aware of why we do what we do. Griffiths (1990) also showed the realization of the importance and the relationship between reflection and action by stating that people reflect on, and improve, their own work and their own situations. He also states that reflection and action are tightly interlinked, including both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. This means that the process includes both monitoring and also both short term and longer term reflections.

Research Objectives

This research aims to explore the perceptions of women leaders on their performance on three key areas of leadership - on ten leadership qualities, type of power they use and their leadership performance - as perceived and assessed by the leaders themselves. A secondary aim of the study is to explore the role if any educational level, leadership experience and training in leadership play in the successful performance of women leaders in the three key leadership areas under investigation. The women are drawn from three sectors in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. These are the public, the non-governmental and for –profit or private sectors.

The study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do women leaders from the private, public and NGO sectors perform in the three areas of leadership?
2. Are there similarities and differences in the self-rating of women leaders in the three sectors in terms of the three key leadership areas?
3. Are there relationships between educational level, experience and training in leadership on the one hand and performance on the three leadership areas on the other among leaders from the three sectors?

Methods

Research Participants

By women leaders is meant women who currently assume decision-making positions in the three different sectors identified for the study. These include positions such as general/deputy manager, director, department head, program managers, team leaders. Purposive sampling method was used to select participants for the study. Participants were selected among women leaders who had a wide range of experiences in leadership positions and educational background, and who could understand and answer the items in the questionnaires. In other words, instead of statistical sampling, the study employs theoretical sampling wherein participant selection is based on potential relevance to the study's research questions. Intensity sampling (Patton, 2002) was used to select participants through

internal expert selection of members who manifested general leadership competence, knowledge and skills.

A total of 45 women leaders 15 each from public, NGO and private sectors participated in the study. The women leaders from public organizations were drawn from federal ministries, commissions, corporations, Addis Ababa sub-city administrations public schools. These include directors, general and deputy managers to department heads, program managers and team leaders. Women leaders from NGOs comprised of organizations and associations that work on children's' welfare, family, health, relief work, and constituted leaders from both faith – based and secular non-profit organizations. Here we have programme / senior managers and assistant managers, directors, programme / project coordinators, department heads, and a vice chairperson. The private sector leaders represented businesses such as manufacturing, distribution and retails, service industry such as education, training, consultancy, and hotels. Their positions include a 5 –Star hotel manager, medical doctor and manager of a clinic, general managers and assistant managers of Private Limited Companies, retail shop managers, consultancy firm manager, university college department head.

As summarized in Table 1, the women leaders are drawn from various backgrounds in terms of education, years of work experience both at the organization and at current position in the organizations they represented. Of the 45 leaders, 10 have MA / MSc degrees; 29 hold BA degrees; and 6 hold diplomas. Of these two hold MA and 5 BA in leadership and 28 had certificate level training in leadership.

Table 1
Participants' Educational Level and Experience

	Av. Years in		Qualification			Training in Leadership		
Sector	Org	Position	MA/MSc	BA	Dip	BA& above	Cert	No
Public	15.3	8.7	4	11	-	2	11	2
NGO	7	5.2	2	12	1	2	8	5
Private	9.7	4.9	4	6	5	3	9	3
Total	10.7	6.3	10	29	6	7	28	10

The average years of service within current organization and years in current leadership position are about 11 years and 6 years, respectively. Overall years of service and years in current position are higher in public organizations, followed by private and NGO sectors.

The Questionnaires

Each questionnaire consisted of two parts. The first part solicited information about a participant's organization, position in and number of years in the organization as well as years in current position, educational level and whether or not she has participated in leadership training programmes.

Moreover, three open-ended questions asked participants to state how they assumed current leadership positions, what helped them become the leaders they currently are and what kind of support they may need to be more effective and successful leaders. The second part of the questionnaire contained the three sets of questions, that is, one on leadership qualities (10 questions), a second on type of power used (16 questions) and a third on leadership performance (15 questions).

About 60 questionnaires were distributed to women participants drawn from the public, private and NGO sectors in Addis Ababa. Of these 45 women leaders (15 each from three sectors) completed and returned questionnaires on time. Each of the questionnaires has an already established and tested rating system and has been used by different researchers. Adapted from Manning and Curtis (2007), the scoring and interpretation methods used for each questionnaire are discussed in the findings section of the paper. Data was compared and contrasted using statistical means, averages and ranks.

Results and Discussions
In this section of the study, the findings from the three questionnaires will be presented in two sections. First, findings on the ten leadership qualities, type of power used by women leaders and their professional performance both overall and by sector will be presented. Secondly, the overall findings on the three key areas of leadership will be summarized, and comparisons and contrasts are made among sector leaders. Here an attempt is made to answer the question, 'Do education level, experience and training in leadership have any effect on women leaders' performance in the three areas of leadership?'

Findings on Leadership Qualities, Use of Power and Professional Performance
Ten leadership qualities
Leadership is about social influence, leaving a mark, initiating and guiding. The result of leadership is change and the product could be a new direction or character, etc. Effective leadership or effective leaders have the ability to attract and retain capable people, motivate them to put forth their best efforts, and solve problems that arise (Manning & Curtis, 2997). Wren (1995, p. 236) wrote, leaders, through "their ideas and deeds show the way and influence the behavior of others". To do so successfully, an effective leader must be director and motivator, implementer and innovator, mentor and team builder, expert and moral force, organizer and developer of people (Wren, 1995). Though different wordings are used, there are certain qualities or characteristics that effective leaders are expected to possess.

In this regard, the first key leadership area investigated of women leaders looks at one of the variables called leadership qualities. It answers the question 'What does it take to be a successful leader?' The following is a discussion of ten

qualities that mark a leader and help influence the leadership process – vision, ability, enthusiasm, stability, concern for others, self-confidence, persistence, vitality, charisma, and integrity (Manning & Curtis, 2007). Each is followed by the findings of the study on how the women leaders performed. Finally, overall ratings for three sectors are discussed. But first let us see how the ratings for this item work. Each quality is measured along a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest). Individual scores for the ten qualities are then added and scored out of 100. Accordingly, 'Excellent; exceptional' leaders score 90-100; those in the 'High; very good' category score 80-89; 'Average' leader's score is 70-79; and 'Low' is for those who score 60-69. Findings are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2
Rating of Leadership Qualities by Sector

Rank	Ranking by Public Sector	Ranking by NGO Sector	Ranking by Private Sector	Raking by all Sectors
1	Integrity	Self – confidence	Integrity	Integrity (92.7)
2	Enthusiasm	Integrity	Vision	Concern for others (89.7)
3	Charisma & Concern for others	Concern for others	Concern for others	Self – confidence (88.7)
4	-	Enthusiasm	Ability	Enthusiasm (88.4)
5	Persistence	Vision	Charisma	Vision (88.0)
6	Self-confidence	Vitality	Enthusiasm	Ability (85.6)
7	Vision	Ability	Vitality	Vitality (85.3)
8	Stability	Persistence	Self-confidence	Persistence (84.7)
9	Vitality	Charisma	Persistence	Charisma (84.3)
10	Ability	Stability	Stability	Stability (80.1)

Vision. The findings of the study show individual as well as sectoral variations in the ratings of this quality. Individually, a total of 24 leaders scored the highest rating (90-100; excellent, exceptional) of which 9 are private; 8 NGO and 9 public. But if we look at the sector average performance, we find that, public sector leaders scored the highest average of 92, followed by NGO leaders (88) and public leaders (84). 'Vision', with an average score of 88, ranked 5th out of the ten qualities for all sectors.

Ability. In terms of the quality of 'Ability', we also observe differences in scores of individual leaders and sectors. A total of 24 leaders were self-rated as 'Excellent' of which 6 are from the public, 9 from NGO and 9 from private sectors. Sectoral performance is higher for private (89) followed by 86 for NGO and 81 for public leaders. This quality ranked 6th with an average score of 85.6.

Enthusiasm. This quality seems to be almost consistent in leaders of all sectors with the average ratings of 89, 88 and 87 by public, NGO, and private sector leaders, respectively. The overall rank is 4th which is one of the highest rated qualities. Moreover, it also is one of the highest scored by 31 individual leaders (11 public; 10 NGO and 10 private).

Stability. 'Stability' seems to be one of the qualities lacking in the women leaders in the study. Only 5 from NGO 8 from private and 8 from public sector leaders were self-rated as 'Excellent' in this quality. This is the only quality that scored the lowest average (75 by NGO) among the ten qualities. This is followed by 83 and 84 by private and public sector leaders, respectively. It is also stands the last in rank, that is, 10th.

Concern for others. Following 'Integrity' this is the second highest in rank, scoring an average of 89.7. The highest number of leaders, that is, (33 of 45) also possess this quality as 'Excellent" and are drawn from public 8, NGO 12 and private 13. With slight difference, NGO (91.3) and private (91) lead followed by public (87) sector leaders.

Self - confidence. NGO leaders seem to be 'Excellent' in 'Self –confidence' ranking first in it by 93 points. With only slight differences between them follow private (86) and public (85) sector leaders. In general, this quality ranks 3rd for all sectors. A total of 28 leaders assessed themselves as 'Excellent' of which the highest are from NGO (11), 9 from private and 8 from public sectors.

Persistence. This quality ranks among the lowest, that is, 8th, by all sector leaders. Public sector leaders with an average score of 86 seem to manifest this quality more than private business leaders (85) and NGO leaders (83). Only 8 leaders each from the three sectors seem to be persistent.

Vitality. Both NGO and private business leaders seem to possess this quality almost equally (87 by private and 86.8 by NGO). The lowest score goes to public sector leaders with 82 points. 'Vitality' ranks 7th out of the ten qualities.

Charisma. 'Charisma' follows 'Stability' as the quality that is most lacking in all leaders in the study. Ranking 9th with an average 84.3 points, it is also assessed as 'Excellent by half of the leaders of which 8 are from public, 5 from NGO and 9 from private sector leaders.

Integrity. 'Integrity' is ranked 1st by all sector leaders with an average of 92.7 points. All sector leaders possess 'Excellent' integrity (scoring 93 points each for public and private and 92 for NGO). A score of 35 leaders (78 per cent of the total) 13 from public, 11 from private and 11 from NGO sectors individually scored 'Excellent' in this quality.

Another study by Thach & Thompson (2007) comparing 23 qualities of profit and non-profit organization leaders found out the following almost similar overall ranking for six qualities. Integrity was ranked 1st, Concern for others or developing others was ranked 3; Self-confidence was ranked 7; Being visionary was ranked 9; Enthusiasm or initiative was ranked 13; and Being inspirational or charismatic leader was ranked 9th.

Overall Ratings for Women leaders in different sectors
What really gives a true picture regarding qualities of effective leaders is not whether or not a leader possesses a particular quality better than others. It is the cumulative effect of the presence or absence of all the qualities that indicate the effectiveness of leadership. Hence, the need to explore the average ratings for each sector as shown in Table 2. If we look at the average ratings for qualities of leadership for NGO, Public and Private leaders, we find very slight differences. However, with an average of 87.9 per cent private sector leaders seem to lead followed by NGO sector leaders (86) and public sector leaders (85.7). This puts all leaders under the 'High; very good' category. However, there is a category called 'Excellent; exceptional' which women leaders in the study failed to reach or possess.

Findings on Type of Power Used by Leaders
According to Manning & Curtis (2007), another key characteristic of leadership is the empowerment of people through the exercise of power. With the office of leadership come both responsibility and power. The challenge for effective leadership is to meet the responsibility of the position without abusing its power. The successful leader masters the use of power to influence the behaviour of others. The following is a discussion of two sources of power, namely, power of the position and power of the person. The participants in this study have been asked to assess themselves in terms of these sources of power.

Sources of Leadership Power
Successful leaders master the use of power to influence the behaviour of others. Research by Manning & Curtis (2007) found out two sources of power for leaders. The first is power of the position based on what leaders can offer to others. Here the leader can use reward, coercive, legitimate or information power to influence followers' behaviour. The second is based on how leaders are viewed by others and refers to power of the person. Using expert, referent, rational or charisma power the leader attempts to persuade followers to do what he/she deems important.

Ratings for Sources of Leader Power
Women leaders from the three sectors were presented with 16 statements and asked to select the most appropriate response using the following scale: 1= strongly disagree; 2= disagree; 3= neither agree nor disagree; 4= agree; 5 = strongly agree. Each of the eight power types was represented with two statements. Thus, the highest score for each type is 10 and the highest for the four types under each category is 40.

Based on the above ratings, the effective leader is expected to emphasize the power of the person to achieve desired goals. This does not rule out the use of power that emanates from the position when and where contexts demand it. An ideal leader uses each of the following eight types of power in the following order. First come power of the person in the following order. Firstly, the leader needs to maintain knowledge and skill (expertise); secondly, she is expected to manifest high moral character (referent power); thirdly, she is required to demonstrate effective problem –solving ability (rational power); and fourthly, she needs to motivate and inspire people (charisma). The effective leader also needs a second set of power sources that come from the position one holds formally in the organization. From these comes the fifth type of power - the need for the leader to reward efforts and accomplishments (reward power); to make effective decisions (legitimacy) is sixth; and the seventh is keeping people informed on important matters (information). Finally, the effective leader rarely if ever uses fear and punishment (coercion) as form of power (Manning & Curtis 2007).

We can now examine the power participants say they use in leading their respective organizations in light of the preceding discussion on the ideal order of power use. As indicated above, an effective leader emphasizes the power of the person more than the power of position. Thus, we will start by assessing individual sector leaders who scored the highest in this power source. Only one NGO leader scored 40 out of 40 for power of the person (that is, Expert, Referent, Rational and Charisma). This is followed by three NGO leaders and one public leader who scored 39 out of 40. One each from public and NGO and three from private sectors scored 38 out of 40. Thus, NGO leaders seem to approach the ideal leader we discussed earlier, followed by private and public leaders.

As indicated in Table 3, women leaders in all sectors seem to favor one of the powers that emerge from position, namely, reward power and seem never to use coercion as a way of leading. Whereas the former finding seems to disagree with what is expected of an ideal leader, the later finding seems to completely agree. Another power of the person, referent power, which refers to capacity to influence others because of their desire to identify with the leader, is the next less used power type by women leaders in the study. Yet this power type is ranked second in the ideal leader. Information power, belonging to power of position, seems to be favored rather than

referent power. The overall ratings put women leaders in the NGO sector to use more power of the person and appear closer to the idea leader. Leaders in the private and public sectors follow.

Table 3
Rankings on the Power Type Used by Sector Leaders

Power sources	Power type	Ideal rank	Rank by Public	Rank by NGO	Rank by Private
Power of Person	Expert	1	3	2	4
	Referent	2	7	6	7
	Rational	3	4	5	3
	Charisma	4	2	3	2
Power of Position	Reward	5	1	1	1
	Legitimate	6	6	7	6
	Information	7	5	4	5
	Coercion	8	8	8	8

The focus on power of the person (reward and information power) by all sector leaders may indicate the prevalence of a style that leans more to transactional, authoritarian leadership than democratic and transformational leadership. Could these have resulted from the influence of more paternalistic ways of socializations both women and men have been exposed to? Or could the male dominated organizations and their reliance on power that emanates from the position one holds and not how that power needs to be used to work with and through people have helped shape women's leadership styles? Though more research in this regard is called for, it seems plausible to argue that the way women are socialized and previously led could influence the way they themselves lead.

Findings on Women Leaders' Performance Type
Another key leadership area, performance management, refers to achieving organizational success through personal humility, fierce resolve and sustained discipline. For leadership effectiveness it is important to have a vision, it is important to have leadership qualities, it is important to have the power of leadership position. But all of these will result in little actual accomplishment without performance management skills (Manning & Curtis, 2007).An important element of performance management and the third area self-assessed by women leaders is professional performance. For this purpose, the questionnaire evaluated job performance in three important areas: stateswomanship, entrepreneurship and innovation. A brief discussion on each follows.

Stateswomanship is the ability to work with and through other people. A stateswoman is skillful in human relations and is able to multiply personal accomplishments through the efforts of others. A stateswoman is not a dictator, but rather a developer of effective relationships. The stateswoman is one who guides rather than leads, helping others to make decisions rather than making decisions alone. The stateswoman believes that if

everyone works together, more can be accomplished. Entrepreneurship is the ability to achieve results, regardless of obstacles. It takes entrepreneurship to build a plant on time, to produce a quality product, and to close a sale. An entrepreneur is action-oriented, but knows that it is not just action, but achievement, that counts. Innovation is the ability to generate new and usable ideas. The innovator is not satisfied with the status quo, and therefore explores, questions, and studies new ways of doing things. Innovation accounts for advances in all fields of work. Important products we take for granted today are the results of yesterday's inventions.

Ratings for Professional Performance
To assess their professional performance women leaders were presented with 15 questions, five each for stateswomanship, entrepreneurship, and innovation. Each question had four alternative answers with 1, 3, 5 & 7 point distribution. Thus, the highest possible score for each performance type is 7 multiplied by 5 which equals to 35. Accordingly, a score of 30-35 places a leader on the 'Extremely high performer' level; a score of 20-29 is for 'Good performer'; a score of 15-19 is for a leader who is doing the job, no more, no less. A score of below 14 is for those leaders who need a lot do to improve performance. Like the findings for the two key areas of leadership, there are individual as well as sectoral differences in professional performance in terms of both each of and average for the three performance types. When we look at individual scores for the three performance types we find that seven NGO (of these 5 are for Stateswomanship, one each for Entrepreneurship and Innovation); three private (two for Stateswomanship and one for Entrepreneurship) and one public sector leader seem to belong to the 'Extremely high performer' category. This makes up 24 per cent of the leaders who participated in the study. Only 2 leaders from the private sector scored the lowest (13 out of 35) for Stateswomanship and Innovation.

Unlike the individual differences in performance, we observe almost similar average scores by sector for all three performance types. As shown in Table 4, NGO leader seem to be able to work more with and through other people (Stateswomanship) followed by both private and public sector leaders. Though with insignificant difference, private sector leaders, on the other hand, seem to possess the ability to achieve more results (Entrepreneurship) followed by both NGO and public sector leaders. Finally, when it comes to Innovation, that is, the ability to generate new and usable ideas, again with slight difference between them public and NGO sector leaders seem to perform better than private sector leaders. Similarly, there are differences within sector leaders in terms of achievements in the three performance types. With the highest average score of 26 NGO leaders seem to perform better as Stateswomen, followed by Innovation (25) and Entrepreneurship (23.7). Public sector leaders, scored the next best average score of 25.5 for Innovation, and 25 for Entrepreneurship and 22.6 (the lowest average) for

Stateswomanship. Finally, private sector leaders seem to perform relatively higher as Stateswoman than as Entrepreneurs and Innovators.

Table 4
Professional Performance by Sector

Performance type	Public	NGO	Private	Average
Stateswomanship	22.6	26	24.3	24.3
Entrepreneurship	25	25	25.7	25.2
Innovation	25.5	25	23.7	24.7
Average	24.4	25.3	24.6	

The overall average performance rating for all sectors in the three performance types (that is 20-29) puts women leaders who participated in the study under the 'Good performers' category (See Table 4). These are types of leaders who are pivotal people in their organizations and are solid produces. However, there is a higher much more efficient performer category called 'Extremely high performers' who as a result of ability, experience, motivation, and attitude, produce top results.

Educational Level, Experience and Training in Leadership
Do education level, experience and training in leadership have any effect on women leaders' performance in the three areas of leadership? As mentioned in the first section of the paper, participants in this research come from varied backgrounds in terms of years of experience in leadership position, educational level and training in leadership. Table 5 shows the rankings for women leaders in the three sectors in the three leadership areas in relation to experience, education and training in leadership. Women leaders from the public sector rank first in educational level (15 of them have MA /BA degrees), years in leadership position (average of 9 years) and training in leadership (13 out the 15). But when it comes to their performance in the three key leadership areas they score the least and stand last. It seems safe to conclude that experience, education and training have no effect on the performance of women leaders at least in the public sector.

Table 5
Over Rankings on Experience, Education and Performance of Key leadership Areas by Sector

Sector	Rank in Experience	Rank in education	Rank in leadership training	Rank in three areas of leadership
NGO	2	2	3	1
Private	3	3	2	2
Public	1	1	1	3

Women leaders in the private sector rank second in leadership training (12 out of 15), and third in both education (10 MA &

BA) and experience (average of 5 years). However, they stood second in performance in the three areas of leadership. Thus, these leaders seem to perform better than public sector leaders in the three key leadership areas in spite of lower rankings in education, experience and training.

The same seems to be true for NGO sector leaders. Ranking second in both experience (average of 5.3 years) and education (14 of the 15 have BA/MA degrees), and third in training (only 10 of the 15), they stood first in the three key leadership areas. Like leaders in the private sector, these leaders have proved to be effective leaders in spite of limited experience and training in leadership.

Why do women leaders in the public sector perform less as effective leaders while having the highest level of education, adequate training in leadership and more years in leadership positions? Why do NGO sector leaders with limited experience and training in leadership prove to be more effective leaders than the rest? In addition to personal qualities, performance and power use, other factors such as the broader culture and organizational culture as well as the characteristics of followers also contribute to leadership effectiveness. For example, public and non-profit organizations tend to be focused on public interest, while the goals of private organizations are driven by profits and self-interest (Blau & Scott, 1962; Rainey et al., 1976 cited in Thach & Thompson, 2007). Compared to private organizations, human resource systems in public organizations tend to be merit-based (Ring & Perry, 1985 cited in Thach 7 Thompson, 2007), and performance incentives tend to be inadequate or absent (Perry & Porter, 1982).

Research also shows that public organizations are more open to environmental influences as a result of their accountability to multiple constituencies, policy makers, and legislative mandates (Self, 1977; Ring & Perry, 1985 cited in Thach & Thompson, 2007). Along those same lines, Lan and Rainey (1992) found that public leaders perceived a higher emphasis in their organizations on formalized rules and procedures, which impinge upon their authority. After all, as discussed above and in the theoretical section of the paper, the proposition that there might be sector-based differences in leadership performance stems from the apparent differences between the sectors themselves. Organizations in the private, public and non-profit sector vary in terms of goals, structure, accountability, budgets, and ownership. Moreover, values, incentives, and internal and external constraints are key institutional differences between the private and public sectors.

The research participants' response to three open –ended questions – one on how the women assumed leadership positions, another on what helped in becoming the leaders one is and a third on the kind of support they would need to be even more effective leaders – could probably help answer the above questions. The first open-ended question asked 'How did you assume current leadership position? In other words, how did

you become the leader of the organization or section? 'Leaders from the public sector mentioned that they assumed current leadership position through promotion based on competition that valued experience and educational qualification. The answer these leaders forwarded to the second question 'What helped you be the leader you currently are?' seems to differ from other sector leaders. They mentioned good performance, educational qualification and training in leadership.

NGO leaders responded to question one in similar ways as those in the public sector (educational background; qualification for the position) but added personal qualities (such as persuasiveness, self-confidence, human relations, customer handling) and personal effort and interest in what they are doing. In answering the second question they also mentioned similar factors as those by public leaders (experience; good performance; education and training; qualification, personal qualities (persuasiveness, self-confidence, human relations, customer handling) but added two factors not mentioned by public sector leaders: supportive / conducive work environment and personal effort and commitment. Answers for the first question by the private sector are slightly different as they focused more on ownership of business, shareholder; being elected by shareholders followed by education and qualification; personal qualities and experience. Answers to the second question are similar as those of the public and NGO leaders.

The reasons why women leaders in the public sector perform less as effective leaders with the highest level of education, adequate training in leadership and more years in leadership positions while NGO sector leaders with limited experience and training in leadership prove to be effective leaders seem to reside in the type and culture of organization and other personal qualities. Unlike the public leaders, NGO leaders added personal qualities (such as persuasiveness, self-confidence, skills in human relations and customer handling) and personal effort and interest in what they are doing as contributing factors for their assumption of current position. They also added factors such as supportive / conducive work environment and personal effort and commitment to have helped them to be the leaders they have become. Thus, in addition to the inherent differences among sectors, personal traits such drive, commitment, interest, interpersonal skills tend to affect leadership quality and effectiveness among the women leaders of the different sectors.

To a question about the kind of support women leaders need to be even more effective leaders, they requested help in the following areas in that order: (1) short –term training on leadership; (2) Experience-sharing, learning from exposure and feedback on performance; (3) psychological support;, encouragement and recognition for one's contribution; (4) supportive work environment.

Conclusions

This research has attempted to answer three questions introduced in the first part of the paper. The following discussion brings the conclusions of the study by answering these questions.

1. How do women leaders from the private, public and NGO sectors perform in the three areas of leadership?

Performance on Leadership Qualities

With variations both at the individual and sectoral levels, women leaders in the study self-rated the ten leadership qualities as follows: Integrity; Concern for others; Self – confidence; Enthusiasm; Vision; Ability; Vitality; Persistence; Charisma; and Stability.

The findings of the study show that with minor differences among them, private sector leaders seem to possess the ten leadership qualities better than and followed by NGO and public sector leaders. The average score for all sector leaders puts them under the 'High; very good' category in terms of possessing these qualities. However, there is a category called 'Excellent; exceptional' which our leaders failed to reach or possess.

Power use

Both in terms of individual and group performance, NGO leaders seem to use power of the person to the highest degree. They are followed by private sector leaders and last come public sector leaders. While the ideal leader is expected first and foremost to use more of 'Expert' power, women leaders in study ranked it third. Instead they ranked 'Reward' power first. Such a tendency could indicate the prevalence of transactional rather than transformational leadership among participants of the study.

Professional performance

NGO leader seem to be more able to work with and through other people (Stateswomanship) followed by both private and public sector leaders. Though with insignificant difference, private sector leaders, on the other hand, seem to possess the ability to achieve more results (Entrepreneurship) followed by both NGO and public sector leaders. Finally, when it comes to Innovation, that is, the ability to generate new and usable ideas, again with slight difference between them public and NGO sector leaders seem to perform better than private sector leaders.

The overall average performance rating for all sectors in the three performance types puts NGO women leaders at the top followed by private and public sector leaders. It also puts women leaders who participated in the study under the 'Good performers' category. These are types of leaders who are pivotal people in their organizations and are solid produces. However, there is a higher much more efficient performer category called 'Extremely high performers' who as a result of ability, experience, motivation, and attitude, produce top results. These findings are similar to those arrived at by a study done earlier on 12 women leaders in Addis Ababa. The overall

results for the two key leadership areas – leadership qualities and professional performance – show that women NGO leaders seem to score the highest, that is, an average of 88% followed by women in private businesses with an average score of 84 %. With 81%, women leaders in the public sector came last.

2. Are there similarities and differences in the self-rating of women leaders in the three sectors in terms of the three key leadership areas?

Findings of the study show that women leaders in the NGO sector scored highest in terms of using power of the person, in professional performance and high in leadership qualities. Women leaders from the private sector stood second by scoring the highest in leadership qualities and high in the use of power of the person and professional performance. Women leaders from the public sector scored lowest and stood third in all key areas of leadership.

As discussed earlier, for leadership effectiveness it is important to have all of the leadership qualities of the highest degree and it is also important to exercise the power of the person more than the power of position. But all of these will result in little actual accomplishment without the required performance or achievements that realize the goals of the organization. A question to address in this regard would be 'Is there any correlation between the two key leadership areas and professional performance by sector?

Findings of the study indicate that in terms of professional performance NGO leaders scored the highest compared to leaders from the two sectors. These leaders also scored the highest in using power of the person and possessing the required leadership qualities. The same is true for leaders in both the private and public sectors, though with slight difference It seems reasonable to conclude that there is positive correlation between high scores in the two key areas of leadership and professional performance. In other words, the higher the scores for the two leadership areas, the higher the ratings for professional performance.

3. Are there relationships between educational level, experience and training on the one hand and performance on the three leadership areas on the other among the leaders?

The overall findings indicate that the relatively higher performance of women sectoral leaders in the study could be attributed to their corresponding high levels of educational qualification, over all work experience and experience in leadership positions, and training on leadership. If we look at sectoral differences, the findings of the study indicate that women leaders in the public sector perform less as effective leaders regardless of high level of education, adequate training in leadership and more years in leadership positions. NGO leaders, on the other hand, were found to be effective leaders in spite of their limited experience and training in leadership compared to those in the public sector. What factors could contribute to this state of affairs? As discussed earlier, the

answer lies in the fact that though there are inherent differences among sectors in terms of goals, structure, culture, accountability, budgets, values, incentives and ownership, personal traits of leaders such drive, commitment, interest, interpersonal skills tend to affect leadership quality and effectiveness and make significant variations among leaders.

Recommendations

This study has shown how women leaders in different sectors in the capital of the country self-assessed their leadership effectiveness on three leadership areas. It is hoped that the findings will contribute to the understanding of the status of current women leaders in selected sectors in terms of the key leadership areas. More significantly, however, the study indicates what needs to be done to improve the quality as well as increase the number of women leaders in the country. In line with this, the following recommendations are forwarded.

1. There is still a lot to be studied and discovered about gender and leadership in Ethiopia. Actual interventions become worthwhile when supported by and based on rigorous research and not on any amount and quality of rhetoric. Thus, the growing interest to support research in this area by public as well as NGOs needs to be strengthened.

2. Research into gender and leadership needs to be translated into action. It must be accompanied as well as followed by activities that help bring more women into leadership positions and that empower current women leaders. Such activities include continuous and need-based trainings on leadership, recognition for contributions made by women leaders, and creating sustaining and supportive work environments.

3. As the few studies on women leaders in Ethiopia and the leadership trainings thus far offered to women attest, there is an ever-growing need for education and training in leadership. The efforts by public organizations and women's affairs offices in this regard need a solid support from the non-profit, non-governmental organizations.

Limitations and Implications for Future Research

One drawback of the study could be asking leaders to reflect about their leadership. Studies on leadership effectiveness tend to follow the 360 – degree assessment strategy. That is, they use the leader's self –assessment plus peers', followers' and bosses' assessments. The danger associated with asking leaders to self – assess their performance lies in the tendency to characterize themselves in terms of dominant leadership traits and behaviour. At the same time leaders tend to describe themselves in terms that fit with the prevailing rhetoric of good leadership practice, now strongly associated with a consultative style and a high level of interpersonal skills. Thus, results of such assessments could be more favourable to the leaders.

However, there is research that shows otherwise. In a study of leadership styles of for-profit, public and non-profit leaders,

Thach and Thompson (2007) administered questionnaires to participants. The most obvious and significant difference was that the women in the study tended to under assess their own skills when compared with how they were assessed by direct reports, by peers, and by bosses in the majority of cases. Men, by contrast, tended to over-assess their skills. How would Ethiopian leaders, women and men, perform if similar studies were done? Considering the effect of the culture of the society and organization and the nature of followers, the outcomes could be different. Moreover, there is no denying that effects of such tendencies - to under – or over-assess one's performance - could be minimized by including assessments by followers, peers and bosses. This, of course, calls for another study.

As can be surmised from the above discussion and the findings of the study there is a need for more and much detailed research on gender and leadership in Ethiopia. A follow up study could be done on the performance of the same women leaders as assessed by their followers, peers and bosses. On a general note, more longitudinal and cross-cutting research is called upon to investigate the factors that influence the success of women leaders in Ethiopia and how they fare in relation to men leaders in the private, public and non-governmental sectors.

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