

## Strategic Leadership and Gender Mainstreaming: The Mediating Effect of Gender Unit Empowerment

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### Abstract

This study was designed to examine the mediating role of gender unit on effects of strategic leadership in mainstreaming gender. In order to address this case, the descriptive and explanatory research designs were employed. Accordingly, survey questionnaire was used to collect primary data from two offices (communication and gender unit) in each of 135 randomly selected public institutions. The data were analyzed using SPSS software to generate descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive result of this study shows that more public organizations relatively exercise transformational leadership style followed by contingent reward of transactional and laissez-faire styles. The study also found that the gender mainstreaming practices in public organizations were mainly focused on “equal treatment” perspective that entails the formulation and enforcement of legal instruments to promote equal participation in decision making positions. In addition, the results of regression analysis depict that both transformational and contingent reward of transactional leadership styles have positive effect on practices of gender mainstreaming in public organizations. It was also confirmed that the positive effects of transformational and contingent reward of transactional leadership styles on gender mainstreaming practices were partially mediated by empowered gender unit. Therefore, it is very important to establish an autonomous, skilled and experienced, well-resourced and empowered gender unit in public organizations to enhance the role of strategic leaders to ensure gender mainstreaming practices from all equal treatment, women and gender perspectives.

**Key Words:** Gender mainstreaming, Gender unit, Leadership styles, Mediating effect, Public organizations, Strategic leaders

### 1. Introduction

In recent years, ‘gender mainstreaming’ has become a key strategy for development practitioners to promote gender equality. This concept has been popular since the 1995 UN International Conference on Women and adoption of the ‘Beijing Platform for Action’ for women’s advancement. It pledges to promote gender equality and to curb a gender-blind approach to development that has tended to ignore and marginalize women (Gawanas, 2009).

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© 2017 Ethiopian Civil Service University (ECSU)

ISSN 2519-5255(print) ISSN 2957-9104(online)



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Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) also recognized mainstreaming gender in governance particularly in political participation and decision-making. One of the important tools to achieve the MDGs was to ensure gender equity and equality through gender mainstreaming in governance. This was again considered as an integral part of good governance and key to poverty eradication and development effectiveness (Blackden, Canagarajah, Klasen, & Lawson, 2007). The issue of gender mainstreaming is also one of the agendas of the Ethiopian government which is the subject of this study. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) has formulated National Women's Policy in 1993 with core objectives of creating and facilitating conditions for equality between men and women, eliminating stereotypes, and discriminatory perception and practices that constrain the equality of women. FDRE has created favorable policy climate to gender mainstreaming and is officially committed to gender equality at a policy level and has signed up to key international conventions and agreements to this effect including the MDGs (Cherinet, Mulugeta, & Ababa, 2002; Waterhouse & Sever, 2005).

Besides to the aforementioned national women policy, gender equality is guaranteed by the constitution of the country. Article 25 of the FDRE constitution states that all persons are equal before the law and it prohibits any discrimination on grounds of gender. In Article 35, equality in matters related to employment, equality in acquisition and management of property, equal participation in policy and decision making, and right of women to plan families are stated to ensure gender equality (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia/FDRE/ Constitution, 1995). In order to realize the constitutional provision and National Women's Policy objectives, the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs with collaboration of other stakeholders has designed the gender mainstreaming guidelines in 2010 with the overall objective of enhancing the effective mainstreaming of gender in all development programs to ensure equal participation and benefit of women with men in the country (Ministry of Women Children and Youth Affairs/MoWCYA, 2006). The government has also shown its commitment by developing other gender responsive policies and programs such as population policy, educational policy, labor law 377/2004, Federal Rural land administration law, civil service proclamation 262/2002, cultural policy, pension law and social policy which facilitate the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming in the country with aim to minimize gender gap in social, economic and political perspectives (FDRE, 2006). With the desire to facilitate the implementation of all these gender responsive legal instruments, the government has shown the highest commitment in establishing gender unit that mainly focuses on gender issues in different institutions.

Despite the commitment of government in designing and implementing different gender mainstreaming strategies, studies show that there is high gender gap. For instance, according to the work of Cherinet et al. (2002), Ethiopian women, like the cases of many countries, are mainly poorer and less educated than men. The females' low status in education and economic levels and other many factors triggered for their insignificant roles in political participation and decision making. For instance, out of 547 parliament seats only 2.38% and 7.68% were held by women in years 1995 and 2000 national elections respectively. Interestingly, the proportion of women in federal people representatives rose to about 22 percent in year 2005 election and arrived to 38.8 percent during year 2015 election (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017). However, women held not more than 15 percent of higher level positions in the executive and judiciary branches of government in 2014 (Gebru & Demeke, 2015). This clearly informs that more tasks to be done to ensure gender equality in higher decision making positions in the future.

In addition to the practical gap indicated above, there is little empirical research that explicates whether the gender unit plays a mediating role for commitment of strategic leaders to

successfully implement gender mainstreaming in governance of public sector. Cognizant of this, our study argues that for the efforts of strategic leadership to be effective in mainstreaming gender, there should be an autonomous and skilled gender unit that plays a mediating role. This implies that the strategic leadership enhances the practices of gender mainstreaming in organizations with the mediation role of gender unit/desk, which otherwise cannot be realized (Page, 2011; Sclater, 2009). Therefore, this study has paramount importance in filling these gaps and will be used as an input for policy makers to know the practices of gender mainstreaming at government institutions. Then after, they will be able to take vital measures to mitigate the existing problems to accelerate gender mainstreaming to achieve gender equality in decision making and leadership posts in government institutions as well as in any other social and economic spheres. Furthermore, it will be used as a corner stone for other scholars to conduct investigation in the area that has not been addressed in this study or for further detailed investigation.

Based on the focus of the study that signifies the existence of gender gap in government institutions, this study answered the following basic research questions:

1. What strategic leadership style is dominant in public sector of Ethiopia?
2. What kind of gender mainstreaming practices has been exercised?
3. What is the relationship between strategic leadership (transformational and transactional) and the effective gender mainstreaming?
4. How does empowered gender unit explain the effect of leadership style on the best practices of gender mainstreaming?

Besides, the study was based on testing the following hypotheses:

- H1: Transformational leadership would positively influence gender mainstreaming practices.*
- H2: Transactional leadership would positively influence gender mainstreaming practices.*
- H3: There would be a positive significant relationship between the empowerment of gender unit and the practices of gender mainstreaming.*
- H4: Empowered gender unit would play the mediating role in the relationship between strategic leadership and gender mainstreaming.*

## **2. Concepts and Theories**

### **2.1 Strategic Leadership**

Before directly moving to the concept of strategic leadership, we better show the basic differences between leadership and strategic leadership on the basis of Hambrick (2007) work. The first distinction is that leadership pertains to leaders at all levels in the organization whereas strategic leadership focuses on only the top executives at a higher echelon of the organizations. The second distinction is that leadership emphasizes on the relationship and nature of interactions among the leaders, followers and contexts while the study of strategic leadership focuses on executive works from strategic perspectives. In other words, leadership takes the micro perspectives whereas the emphasis of strategic leadership is at a macro level. For purpose of this study, we adopt the strategic leadership approach to examine how the overall leadership of an organization influences the practices of gender mainstreaming.

Though there are many theories of leadership, transactional/transformational leadership framework has been proven useful for the study of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) level management. Transactional and transformational leadership styles can contribute to a more realistic view of top management. They build on prior classifications of leadership such as task-oriented versus relations-oriented; directive versus participative leadership. In some cases, strategic leaders also exhibit a laissez-faire style in which leaders lack direct supervision of employees and fail to provide regular feedback to those under their supervision. Highly experienced and trained employees requiring little supervision fall under the laissez-faire leadership style. However, not all employees possess those characteristics. As a result, it hinders the production of employees needing supervision (Vera & Crossan, 2004).

Transactional leadership has an exchange orientation whereby a leader uses some form of rewards or punishments depending on the behaviors of organizational members. This involves setting goals, articulating explicit agreements about the leader expectations, and rewards for the efforts and commitment of organizational members, and providing constructive feedback to keep everybody on task. Transactional leadership has two core dimensions: contingent reward, and Active management-by-exception. In a contingent reward, transactional leadership motivates followers by giving rewards upon accomplishment of the agreed goals. Through active management-by-exception, transactional leadership develops work standards and engages in the coordination, and monitoring of activities for successful completion of organizational goals (Vera & Crossan, 2004).

Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is concerned with the development and empowerment of the followers to work independently. This new approach to leadership is an improvement version of charismatic leadership that views a leader as an extraordinary and the followers dependent on the leader. Transformational leadership theory is sometimes said to be a neo-charismatic theory. Transformational leaders empower and motivate the followers to perform beyond their expectations, and to make them work on transcendental plans, collective goals rather than focusing solely on immediate personal interests (Kark, 2004). Transformational leadership has four interrelated dimensions, namely inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bellé, 2013; Tyssen, Wald, & Spieth, 2014). Inspirational motivation involves motivating the employees by articulating an appealing vision and future for an organization. In connection with this, transformational leaders encourage and facilitate their followers to work toward that vision. Through idealized influence, transformational leaders act as a role model by showing behaviors consistent with the stated vision, build employee confidence and pride in the organization. Through intellectual stimulation, transformational leaders stimulate followers to challenge old assumptions about organizational problems in intellectual manner. In this way, transformational leaders promote intelligence, rationality, creativity, and encourage new approaches for performing tasks. Finally, individual consideration entails becoming responsive to each follower's needs through mentoring, coaching and other similar activities. In view of the above mentioned contemporary leadership theory of transformational leadership and transactional leadership, we examine the effect of strategic leadership on the practices of gender mainstreaming. The next section presents about gender mainstreaming.

## **2.2 Gender Mainstreaming Practices**

To start from the basic terminologies, the history of 'gender' can be tracked to the distinction that feminism made between biological 'sex' and socially constructed 'gender' (EvElinE &

BaCChi, 2010). The following explanations given by Sen (2000:7) are very helpful to establish the gender/sex distinctions:

*Gender can be defined as the set of characteristics, roles and behavior patterns that distinguish women from men which are constructed not biologically but socially and culturally. The sex of an individual is biologically determined, whereas gender characteristics are socially constructed, a product of nurturing, conditioning, and socio-cultural norms and expectations. The concept of gender refers not only to women and men but, importantly to the relations of power between them.*

From gender relations angle, many scholars (for example, Antrobus, 2000; Egne, 2014; Haile & Enqueselassie, 2016) argue that the socially defined gender roles of men and women largely influence the power balance between the two sexes. As it is common in many developing countries, most communities in Ethiopia ascribe inferior positions such as home-makers to women (Burgess, 2013). In order to address gender inequality that exists in various forms and at different levels, gender mainstreaming is a vital strategy.

Gender mainstreaming was first popularized during the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995. Since that time, it has been widely adopted in many policy documents at international, national, and local levels by different institutions. Gender mainstreaming involves both the integration of women into existing systems as active participants and changes to the existing systems to reduce gender inequalities stemming from women's disadvantaged position in societies (Tiessen, 2004). In this line, Tiessen (2004: 318) defines gender mainstreaming as 'a process that seeks to advance gender equality by putting gender in the Centre of all mainstream policy areas.' Thus, gender mainstreaming entails embedding gender equality in systems, processes, policies, and institutions.

Booth and Bennett (2002) conceptualized gender mainstreaming in terms of three perspectives: equal treatment perspective, a women's perspective, and a gender perspective. They called these perspectives as the 'three-legged equality stool' to emphasize that the perspectives are interdependent and affinity. The equal treatment perspective is based on the liberal principles of equal rights and treatment before the law. It basically describes actions that guarantee women the same rights and the same opportunities as men in the public sphere. The Practices and actions under equal treatment perspective emphasize on the need to secure 'voice' which entails addressing the democratic deficit, formulating statutory and mandatory legal instruments, and ensuring a gender balance in decision-making (Booth & Bennett, 2002). The women's perspective inspires initiatives that recognize women as a disadvantaged group in society, who deserve and require particular treatment and special provision in order to redress their past experience of discrimination, which has become institutionalized. Practices under women's perspective relates to resources allocation, which entails providing more funding for equality projects, and redistributing resources to address the needs of women (Booth & Bennett, 2002).

The gender perspective-the third stool- promotes actions that aim to transform the organization of society to a fairer distribution of human responsibilities. It acknowledges the differences between women and between men. According to this perspective, transformation of human lives is premised on the understanding that men are not the deliberate oppressors of women, but can also be disempowered by current social arrangements. This perspective to

gender mainstreaming advocates the practices that secure the reconciliation of home, work, and family life (Booth & Bennett, 2002). The above three perspectives of gender mainstreaming can be summarized in table 2.1 as follows:

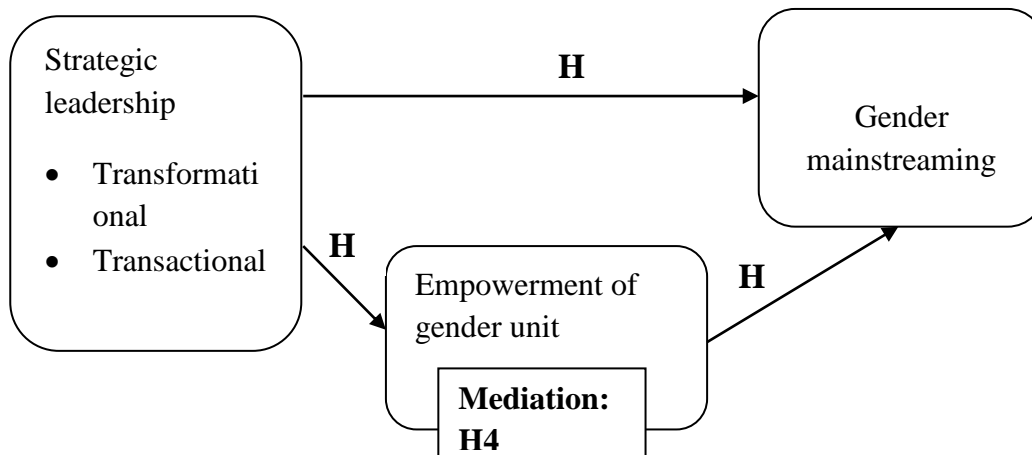
**Table 2.1: Dimensions of gender mainstreaming**

Equal treatment perspective	Women's perspective	Gender perspective
Equal rights and opportunities	Equality of outcome	Equal valuing of difference
Legislative response	Separate institutional provision	Managing diversity

Source: Booth and Bennett (2002: 434)

### 2.3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses of the Study

Drawn from the literature reviewed in the previous sections, figure 2.1 depicts a conceptual framework of this study. On the basis of the framework, this section presents hypotheses of the study along with their arguments.



**Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework of the study**

Source: Authors' own synthesis based on Vera and Crossan (2004), Maddock (2002), and Tiessen (2004).

### 2.4 Strategic leadership and gender mainstreaming

Leadership is one of the important means by which the executives influence organizational practices. Strategic leadership theory asserts that the decisions made by the top managers would influence about what happens in the organizations (Vera & Crossan, 2004). The implication of the theory is that the values and predispositions of top executives determine about what happens in their respective organizations. In this line, the best leaders are those who possess both transformational and transactional leadership behaviors. Therefore, this study argues that transformational leadership, and transactional leadership can encourage personnel to take the engendering process seriously (empowering gender unit) and thus can positively contribute for gender mainstreaming. In other words, the study speculates that strategic leadership helps the gender unit (mediator) to be empowered which in turn contributes to effective gender mainstreaming practices.

### **3. Methodology of the study**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This study employed both descriptive and explanatory research methods. Using a descriptive research design, we addressed issues about the predominant leadership styles exercised by top executives and the strategies and activities used to promote gender mainstreaming in Ethiopian public sector. By applying an explanatory research design, we established the causal mechanism that drives the successful implementation of gender mainstreaming practices. Accordingly, this study tests the hypothesis that strategic leadership has a positive effect on the effective implementation of gender mainstreaming practices in the public sector. More importantly, the study seeks to explicate the mediating effect of gender-unit empowerment on the relationship between strategic leadership and gender mainstreaming practices.

#### **3.2 Research Setting and Participants**

The sampling unit of this study is public-sector organizations that operate at federal government, Addis Ababa City Administration, and Oromia Regional State levels. The unit of analysis for this study is the gender unit/desk and communication officers working in the public organizations in selected areas with belief to provide relevant information to the subject matter under study.

#### **3.3 Sample and Data Collection Procedures**

By taking the time constraint and shortage of fund into account, we purposively selected Federal, Addis Ababa City Administration, and Oromia Regional State. The targeted population for this study was 225 public institutions operating in the three selected government levels. Out of these institutions, a questionnaire survey was administered to 270 respondents working in 135 public sector organizations, which were selected with the use of simple random sampling method. From the total 270 survey questionnaires administered, 252 respondents drawn from 126 public sector organizations returned their completed questionnaire. Thus, data used for this study were collected from 252 employees representing 126 public sector organizations (64-federal level, 26-Addis Ababa City Administration, and 36-Oromia Regional State). From each organization, we selected two employees (gender unit officer and communication officer). The selection of employees and work units is due to their direct involvement in gender mainstreaming and having sufficient information on subject matter under investigation. Since we want to test the effect of strategic leadership on the practices of gender mainstreaming (at organizational level), we aggregated responses from each respondent to obtain the organizational level of analysis. Before aggregating the responses, correlations were run to determine inter-class correlation coefficient (ICC) between the multiple rates (respondents) for each construct. Correlations of  $\geq 0.30$  with statistical significance of  $p \leq 0.05$  are considered as an acceptable inter-rater reliability (Field, 2009).

#### **3.4 Methods of Data Analysis**

Multiple regression and mediation analyses were performed to test the hypotheses with the use of SPSS (Version 20). In assessing mediation, four conditions must be satisfied (Baron & Kenny, 1986). First, the initial variable, strategic leadership in this case, must be significantly associated with the mediator, gender-unit empowerment. Second, the initial variable must be associated

with the outcome. Third, there must be significant relationships between the mediator and outcome. Finally, the effect of the initial variable on the outcome must be reduced (to zero for full mediation) when the mediator is entered. For descriptive analysis using mean values, we followed the approach recommended by Yalegama, Chileshe, and Ma (2016). The following indexes' ranges and interpretations were applied for analysis and discussion purposes in this study.

**Table 3.1: Mean value and interpretation used**

Mean values and interpretation				
1.00>=1.8 Never	1.80>=2.60 Rarely	2.60>=3.40 Sometimes	3.40>=4.20 Often	4.20>=5.00 Very often

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Basic Characteristics of Survey Institutions

Under this section, the basic information related with the survey institutions like the level of organization, the category of sectors, and gender of the head of organization were presented and discussed. In this regard, table 4.1 shows the basic information as follows.

**Table 4.1: Basic Characteristics of Institutions**

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender of strategic leaders	Male	112	88.9
	Female	14	11.1
	Total	126	100
Level of institution	Federal	64	50.8
	Addis Ababa city	26	20.6
	Oromia region	36	28.6
	Total	126	100
Category of institution	Banking sector	2	1.6
	University/college	3	2.4
	Civil service	102	80.9
	Public enterprise	8	6.4
	Other	11	8.7
	Total	126	100

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 4.1 indicates the basic characteristics of institutions addressed in this study. Accordingly, it depicts the gender of strategic leaders, hierarchical level of institutions with their respective category. Regarding the gender, majority of the strategic leaders (88.9%) are male, while only 11.1% are women. This clearly shows the male dominance of strategic leadership positions in public institutions which requires assignment from all concerned bodies to play their roles in enhancing the participation of women to higher decision making positions. Concerning the hierarchical level of institutions targeted in this study, 50.8% are from federal level and the remaining 28.6% and 20.6% are from Oromia regional state and Addis Ababa city



Administration respectively. All these institutions are at higher level (Ministry, enterprises, bureaus, agencies and universities) which are highly believed by researchers to give adequate and genuine information on strategic leadership exercised and gender mainstreaming practices. The study also addressed institutions on the basis of their sector. In this regard, majority of the institutions (80.9%) are civil service institutions and the remaining (19.1%) are from banking sector, universities, public enterprise and others. This composition of institutions was believed to examine the practices of leadership and gender mainstreaming since their settings and contexts might be different and believed to get genuine information.

#### 4.2 Reliability test and mean of the main constructs

This section discusses the reliability test made to ensure the reliability of data collection instrument. In this regard, table 4.2 summarizes number of items and the values of Cronbach's alphas for each construct used in this study.

**Table 4.2: The Reliability test for main constructs of the study**

No.	Construct	No. Items	Cronbach's alpha
1	Practices of gender mainstreaming	17	.948
	Equal perspective	2	.794
	Women perspective	3	.800
	Gender perspectives	12	.934
2	Strategic Leadership		
	Transformational leadership	20	.975
	Contingent reward transactional leadership	4	.909
	Active management-by-exception transactional leadership	4	.624
	Laissez-faire leadership	4	.810
3	Gender-unit empowerment	12	.929

Source: Researchers' own computation

Table 4.2 shows that except for active management-by-exception, all of the  $\alpha$  values for constructs are 0.80 and above, indicating a high degree of internal consistency in the responses (Field, 2009; Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

#### 4.3 Strategic Leadership Style Exercised in Public Sector of Ethiopia

Different types of leadership styles exist in work environments. Some companies offer several leadership styles within the organization, dependent upon the necessary tasks to complete and departmental needs. Some of these leadership styles consist transactional, transformational and laissez-faire. Transactional leadership has an exchange orientation whereby a leader uses some form of rewards or punishments depending on the behaviors of organizational members. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, is concerned with the development and empowerment of the followers to work independently (Kark, 2004; Vera & Crossan, 2004). Transactional and transformational leadership styles can contribute to a more realistic view of top management. They build on prior classifications of leadership such as task-oriented versus relations-oriented; directive versus participative leadership (Kark, 2004; Vera & Crossan, 2004).

In this regard, this study assessed the leadership style that was dominantly exercised in selected public sector of Ethiopia and presented in table 4.3 as shown below.

**Table 4.3: Descriptive on strategic leadership styles exercised in public organizations**

	No.	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Transformational Leadership	126	1.30	5.00	3.5573	.81293
Transactional Leadership					
Contingent Reward	126	1.00	5.00	3.2817	.96085
Active Management-by-exception	126	1.00	5.00	2.9990	.68200
Laissez-faire Leadership	126	1.00	5.00	2.3224	.93546

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 4.3 shows the strategic leadership styles in selected Ethiopian public sector organizations. In this regard, the results show that the heads of the organizations employ transformational, transactional leadership, and laissez-faire leadership styles in ranking orders. Relatively, the transformational leadership style is exercised more as compared to transactional and laissez-faire styles in public organizations. According to Kark (2004), the strategic leaders of these public organizations exercising the transformational style are believed to empower and motivate the followers to perform beyond their expectations, and to make them work on transcendental plans, collective goals rather than focusing solely on immediate personal interests.

#### **4.4. The Extent of Gender Mainstreaming Practices in the Public Sector**

According to Booth and Bennett (2002), gender mainstreaming has been conceptualized in terms of three perspectives: equal treatment perspective, a women's perspective, and a gender perspective and emphasized that the perspectives are interdependent and affinity. In this regard, Table 4.4 presents the perspective of gender mainstreaming practiced in public institutions as follows:

**Table 4.4: Descriptive statistics on extent of gender mainstreaming practices**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Gender Mainstreaming practices	126	1.35	4.65	3.12	.744
Equal Treatment	126	1.00	5.00	3.59	.780
Women Perspective	126	1.00	5.00	3.31	.844
Gender Perspective	126	1.36	4.71	3.07	.758

Source: Field survey, 2016

Table 4.4 indicates the extent of gender mainstreaming practices in public sectors using the approach indicated by Yalegama et al. (2016) as three perspectives. The results show that the mean values for overall gender mainstreaming as well its three perspectives (equal treatment, women perspective and gender perspective) ranged from 3.07 to 3.59. This indicates that the performance of public sector organizations in public institutions in practicing gender mainstreaming is at average level. The result also reveals that the mainstreaming of gender in public institutions relatively focused on equal treatment perspective as compared to women and gender perspectives. This action of the public sector under equal treatment perspective also

emphasize on formulating statutory and mandatory legal instruments to ensuring a gender balance in decision-making.

#### 4.5 The Relationship between Strategic Leadership and the Effective Gender Mainstreaming

Leadership plays a significant role by supporting the practices of gender mainstreaming that would ensure gender equality (Sandler & Rao, 2012). According to Maddock (2002), the need for effective leadership to bring a major shift from a patriarchal culture to a gender balanced culture in the governance of public sector is indispensable. As transformational leaders nurture personal and group development, share inspiring organizational visions (Manning, 2002; Howell and Avolio, 1993), they could foster commitment and motivation towards gender mainstreaming goals. Table 4.5 below presents the result on effect of Transformational leadership style on gender mainstreaming.

**Table 4.5: The effect of Transformational Leadership on gender mainstreaming (GM) practices**

	(Step 1)	(Step 2)
	GM practices	GM practices
Organizations by government level	-0.0541	-0.266
govtleve1	(0.174)	(0.143)
govtleve2	-0.172	-0.0600
	(0.158)	(0.128)
Categories of organizations		
firmscat1	0.660	0.637
	(0.748)	(0.604)
firmscat2	-0.125	0.0293
	(0.440)	(0.355)
firmscat3	0.232	-0.141
	(0.272)	(0.224)
firmscat4	-0.786	-0.795
	(0.753)	(0.608)
Gender of Strategic leaders	-0.403	-0.326
	(0.211)	(0.171)
Transformational		0.557***
		(0.0695)
_constant	3.537***	1.518***
	(0.214)	(0.305)
N	126	126
adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.007	0.353

Notes: Standard errors in parentheses; \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4.5 indicates that transformational leadership has positive significant effect on the practices of gender mainstreaming. Results indicated in step 1 show that the control variables do not have any effect on the gender mainstreaming practices. As depicted in step 2, transformational leadership has a positive significant effect on the practices of gender mainstreaming ( $B=0.557$ ,  $P<0.001$ ). Thus, the hypothesis which was stated as transformational

leadership has no effect on gender mainstreaming is rejected. Therefore, a strategic leader exercising transformational style increases the practices of gender mainstreaming by 0.557 units as compared to those exercising transactional leadership style when other things are constant. This finding concurs with Manning (2002), indicated that transformational leaders nurture personal and group development, share inspiring organizational visions could foster commitment and motivation towards gender mainstreaming goals. Table 4.6 summarizes the results of test on Hypothesis which articulates that “transactional leadership (contingent reward) has no effect on the practices of gender mainstreaming.”

**Table 4.6: The effect of Contingent reward transactional leadership on the practices of gender mainstreaming**

	(Step 1)	(Step 2)
	GM practices	GM practices
govtleveld1	-0.0541 (0.174)	-0.150 (0.152)
govtleveld2	-0.172 (0.158)	0.0857 (0.144)
firmcatd1	0.660 (0.748)	0.803 (0.651)
firmcated2	-0.125 (0.440)	0.0358 (0.383)
firmcated3	0.232 (0.272)	-0.113 (0.243)
firmcated4	-0.786 (0.753)	-1.309* (0.661)
Gender	-0.403 (0.211)	-0.365* (0.184)
Contingent reward		0.409*** (0.0655)
_constant	3.537*** (0.214)	2.130*** (0.292)
N	126	126
adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.007	0.248

Standard errors in parentheses, \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4.6 in step 1 reveals that all control variables have no effect on gender mainstreaming practices. Step 2 of the table indicates that contingent reward of transactional leadership has a significant positive effect on the practices of gender mainstreaming (B=0.409, P<0.001). This indicates that strategic leaders exercising the transactional style (Contingent reward) in public organizations increase the practices of gender mainstreaming by 0.409 units as compared to those exercising transformational leadership style in the constant of other things. This concurs with the finding of Mukhopadhyay (2004), stated as contingent reward transactional leadership can influence the success of gender mainstreaming by initiating and contextualizing the gender-sensitive indicators in performance appraisal system of an organization. In addition to contingent reward of transactional leadership, we examined the effect of active management-by-exception of transactional leadership on the practices of gender mainstreaming as indicated in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: The effect of Active Management-by-Exception Transactional Leadership on the practices of gender mainstreaming**

	(Step 1)	(Step 2)
	GM practices	GM practices
govtleveld1	-0.0541 (0.174)	-0.0564 (0.175)
govtleveld2	-0.172 (0.158)	-0.180 (0.163)
firmcatd1	0.660 (0.748)	0.663 (0.751)
firmcated2	-0.125 (0.440)	-0.130 (0.442)
firmcated3	0.232 (0.272)	0.232 (0.273)
firmcated4	-0.786 (0.753)	-0.774 (0.758)
Gender	-0.403 (0.211)	-0.406 (0.212)
		0.0241 (0.100)
Active management-by-exception		
_cons	3.537*** (0.214)	3.471*** (0.350)
N	126	126
adj. $R^2$	0.007	-0.001

Standard errors in parentheses, \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Results in step 1 in table 4.7 shows that the control variables have no significant effect on the practices of gender mainstreaming. Step 2 of the table also reveals that active management-by-exception of transactional leadership has no significant effect on the practices of gender mainstreaming ( $B=0.0241$ ,  $P>0.05$ ).

#### **4.6 The Mediating Role of Empowered Gender Unit on Effect of Strategic Leadership on gender mainstreaming**

The establishment of a gender unit in organizations has the highest importance to promote gender equality and/or improve the status and rights of women (McBride & Mazur, 2012). They also argue that gender units that are close to centers of powers, have clear mandates, well-resourced and developed links with civil society are successful in enhancing gender mainstreaming. Accordingly, Table 4.8 presents the mediating role of empowered gender unit on effect of leadership style in gender mainstreaming. Concerning the mediating role of empowered gender unit on the effect of strategic leadership style in gender mainstreaming, the hypothesis states that gender-unit empowerment mediates the positive relationship between strategic leadership (in terms of both transformational leadership and contingent reward of transactional leadership) and gender mainstreaming practices. In this regard, Table 4.8 and Table 4.9 present the results of a series of multiple regressions for the mediation analyses undertaken in this study.

**Table 4.8: The mediating effect of gender-unit empowerment on the relationship between transformational leadership and practices of gender mainstreaming**

	(Step 1)	(Step 2)	(Step 3)
	GM practices	Gender-unit empowerment	GM practices
govtleveld1	-0.266 (0.143)	-0.257 (0.149)	-0.155 (0.130)
govtleveld2	-0.0600 (0.128)	-0.0556 (0.133)	-0.0361 (0.115)
firmcatd1	0.637 (0.604)	0.0397 (0.628)	0.620 (0.542)
firmcated2	0.0293 (0.355)	-0.216 (0.369)	0.122 (0.319)
firmcated3	-0.141 (0.224)	-0.189 (0.233)	-0.0598 (0.202)
firmcated4	-0.795 (0.608)	-0.822 (0.632)	-0.441 (0.550)
Gender	-0.326 (0.171)	-0.272 (0.177)	-0.209 (0.155)
Transformational leadership	0.557*** (0.0695)	0.552*** (0.0723)	0.319*** (0.0764)
Gender-unit empowerment			0.431*** (0.0798)
_cons	1.518*** (0.305)	1.826*** (0.317)	0.732* (0.310)
N	126	126	126
adj. R <sup>2</sup>	0.353	0.323	0.479

Standard errors in parentheses, \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Table 4.8 shows the mediating effect of gender-unit empowerment on the relationship between transformational leadership and practices of gender mainstreaming. Step 1 in Table 4.8 indicates that transformational leadership (the independent variable) is significantly correlated with gender mainstreaming practices, which is the outcome variable ( $B=0.557$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), thereby satisfying the first condition for mediation. In step 2, transformational leadership is significantly correlated with gender-unit empowerment, which is the mediator ( $B=0.552$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), meeting the second condition for mediation as well as supporting for the hypothesis to be tested. Step 3 indicates that gender-unit empowerment is significantly correlated with gender mainstreaming practices ( $B=0.431$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), satisfying the third condition for mediation. In addition, as indicated in step 3, the coefficient of transformational leadership dropped from ( $B=0.557$ ,  $P<0.001$ ) to ( $B=0.319$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), a 42.7% drop when both the independent and the mediator variables were entered into the model, implying that the fourth condition for mediation is satisfied. Thus, the results show that gender-unit empowerment partially mediates the positive significant relationship between transformational leadership and gender mainstreaming practices. This implies that the empowered gender unit in the public organizations can increase the role of transformational leadership by 0.431 units in gender mainstreaming practices, assuming other things are constant. This finding also coincides with Gouws (2006), stated that transformational leaders who

empower gender unit can successfully accomplish gender mainstreaming activities. In addition, Table 4.9 presents the mediating effect of gender-unit empowerment on the relationship between contingent reward of transactional leadership and practices of gender mainstreaming.

**Table 4.9: The mediating effect of gender-unit empowerment on the relationship between contingent reward transactional leadership and practices of gender mainstreaming**

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	GM practices	Gender-unit empowerment	GM practices
govtleveld1	-0.150	-0.151	-0.0737
	(0.152)	(0.153)	(0.132)
govtleveld2	0.0857	0.111	0.0294
	(0.144)	(0.144)	(0.124)
firmcatd1	0.803	0.217	0.693
	(0.651)	(0.654)	(0.564)
firmcated2	0.0358	-0.195	0.135
	(0.383)	(0.385)	(0.332)
firmcated3	-0.113	-0.191	-0.0161
	(0.243)	(0.244)	(0.211)
firmcated4	-1.309*	-1.377*	-0.612
	(0.661)	(0.663)	(0.582)
Gender	-0.365*	-0.307	-0.209
	(0.184)	(0.184)	(0.161)
Contingent reward	0.409***	0.440***	0.185**
	(0.0655)	(0.0658)	(0.0666)
Gender-unit empowerment			0.507***
			(0.0796)
_cons	2.130***	2.310***	0.960**
	(0.292)	(0.294)	(0.313)
N	126	126	126
adj. $R^2$	0.248	0.266	0.438

Standard errors in parentheses, \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$

Step 1 in Table 4.9 shows that contingent reward (the independent variable) is significantly correlated with gender mainstreaming practices, which is the outcome variable ( $B=0.409$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), thereby satisfying the first condition for mediation. In step 2, contingent reward is significantly correlated with gender-unit empowerment, which is the mediator ( $B=0.440$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), meeting the second condition for mediation as well as supporting for the hypothesis testing. Step 3 indicates that gender-unit empowerment is significantly correlated with gender mainstreaming practices ( $B=0.507$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), satisfying the third condition for mediation. In addition, as indicated in step 3, the coefficient of contingent reward dropped from ( $B=0.409$ ,  $P<0.001$ ) to ( $B=0.185$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), a 54.8% drop when both the independent and the mediator variables were entered into the model, implying that the fourth condition for mediation is satisfied. Thus, the results show that gender-unit empowerment partially mediates the positive significant relationship between contingent reward of transactional leadership and gender

mainstreaming practices. This implies that the empowered gender unit in public organizations can increase the role of transactional leadership by 0.507 units in gender mainstreaming practices, assuming other things are constant. The finding of this study concurs to Sen (2000), reported that the contingent transactional leaders who established an autonomous and empowered gender unit can promote the integration of gender mainstreaming in each individual's work, and ensures successful gender mainstreaming.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study was designed to examine the mediating role of gender unit empowerment on the effect of strategic leadership in practicing gender mainstreaming in public organizations. It was also confirmed that this area has been rarely researched and has academic knowledge gap. The study found that relatively the strategic leaders in public institutions exercise transformational leadership style followed by transactional leadership styles. In this regard, the study confirmed that the transformational and contingent rewards of transactional leadership styles have significant positive effect on gender mainstreaming practices of the public organizations. However, the strategic leaders (exercising both transformational and transactional styles) need the mediation role of empowered gender unit in the organizations to ensure successful gender mainstreaming practices. In general, gender mainstreaming practices in public organizations can be successfully realized when strategic leaders (transformational and contingent reward transactional leadership) effectively empower the gender unit in their respective organizations.

**In regard to further measures to be taken to tackle the limitations addressed, the researchers recommend the following actions to be considered:**

- The current gender practices of public organizations were relatively focused on equal treatment aspect that focuses on formulation of legal instruments to balance gender in decision making positions. Focusing only on this perspective would not help organizations to ensure effective gender mainstreaming. Therefore, it is very important to give attention on women perspective, in which the allocation of more resource is needed to address the needs of disadvantaged women and gender perspective that entails transforming the society to ensure fairer distribution of human responsibilities.
- It is advisable for leaders of public organizations to exercise transformational leadership, especially empowering and motivating their followers to perform beyond their expectations, and to make them work on transcendental plans and collective goals than self-interests.
- Leaders of public organizations must establish an autonomous, close to centers of power, have clear mandates, well-resourced and experienced gender unit to enhance gender mainstreaming in the organizations.



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