

The Role of Gender in Leader and Subordinate Relationship, Job Satisfaction and Career Prospects for Women in Dubai

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Chapter 1: ABSTRACT

Although women constitute almost 50% of the global population, they remain underrepresented in senior leadership roles. Recognizing the critical role of women in the economy and helping them advance in the workplace, constitute a huge step forward towards reducing this leadership gender gap. Grounded on the gender and leadership theories, this study examines whether women are more likely to have better career advancement opportunities under women leadership. It argues that female gender-specific work behaviors and attitudes play a significant role on the career prospects of expat women employees in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), where unlike the global workforce, women have a higher presence and hold more senior positions in the workplace. The study uses the mixed methodology in which qualitative and quantitative data was collected independently, analyzed separately, and interpreted collectively to investigate to what extent the experiences within the specific local context explain the theories. The quantitative data, collected through surveys, was used to locally test the validity of the theories on women leadership, the role of gender in supervisor and subordinate relationship, and the role of gender in job satisfaction. The qualitative data, collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with women

leaders explored the women's career experiences and investigated their growth opportunities. The quantitative data analysis provided full support to the role of gender on leader and subordinate relationship dimension, and no support to the role of gender on job satisfaction and career prospects. The themes emerging from the qualitative analysis highlighted organizational support, and transformational leadership style as contributing factors towards women career advancement to top positions. Collectively, the findings revealed the positive role of transformational leadership that offset the role of gender on women job satisfaction and career progression. The results also highlighted the adapted manifestation of the transformational leadership style within the local context. The findings also revealed the role of the UAE gender equality program and its significant positive effect on the career progression of female employees. Implications, recommendations, and limitations are also discussed.

Keywords: Gender, leadership, job satisfaction, and career progression.

Introduction

1. Background to the Problem

Although, women constitute almost 50% of the global population, they make up 32% of the global workforce (International Labor Office, 2016). Women are underrepresented at every level in the workforce and even more so in senior roles (LeanIn Org & McKinsey 2016; Pearl Initiative 2015). In the United States (US), women hold 35% of senior-level positions (Catalyst, 2015), in Africa, 29%, 26% in Asia, 21% in Europe (AT Kearny, 2015) and 9% in the Gulf Corporation Council countries (GCC) (Pearl Initiative, 2015). Having women in leadership positions is positively related to improved team and corporate performances (Catalyst, 2015), so there is no doubt that the workforce needs to encourage and support women advancement to top levels. According to a McKinsey report (2015) supporting women to reach top senior level positions can add \$12 trillion to the global Growth Domestic Product (GDP) by 2025. Therefore, women's advancement in the workplace makes a solid and indisputable business sense.

2. The Glass Ceiling

Literature (Eagly & Carli 2003; Powell & Butterfield 2015; Dezsó et al. 2016) refers to this leadership gap phenomenon as the Glass Ceiling - the symbolic wall that holds back women and prevents from reaching senior level positions. The Glass Ceiling expression has been used widely to explain the leadership gender gap in the workplace. However, some corporations continue to claim that the Glass Ceiling is a "myth and self-created issue" (Bomбуwela & Chamaru, 2013: 7). They argue that women underrepresentation in senior positions is caused by the women themselves who choose to "opt out" (Powell & Butterfield, 2015: 30) favoring personal and family commitment over career and professional growth.

3. What is Causing the Glass Ceiling

Research (WEF 2016; UN 2015; McKinsey 2016; Catalyst 2015) has extensively explored the social and corporate factors of the Glass Ceiling. Socially, the main inhibiting reason is work-life balance. While professionally, the main hindering factors are organizational gender bias and discrimination practices.

Du Plessis et al. (2015: 2) observed that, “the Glass Ceiling is a multifaceted phenomenon because it is the cause and effect of multiple factors. Sometimes the causes and effects are visible but sometimes they are hard to notice.” This observation could justify why mainly the studies on the leadership gender gap focus on the visible factors including legal, economic, and social factors, while overlooking what may be the hard to notice factors such as female gender-specific contributing attitudes and behaviors towards leadership style and work preferences. The situational leadership theory suggests that the leader’s success lies in adjusting his behavior in accordance with his follower’s characteristics (Hannah et al., 2014). Indeed, a successful leader must take into consideration the individuality of the employees, thus, indicating the critical role of the employee in the leadership process. So, shouldn’t gender be treated as a unique subordinate characteristic that needs to be acknowledged and managed properly?

4. Research Gap

None of the leadership gender gap reports consider the gender-specific behavioral variations and distinctions of women employees. Caprino (2013, cited in Rath et al., 2015: 80) identifies “value differentiation between men and women” as a major, and a yet underestimated, factor that contributes towards the leadership gender gap. These existing vital gender distinctions expose fundamental differentiations in peer and supervisor relationships, job satisfaction and motivation factors, which ultimately impact female job retention, and advancement opportunities.

Objective

The main objective of this study was to investigate the role of gender in leader and subordinate relationship, job satisfaction and career prospects for women, and examines the career growth opportunities for women in Dubai.

4. Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the role of gender in subordinate and supervisor relationship?

Research Question 2: Do women subordinates report better job satisfaction under women supervision?

Research Question 3: Will women subordinates prefer to be managed by women supervisors?

Research Question 4: Are women more likely to have better career advancement opportunities under women leadership?

5. Significance of the Study

Grounded on the gender and leadership theories, this study argues that female gender-specific work behaviors and attitudes play a significant role on the career prospects of women employees. Organizations should be aware of the underlying career-related gender differences, and be equipped to better manage and support, and encourage their female subordinates to increase their career advancement opportunities.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Gender and Job Satisfaction

A recent study by Zou (2011), uncovered the existing differences in job satisfaction factors between male and female employees and claimed that while men value financial benefits, women value social relations and flexible work hours. Similarly, Lindorff (2011) stated that the single best predictor of female job satisfaction, and thus female retention, is work life balance. Dimovski et al. (2010: 309) study also reiterated that notion, as their findings revealed that “achieving balance in their lives” is the main driver of women job satisfaction.

2. The Female Transformational Leadership and Work-Life Balance

Research (Zou 2011; Lindorff 2011; Konrad et al., 2000) concerning the effect of leadership on job satisfaction and employee behavior, recognize the positive relationship between transformational leadership and subordinate career advancement. This growing body of research on leadership also claims that women and men lead differently. These studies suggest that women manifest transformational leadership styles that facilitate caring and supportive working environments. Transformational female leadership style provides a “communal environment” [that considers] the individualized behaviors” (Eagly et al., 2003: 822). Indeed, the diverse research validates that transformational leadership imminently improves job satisfaction and consequently, “facilitates women’s representation in leadership roles” (Bark et al., 2016: 478).

3. Gender and Subordinate – Supervisor Relation

Malangwasira (2013) research indicates that female subordinates who are working with female supervisors’ report better job satisfaction and thus, validating the positive association between gender and leader-follower relationship and its positive effect on job commitment. Alternatively, Collins et al. (2014) research applied the LMX module and showed the strong and positive relationship between gender and leader-subordinate relationship. Together, these findings suggest the possibility of corresponding the female employee preferred LMX dimension to that of the female transformational leader qualities. Suggesting, that female subordinates would perform better under female transformational leaders, as female managers would provide favorable environments, offer positive relations to their female subordinates and support their career by addressing the unique female value differentiation (Caprino 2013, cited in Rath et al., 2015).

4. Gender and Career Progression

According to a study by the US Law firm Bain, “people are much more likely to select candidates [for promotion] who look and sound like them” (Ceda, 2013: 25). This is in accordance with the sociologist “homophily” theory (McPherson et al., 2001) also known as ‘love of the same’ that compels people to associate themselves with those who are more like them. And, since most of the workplaces are men dominated, the chances of more females filling the highest-level positions seems frail.

Cook & Glass (2014: 100) research suggests that gender inclusion among managerial levels is key to overcoming the Glass Ceiling barriers as it “increases women’s odds of being hired and promoted” and most importantly, gender inclusion among managerial levels, has the highest impact on women’s “mobility and tenure”.

An emerging stream of research (Bozionelos et al. 2016; Fitzsimmons & Callan 2016; Bear et al. 2017) has identified gender bias in promotion process as a major obstacle that hinders the career progression of women. According to Schweitzer et al., (2011) female employees in male-dominated environments are 29% less likely to be advance in comparison to their male counterparts. A study issued in 2008 by Catalyst found that career progression opportunities are not necessarily given based on merit. The study recommends that women, in men dominated environments, must be aware of the unwritten rules to avoid being excluded from advancement opportunities (Catalyst, 2008). In their research on gender and career advancement tactics, Laud & Paterson (2013) observed that female subordinates who actively sought male mentors and vigorously pursued networking opportunities with male managers to “gain visibility and information about career opportunities” (Laud & Paterson, 2013: 62) reported better chances of promotion. These findings are further echoed by the results of the study published by LeanIn.Org and McKinsey & Co (2016: 15: 6) that found “for every 100 women promoted to manager, 130 men are promoted.”

Chapter 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

A parallel mixed methods design was used, in which qualitative and quantitative data was collected independently, analyzed separately, and interpreted collectively. The quantitative data, collected through surveys, was used to locally test the validity of the theories on women leadership, the role of gender in supervisor and subordinate relationship, job satisfaction, and career progression. The qualitative data, collected through face to face semi-structured interviews, explored the women’s career experiences and investigated the opportunities and challenges they faced along the way.

2. Data Collection and Analysis Methods

Primary quantitative data was collected through an online survey to investigate the credibility of the theories in the local context. A three-part, 30 question self-administrated survey was designed to collect quantitative data. The questionnaires were distributed and collected online through surveymonkey.com to ensure efficiency, reliability, and confidentiality. The survey employed a five-point Likert-type format, ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. Respondents answered the questionnaires individually and anonymously. The total results collected (N=66) were split into two samples covering women employees reporting to women managers (N=25), and women employees reporting to men managers (N=41). The Mean (M) and the Standard Deviation (SD) were calculated, and a t-test was used to compare the two samples. In addition, the statistical significance was calculated to ensure reliability and validity of the results.

For the qualitative part, interviews were conducted “to develop an understanding of the respondent’s world” (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012: 132) and look for emerging themes and patterns. Grounded theory (GT) was used to identify language codes and frame the data. GT is a data-driven approach and complemented the inductive reasoning and the exploratory nature of this study, as it tested the proposed theory through the emerging categories from the data itself (Project Guru, 2014). The semi-structured interview format allowed the researcher to prepare open-ended questions beforehand and provided autonomy for the participants to express their experiences in their own words. Each interview took 45 minutes to complete. Interviews were conducted in total privacy to encourage the participants to freely express their opinions. During the interview, the researcher took notes as well as recorded the session. To analyze the data, open coding was applied to allow codes to emerge from the data and identify frequencies and patterns. This was followed by axial coding (Appendix C) to classify and label the recurring themes and group them into categories.

3. Population, Sample and Response Rate

This study used probability (stratified) and purposive (sequential) sampling positions to focus on the depth and breadth of the data (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). For the study, the stratified population was female expat employees working in the private sector in Dubai, between the age of 20 and 54. For the quantitative data, a link to an online survey was sent randomly to 117 candidates. Completed responses were received from 66 women. For the qualitative sample, 30 women were purposely selected through purposive sampling, via LinkedIn. Only the female supervisors who have attained their leadership positions through promotions and within the same organization they joined as junior employees, were approached. 11 women accepted the request and were interviewed for this study.



Chapter 4: RESULTS

1. Research Participants Demographic Characteristics

The quantitative study sample consisted of 66 female employees working in the private sector. 57% were aged 26 to 35 years; 35% were aged 36 to 50 years, 4% were aged less than 25 years, and 3% were 51 years, and above. 38% of the respondents were junior/senior level staff; 37% managers, 21% directors and 4% chief executive officers. 57% of the respondents had in total more than 10 years' experience; 25% had more than five years' experience, with the remainder (18%) having less than five years' experience (table 1.0 table 2.0).

Variable	N	%
Age		
25 years and under	0	0%
26 to 35	18	72%
36 to 50	7	28%
50 years and above	0	0%
Marital Status		
Not Married	0	36%
Married, no Children	4	10%
Married with Children	10	40%
Divorced, or Separated, no Children	1	4%
Divorced, or Separated, with Children	1	4%
Job Title		
Junior/Senior Staff	12	48%
Manager	9	36%
Director	2	8%
CEO/MD/VP	2	8%
Total Years of Professional Experience		
Less than 6 Months	1	4%
Less than 1 Year	0	0%
1-3 Years	2	8%
3-5 Years	3	12%
More than 5 Years	7	28%
More than 10 Years	12	48%

The qualitative study sample consisted of 11 female supervisors. 55% were aged 36 to 50 years; 27% were aged 26 to 35 years, 18% were 51 years and above. 45% of the participants were directors, 36% had an executive level role, and 18% were managers. 10 of the participants had in total more than 10 years' experience; and one had less than 10 years' experience (table 3.0).

table 2.0 Descriptive Statistics of the Quantitative Study Sample of Women Reporting to Men N=41		
Variable	N	%
Age		
25 years and under	3	7%
26 to 35	21	51%
36 to 50	16	39%
50 years and above	1	3%
Marital Status		
Not Married	18	44%
Married, no Children	7	17%
Married with Children	14	34%
Divorced, or Separated, no Children	0	0%
Divorced, or Separated, with Children	2	5%
Job Title		
Junior/Senior Staff	14	34%
Manager	15	37%
Director	11	27%
CEO/MD/VP	1	2%
Total Years of Professional Experience		
Less than 6 Months	0	0%
Less than 1 Year	2	5%
1-3 Years	1	3%
3-5 Years	3	7%
More than 5 Years	10	24%
More than 10 Years	25	61%

2. Quantitative Results

This section presents the results of the quantitative questionnaire that tests the theories on female leadership, the role of gender in supervisor and subordinate relationship, job satisfaction, and career progression.

table 3.0 Descriptive Statistics of the Qualitative Study Individual Participants	
Participant 1	26 to 35 years, not married, director, works in the hospitality industry
Participant 2	36 to 50 years, not married, executive director in community development company
Participant 3	36 to 50 years, married with children, senior manager in the T industry
Participant 4	36 to 50 years, married no children, Partner in Public Relations industry

Participant 5	36 to 50 years, married with children, executive director in an environmental company
Participant 6	aged 51 and above, married with children, MD in the education industry
Participant 7	36 to 50 years, married with children, director in the IT industry
Participant 8	36 to 50 years, married with children, director in the manufacturing industry
Participant 9	25 to 35 years, married with no children, regional group manager in IT
Participant 10	26 to 35 years, not married, director in the financial industry
Participant 11	aged 51 and above, married with children in the investment industry

2.1 . Questionnaire Part 1: MLQ

Bass & Avolio MLQ model was used to assess leadership behaviors of the men and women managers through the perception of the participants. To analyze the results, 18 MLQ questions were grouped into six factors with three questions each. Participants reporting to women managers scored their managers statistically higher on the dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors, including Individualized Consideration (M= 3.32), Idealized Influence (M= 3.79), Intellectual Simulation (M=3.25), and Inspirational Motivation (M= 3.39). In comparison, the participants reporting to men managers scored their managers significantly higher on the transactional leadership behaviors, including Management by Exception (M= 3.68) and Laissez Faire (M=3.09) (table 4.0). These results are consistent with the literature review on gender and leadership (Bass & Steidlmeier 1999; McCleskey 2014; Eagly et al. 2003; Eagly & Carli 2003; Bark et al. 2015) that validate female managers are indeed more transformational than men.

MLQ Factor	Mean	T-Test	p Value	at 95% significance level
TOTAL FOR INDIVIDUAL CONSIDERATION (N=66)				
WOMEN REPORTING TO WOMEN (N=25)	3.32	0.82513119	0.02644696	yes
WOMEN REPORTING TO MEN (N=41)	3.15			
TOTAL FOR IDEALIZED INFLUENCE (N=66)				
WOMEN REPORTING TO WOMEN (N=25)	3.79	2.05825672	0.0000000	yes
WOMEN REPORTING TO MEN (N=41)	3.40			
TOTAL FOR INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION (N=66)				
WOMEN REPORTING TO WOMEN (N=25)	3.25	0.63858582	0.05576309	yes
WOMEN REPORTING TO MEN (N=41)	3.15			

TOTAL FOR INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION (N=66)				
WOMEN REPORTING TO WOMEN (N=25)	3.39	0.30745517	0.00026487	yes
WOMEN REPORTING TO MEN (N=41)	3.33			
TOTAL FOR MANAGEMENT BY EXCEPTION (N=66)				
WOMEN REPORTING TO WOMEN (N=25)	3.64	-0.2606721	0.0000000	yes
WOMEN REPORTING TO MEN (N=41)	3.68			
TOTAL FOR LAISSEZ-FAIRE (N=66)				
WOMEN REPORTING TO WOMEN (N=25)	2.97	-0.5798202	0.63606108	no
WOMEN REPORTING TO MEN (N=41)	3.09			

Participants reporting to men managers positively scored their managers on the dimensions of transformational leadership behaviors as well. Including Individualized Consideration (M= 3.15), Idealized Influence (M= 3.40), Intellectual Simulation (M=3.13), and Inspirational Motivation (M= 3.33). Although, the women managers exhibited more transformational leadership behaviors, however, the positive results that reflect the transformational leadership qualities of the men managers cannot be overlooked. This observation is in line with Eagly et al. (2003) research, which and despite presenting that women leaders exhibited more transformational leadership behaviors, they determined that differences in men and women leadership styles appeared to be small and noticeably similar.

A comprehensive study was undertaken by Paustian-Underdahl et al. (2014) to analyze 99 studies on gender and leadership. On the one hand, the analysis revealed that men and women do not categorically differ in their leadership style and effectiveness. On the other hand, the analysis highlighted the moderating role of the organizational environment on the leadership rating. It revealed that participants from male dominated work environment rated the male leader higher on the transformational leadership behaviors. This observation supports Eagly et al. (1995, cited in Paustian-Underdahl et al., 2014: 1139) research that revealed: “as the proportion of males increased [in the organization] ...ratings favored male leaders.” In our study, 65% of the women participants reporting to men managers work in male dominated environments. In comparison to 48% of the women participants reporting to women managers (Table 5.0). This large presence of men in the participants’ working environment may explain these ratings and the proximity of the leadership behaviors of the men and women managers’ leadership styles.

Category	Factor	Response Percent	Response Count
Women participants reporting to women suoervisors (N=25)	Male dominated (employs more men)	48.0%	12
	Female dominated (employs	28.0%	7
	Employs same number of men	24.0%	6
Women participants reporting to men suoervisors (N=66)	Male dominated (employs more	66.0%	27
	Female dominated (employs	2.0%	1
	Employs same number of men and women	32.0%	13

2.2. Questionnaire Part 2: Relation with Supervisor

The LMX method was used to measure the quality of the relationship between the subordinates and their managers. The participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with 22 statements, indicating the nature of the relationship with their manager (Appendix E). Participants reporting to women rated significantly higher quality relation with their managers ($M= 3.77$). In comparison, participants reporting to men rated significantly lower quality relation with their managers ($M= 2.62$). These results are consistent with the literature review (Malangwasira 2001; Collins et al. 2014) on the mediating role of gender and the quality of the exchange between the supervisor and the subordinate. Our findings present evidence and further support that same gender relation indeed yields positive outcomes.

One of the earliest studies that identified the moderating role of gender similarities and its effect on LMX was undertaken in 1997 by Sparrowe & Liden. They observed that women careers suffered under weak social relation with their male managers. Their research managed to successfully “extend the traditional domain of LMX research” (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997: 544) to incorporate the positive effect of gender similarities, which influence the extent to which “the leader and the member like one another” (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997: 544) and develop friendly and supportive relationships. When our participants were asked to rate: my manager is the kind of person one would like to have as a friend, 36% of the participants reporting to women rated Strongly Agree compared to 17% of the participants reporting to men. These ratings offer a substantial validation to Sparrowe & Liden work and concur with Litwin’s (2011: 7) claim, discussed earlier, on “the importance of understanding that women’s relationships in the workplace take place in the context of gender-socialized friendship expectations”.

2.3. Questionnaire Part 3: Job Satisfaction

10 Job Satisfaction questions were administrated to measure female employees job satisfaction and answer one the study’s questions do women subordinates report better job satisfaction working with women supervisors? In addition to rating their overall job satisfaction level, participants were asked to answer further nine questions to evaluate the job satisfaction dimensions of motivation, intrinsic rewards and fringe benefits (Appendix F). Participants reporting to women managers rated higher their overall job satisfaction ($M= 3.80$) compared to the participants reporting to men managers ($M=3.71$). Although positive, however, the analysis provided no statistical difference. These results, even though are non-conforming with the study’s inductive reasoning, however, they are not totally surprising, especially and when, considering the study’s MLQ findings.

Job satisfaction is an outcome of leadership style, and the literature review earlier provided evidence that positively associated transformational leadership to job satisfaction (Bark et al. 2016; Belias & Coustelios 2014). A study that was undertaken by Fernandes & Awamleh (2004) on the impact of leadership styles on employee’s satisfaction in the UAE, confirm transformational leadership boosted employees’ job satisfaction. The individualized attention, as well as intellectual stimulation behaviors the transformational leader exhibits positively reflected on the employee’s job satisfaction. Indeed, Belias & Coustelios (2014) research suggests that transformational leadership qualities of motivation and empowerment are positively correlated with high job satisfaction. This argument further supports the empowerment dimension findings of this study. Our results (Appendix G) show that participants reporting to women and men managers collectively rated their managers evenly (with no level of statistical significance) on the

overall empowerment dimension (M= 3.80). Therefore, the transformational leadership traits, exhibited by both women and men managers, would offset the mediating role of gender on job satisfaction. Indeed, when participants, were asked: if you were taking a new job and had a choice of a manager, would you prefer to work for a man or a woman? 73% of the participants said, No Difference (Table 6.0) In fact, the participants further stated that what matters is leadership style and not gender.

table 6.0 participants preferences on working for a man or woman manager

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Man	19.7%	13
Woman	7.6%	5
No difference	72.7%	48

Fernandes & Awamleh (2004) research in the UAE, which found that transformational leadership was positively associated with job satisfaction, debated that “performance-reward linkage” (Fernandes & Awamleh, 2004: 72) is what mostly drives the job satisfaction of the employees in the UAE. The transitory nature of the UAE work environment is largely (88%) dependent on short-term contractual based expatriate workers (The National, 2010). Fernandes & Awamleh (2004) claimed that, by default, this unique context triggers a pre-determined “employment [satisfaction] condition...[that] neutralizes the [negative] effect of transactional leadership” (Fernandes & Awamleh, 2004: 72). This argument clarifies this study’s MLQ findings, which positively, associated Management by Exception transactional leadership attributes to both women (M= 3.64) and men managers (M=3.68) and presented no substantial mediating negative effect on the job satisfaction of the participants.

Management by Exception is a transactional leadership trait and is attributed to exchange based leadership style. It is when a leader entices the subordinates to increase performance by offering them performance-based contingent rewards. “Psychological contract theory posits that employees will experience the highest levels of job satisfaction when their job expectations are met” (Cogliser et al., 2009: 456). 70% of this study’s participants declared that both Remuneration and Work-Life Balance are equally Very Important (Table 7.0). These job orientation preferences do not correspond with Zou (2011), Lindorff (2011) and Dimovski (2010) findings, discussed earlier, that declared women are mainly motivated by work-life balance and flexible working hours. However, these work orientations are supported by the specific UAE performance-reward linkage notion proposed by Fernandes & Awamleh (2004).

table 7.0 participants' work orientation

	Unimportant	Somewhat Unimportant	Neither Important or Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Very Important	MEAN	SD
Remuneration (good pay / good benefits)	0 0.00%	1 1.5%	2 3.0%	17 26%	46 70%	4.64	0.62
Career progression and development	0 0.00%	1 1.5%	3 4.5%	10 15.2%	52 78.8%	4.71	0.62
Work-life balance (shorter and flexible)	0 0.0%	2 3.0%	1 1.5%	17 25.8%	46 69.7%	4.62	0.67

The opportunity to work with my Manager	1	2	8	27	28	4.20	0.87
	1.5%	3.0%	12.1%	40.9%	42.4%		
The opportunity to work with friendly people	0	2	0	29	35	4.47	0.66
	0.0%	3.0%	0.0%	43.9%	53.0%		
To opportunity to take initiative (to come up with	0	1	2	21	42	4.58	0.63
	0.0%	1.5%	3.0%	31.8%	63.6%		
The nature of the work itself	0	0	2	19	45	4.65	0.54
	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%	28.8%	68.2%		
Variety in the work	1	0	8	24	33	4.33	0.80
	1.5%	0.0%	12.1%	36.4%	50.0%		
Office location	2	1	10	35	18	4.00	0.87
	3.0%	1.5%	15.2%	53.0%	27.3%		
Office amenities	3	4	12	32	15	3.79	1.01
	4.5%	6.1%	18.2%	48.5%	22.7%		
Easy workload	5	13	22	19	7	3.15	1.09
	7.6%	19.7%	33.3%	28.8%	10.6%		
Opportunities to utilize my skills, knowledge and	0	0	0	12	54	4.82	0.39
	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	81.8%		
Opportunities to learn new things	0	0	0	11	55	4.83	0.37
	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	16.7%	83.3%		
Job security	0	1	8	17	40	4.45	0.76
	0.0%	1.5%	12.1%	25.8%	60.6%		

2.4 Questionnaire Part 4: Career Progression

10 Career Progression questions were administrated to measure female employees' perception on their career prospects and test whether women are more likely to have better career advancement opportunities under women leadership. Overall, women participants reporting to both women ($M=3.28$) and men managers ($M=3.44$) perceived their career progression opportunities to be positively equal (Appendix H).

Results of the analysis provide no statistical difference to support the proposed theory.

The combined findings of Malangwasira (2013) and Maume (2011), imply that a female supervisor has a significantly positive impact on female subordinate's job satisfaction and no significant impact on her career advancement. Indeed, their findings collectively, and similarly to this study, highlighted no statistical relationship between female job satisfaction and career development under female leadership, suggesting that "job-related support and their promotion chances are unrelated to supervisor's sex" (Maume, 2011: 289). On the other hand, Priyabhashini & Krishnan (2005) research found statistical significance to confirm the relationship between transformational leadership and subordinate career advancement. However, their study, like several studies on leadership and career advancement did not examine gender as a mediating factor (Vincent-Höper et al., 2012). Alternatively, Maume (2011: 288) declared that women managers have "no effect on the career prospects of female subordinates", without investigating the mediating role of leadership. Indeed, the inductive reasoning guiding this exploratory study makes it difficult to directly compare these findings with existing similar studies. However, our findings regarding leadership and career progression are consistent with previous research on the role of transformational leadership on the career success of women, regardless of the gender of the supervisor (Vincent-Höper et al., 2012).

3. Qualitative Research Results and Analysis

This section presents the findings from the interviews. The themes emerged including work-life balance, organizational support, transformational leadership, and Glass Ceiling perception, gave a deeper understanding of the success factors and the career progression roadmap of the participants.

3.1. Theme 1: Work-Life Balance

Corresponding with the literature review discussed earlier (Lindorff 2011; Dimovski et al. 2010; Zou 2011) all interviewees cited work-life balance being a fundamental basic requirement and a key driver for their career growth. All the participants aspired to achieve work-life balance, and most of them actively took steps towards achieving that balance. Although none of the participants slowed down or downgraded their role, however, many changed the format of what they were doing to allow more flexibility. Some of the participants changed their industry; others chose to work in female friendly organizations. While others established a support system around them.

McKeen & Burke study in 1994 (23) on women friendly organizational policies revealed that “younger women were more interested in family-friendly policies and time off work than older women”. The authors concluded that those young women who belonged to Generation X (at the time aged between 18 and 29 years), and unlike the previous generation, “wanted flexibility and work-free weekends [as they see] a job only as a mean to...family and material success” (McKeen & Burke, 1994: 23). Eight of our 11 interviewees are from Generation X (now aged between 36 and 50 years), and they seem to be a true representation of the future implications of that 1994 research. The McKeen & Burke study’s unexpected findings at the time seem to have become our study’s key findings and the participants’ competitive advantage.

“As I was growing up I decided to find more work-life balance” (Participant 2).

“I have never taken a break I always worked hard.

I just changed the format of what I was doing” (Participant 6)

However, there was an obvious disparity in the work-life balance connotation among the participants who have a family, and those who don’t. The single participants stated that having no family responsibility was the major reason for achieving work-life balance and the key factor for their success. This perception reinforces Alessio & Andrzejewski (2000, cited in Cook & Glass, 2014: 92) findings from the literature review discussed earlier claimed women in leadership positions “are less likely...to be married or have children”. This observation supports the underlying perception that women will not be able to handle the conflicting work and family responsibilities without jeopardizing one or the other.

“My fear and my wish. When you have a family, it’s more difficult to focus on your job” (Participant 2)

“Being single, helped me to get where I am faster” (Participant 9)

“The women who started their career with me and didn’t make it, they chose to build a family. Having more family time” (Participant 1)

This perception is also in line with a recent study by Pew Research Centre (2013: 58) that reported: “63% of the women believe that children will make it harder for them to advance in their career”. The same survey also revealed that for women, being a good parent and having a successful marriage remain much more important than career success. However, when one of our participants was asked if she ever contemplated leaving her job after having children, said:

“No, I didn’t think about leaving. I’m too attached to my career. I love it. I love being a mom and a working woman” (Participant 8)

However, the participants who have achieved their success while being married and starting a family, said that having a husband was a major advantage in achieving work-life balance and the greatest drive behind their success. This rational refutes the findings of Van Vianen & Fischer (2002, cited in Noback et al., 2016: 118), as discussed in the literature review earlier, that reported work-home conflict as being “the most important barrier that prevented [women] from accepting a senior management position, regardless of their ambition”.

“Having the husband that I have was the key to my success. 50/50 split of responsibility. Work and family and bringing in the money” (Participant 6)

“I have a good support system around me that allows me to do what I’m doing. I never felt that I had to work and my husband was capable enough to support us financially” (Participant 3)

The career growth of the working mothers was not negatively affected or disrupted at the expense of their family. Their partner supported them by sharing the responsibility of raising the children and providing them with the needed support, financially and emotionally. A Pew Research (2013: 44) on modern parenthood reported that “fathers have nearly tripled their time with children since 1965...[and] the overall work time^[1] among dual-earner couples is fairly even”. This equal contribution in sharing work and family responsibilities gave these women the comfort and the reassurance that allowed them to focus on their jobs and excel in their career. This echoes the findings of the LeanIn.Org & McKinsey study (2016: 15) discussed earlier, and which reported: “motherhood, in fact, increases [women] appetite for winning promotions”.

“There is an expectation that women should leave and start a family. It was presumed that I would leave my job when I announced my pregnancy. I felt really offended for someone to presume that I would give up. But I was pretty sure that I did want to continue, but it took me a push, when my old boss called me and said, “there is a phenomenal opportunity are you interested?” and I thought if she can be so confident in my skills, even though I had a child then I want to give this my all” (Participant 7)

3.2. Theme 2: Organizational Support - Policies and Transformational Leadership

All interviewees voiced that the organizational support, including corporate diversity policies, equal employment opportunities and leadership played a key role in their career growth.

“Where you work is very important. The corporate diversity policies are the female card. It is a weapon for women. I can’t imagine women not having this upper hand” (Participant 3)

“My manager...understands my need to go see my family. Or work from home if I need to. He understands the key elements that make me productive and happy in my work” (Participant 2)

“My manager empowered me and made me realize my potential” (Participant 6)

“The boss is what would damage a women’s career” (Participant 7)

A woman-friendly organization is one that provides a woman the opportunity to integrate her personal, and work responsibilities successfully. And by doing so, the organization eliminates the barriers that prevent women from advancing. The study of Deniz et al., (2012: 479) on women friendly organizations determined that “family-oriented policies were positively related to continuance commitment”. These findings reiterate Hoobler et al., (2009) observations, discussed in the literature review, that the organization’s perceptions of the women’s family-work conflict played a big role in hindering their career advancement, and ultimately pushed the women to “opt out” (Powell & Butterfield, 2015: 30)

“When I chose to leave the organization it’s because the values of the organization did not match my values. If there is a mismatch you will be miserable” (Participant 11).

On the other hand, when there was a mesh in values between the women and the organization, the women were given plenty of opportunities to advance.

“When I wanted to quit, they fought to keep me. The company said take a break. Work from home” (Participant 3)

“When I wanted to leave, they made me stay. They offered flexible timing to make me stay” (Participant 6)

“When I was having doubts to quit I was offered a higher role. My manager empowered me and made me realize my potential” (Participant 7)

The participants equally stated that they thrived working with leaders who gave them the opportunities to take on more responsibilities, to influence people, to learn and to grow. A study by Mercer (2016: 21) on thriving women, reported that “women thrive when there is individual and organizational alignment”. The report highlighted that women “have different and unique skills...that are considered critical to career success” (Mercer, 2016: 21). This analysis matches the findings of a two-year study by Everest Project (2016), that revealed women are “making their mark” (2016: 6) by benefiting from their unique people skills and their drive for innovation. Evidence of this claim was found in our qualitative participants’ narrative as well. Our participants stated that they learned how to become a manager by watching their manager. Their managers instilled in them the importance of influencing people and executing and delivering above and beyond the requirements of the job. Managing people, being emotionally intelligent, having empathy, better communications skills, taking initiatives, asking to be challenged and actively seeking growth opportunities, were the acquired skills and most crucial for this study’s participants’ success. By building relationships, motivating, inspiring, influencing people, and going beyond and above

the requirements of the job, our participants were recognized, valued, and rewarded for their exceptional leadership skills as well as their business skills. A study by Lopez-Zafra et al., (2012) was the first study of its kind to examine the relation between female emotional intelligence and transformational leadership. Their research statistically confirmed that emotional intelligence is indeed a predictor factor of transformational leadership. Further validating Bark et al. (2016: 478) claim, that transformational leadership skills “facilitate women’s representation in leadership roles”.

“I had the privilege to work with an exceptional leader” (Participant 2)

“My manager made me feel valued and that I can make a change and I started acting accordingly” (Participant 10)

“How to manage people was the most crucial part of my success. “my scores are always high as a manager” (Participant 4)

“I build relationships” (Participant 7)

“You need to know how to lead people. “I’m running a better team than any other team leader” (Participant 10)”

“I’m a people person” (Participant 9)

“It’s important to influence people. My legacy is to develop people” (Participant 11)

3.3. Theme 3: The Glass Ceiling Perception

Nine out of the 11 interviewees said that they did not experience the Glass Ceiling in their career. Although they were aware that some women did face obstacles and prevented them to advance in their career. 10 out of the 11 interviewees said that not once did a manager (man or woman) block their career, or hinder their advancement. They also said they did not face gender discrimination nor bias. Most importantly, none of our 11 participants said that they were passed over for a promotion for a man. In fact, all the interviewees were adamant that the only barrier keeping a woman from advancing in her career is herself.

“The only glass ceiling is you. You ask for what you want, and you get it” (Participant 3)

“Women and their choices cause the glass ceiling” (Participant 11)

This assertion supports the claim discussed earlier, that the Glass Ceiling is a “self-created issue” (Bombuwela & Chamaru, 2013: 7). An article published in the Daily Mail in 2009, stated that “attitudes of women at work have changed beyond our wildest dreams.” The article claimed that most middle-level women in their 30’s, “choose to apply their own glass ceiling and choose not to go any higher for their own valid reasons”. Our study’s interviewees repatriated that notion.

“They don’t want to have what I have. It came as a shock. But they don’t have to be my clones. Now I understand” (Participant 7)

“Women who didn’t advance as fast as I did have other priorities. And they are happy. For them, balance is more important. Not taking the extra mile” (Participant 3)

“Their priorities differ...Career was optional not necessity. They didn’t have the aspiration” (Participant 9)

“She didn’t advance. She stayed in her comfort zone” (Participant 6)

Five participants expressed being lucky not to have experienced the Glass Ceiling. To have been in the right place working with the right people who supported them and provided them with the recognition and the opportunities to advance.

“It really depends on how lucky you are. To be in a company that doesn’t discriminate. People tell me you don’t experience the glass ceiling because of your industry” (Participant 4)

The notion of the “perception of support as lucky” was highlighted in the qualitative study by Hansen (2014: 182) on women high school principals’ career histories. Her research noted that despite the massive success the women achieved through hard work and perseverance, they all “self-assessed themselves as lucky, not acknowledging their competency, ability, or worthiness which certainly contributed to their luck. Unlike the women in Hansen study, our study’s 11 participants expressively and deliberately acknowledged that their success was fundamentally due to them working hard, learning how to lead people, taking on more responsibilities, going the extra mile and doing above and beyond the requirements of their role.

“I don’t ask for things, but I work really hard. There is no short cut. The harder you work the more successful you become. Hard work and nothing else” (Participant 7)

“Work really hard. Women will always have to work harder. Work really hard, continue to learn, stay ahead of everyone else” (Participant 11)

This disparity in self-perception could be attributed to the fact that Hansen study participants worked in the female dominated education industry, where 76% of the public-school teachers are female (NCES, 2016), and their attitudes could have been shaped by the “socialized friendship expectations” (Litwin, 2011: 7). Women value their friendship with other women and avoid jeopardizing the relationship with their female peers by appearing to be competitive to maintain the social relation (Lee et al., 2016). In comparison, this study’s 11 participants worked mainly in men dominated industries including IT, manufacturing, and investment. This argument also supports Chandra & Loosemore study (2014) on the women’s self-perception in male and women dominated industries. Their research determined that there is indeed a variation in self-perceptions and that “women in male dominated industries “emerge relatively positively, with the highest overall level of self-esteem” (Chandra & Loosemore, 2014: 947).

“It’s an advantage for women to be in men dominated environment. It makes you to be tough. Otherwise, you would be fluffly in women environment” (Participant 11)

“The difference between men and women dominated environments, is that women tend to make friends, so the environment is friendlier” (Participant 9)

4.4. Discussion

Women are underrepresented at every level in the workforce and even more so in senior roles (LeanIn Org & McKinsey 2016; Pearl Initiative 2015). Research (WEF 2016; UN 2015; McKinsey 2016; Catalyst 2015) has extensively explored the social and corporate factors causing the gender leadership gap. However, none of the leadership gender gap reports consider the gender-specific work and behavioral variations of women employees. The literature review in this study exposed existing gender specific work-behavior differentiations that impact subordinate-leader relation, job satisfaction and career progression of the women employees. Indeed, this study provided an alternative outlook on women's career progression and focused on the role of gender on female work behaviors and attitudes, and its role on the career advancement of the expatriate women in Dubai. Our findings concurred with earlier studies on gender and leadership and provided full support to gender and leader and subordinate relationship dimension. However, our study further advanced the local knowledge by highlighting the adaptation of the transformational leadership style to the local UAE contextual and cultural variations and revealed its positive effect on the female job satisfaction and her career advancement.

Our LMX analysis confirmed the statistical positive relation between gender and leader-subordinate relation quality. Women participants reporting to women managers registered significantly better quality relation with their managers. Our findings are consistent with Collins et al. (2014) and Malangwasira (2013) who reported that female managers would provide favorable environments and offer positive relations to their female subordinates by addressing the unique female value differentiation. A positive LMX particularly plays a significant role in women's career, because women place more importance on a relationship-based support (Sturges et al., 2010). Evidence of this was also observed in the qualitative data. Our participants, who have worked with a female manager or/and in a female dominated environment praised the relationship and said that it was a very positive and nurturing working environment compared to working with male managers.

Existing studies (Lindorff 2011; Dimovski et al. 2010) reported that the best predictor of female job satisfaction and retention is work-life balance. Our participants confirmed that notion, as they recognized the importance of work-life balance on their job satisfaction and commitment. Furthermore, this study revealed that participants working with men and women managers reported equal job satisfaction levels. Thamrin research on job satisfaction (2012: 570) stated to "raise employees' satisfaction...leaders should know the needs of their subordinates". 70% of the quantitative study participants declared that both Remuneration and Work-Life Balance are equally Very Important to them. Our findings dispute earlier studies on women job orientations (Zou 2011; Lindorff 2011; Dimovski 2010) and argue that these results are significant to the UAE as this study's participants' job satisfaction was highly, and equally dependent on both financial rewards and work-life balance. The distinctive dynamic of the UAE workforce, which is driven by the short-term and constant movement of expat employees, enabled performance-reward linkage to become a key driver for female employees' job satisfaction. Taking into consideration our findings on the supervisors' leadership style and participants' work orientations, we conclude that transformational leadership, coupled with the transactional leadership reward-base exchange behaviors, exhibited by both men and women managers, offset the role of gender on job satisfaction.

This adaptation of the transformational leadership to the local UAE contextual and cultural variations is supported by Jogulu (2010: 705) claim that "culture and leadership interact in different ways in diverse contexts". In 2005, Priyabhashini & Krishnan grounded their study on gender and leadership on the "universal application" (Jogulu, 2009: 710) of transformational leadership without taking into consideration

the local cultural effect of India (where the study was undertaken). However, Singh & Krishnan research on transformational leadership in India revealed that “culture [did] influence the manifestation of transformational leadership [in India]” (2007: 233). This oversight by Priyabhashini & Krishnan probably had a substantial effect on the reliability and the liability of their findings. For this specific reason, and considering the significant role of gender and culture on leadership style and effectiveness it was essential for the study to independently measure the leadership style of the population and its effect on job satisfaction and career growth of the sample.

This study also revealed that both men and women managers equally supported the career progression of their women subordinates. These results further highlighted the mediating positive role of the leadership style on career progression, consistent with previous research on the role of transformational leadership on the career success of women, regardless of the gender of the supervisor (Vincent-Höper et al., 2012). Therefore, we determine that the transformational leadership traits, exhibited by both women and men managers, offset the mediating role of gender on career progression. Indeed, our analysis further concludes that these transformational leadership traits specifically complement the female employees’ gender-specific conformities of work orientation, job satisfaction, and career growth. A transformational leadership style appears to be less effective for women leaders with men subordinates, and more effective for men leaders with women subordinates (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). Further validating Vincent-Höper et al. (2012: 675) findings that “transformational leadership plays a more crucial role with regard to occupational success for women than for men”. This study’s participants thrived working with leaders who provided them with ample opportunities and enabled them to take on more responsibilities to learn and to grow, emulating the intellectual stimulation of a transformational leadership style. However, transformational leadership is an influencing process, and a transformational leader guides his followers to become transformational leaders themselves (Bass & Steidlmeier, 1999). Therefore, this stimulation, motivation, and empowerment exhibited by these transformational managers, inspired our participants to pursue the same vision, to develop their unique proficiencies and skills, to become transformational leaders themselves, to “make their mark” (Everest Project, 2016: 6) and achieve exceptional success. This deduction equally corresponds with Bark et al. (2016: 478) arguments that transformational leadership imminently “facilitates women’s representation in leadership roles”.

Lastly, our observations on the effect of transformational leadership and women career prospects provided no support to observe the manifestation of the Queen Bee phenomenon suggested in the literature review. Our participants, those reporting to women managers as well as those reporting to men managers, equally (with no statistical difference) highly rated my manager is actively interested in my professional development and advancement, and my manager coaches me to help me develop professionally. In fact, the quantitative data reported a significant increase in the number of women participants reporting to a woman manager. A total of 16 participants (24%) were recruited to work with female supervisors in their current role (Table 8.0). This suggests that having female managers increases the chances of women being recruited in higher positions. This argument is in concurrence with our previous observation of Goodman et al., (2003: 475) research that revealed: “women are more likely to occupy top management ranks in establishments that have more lower level management positions filled by women”. Matsa & Miller (2011) examined the role of women helping women in the US from 1997 to 2009. Their results revealed that there is “a positive association between the female share of the board of directors in the previous year and the female share among current top executives” (Matsa & Miller, 2011: 1). They suggest that women in leadership roles on the “demand-side” (Matsa & Miller, 2011: 7), play a crucial role in adding more

women to the workforce, debunking the notion that women are eager to “remain unique in their workplaces” (Johnson & Mathur-Helm, 2011: 50). Similarly, the participants in the qualitative study do not recall being held back at any point in their career by a woman or being denied a promotion by a woman. These declarations further provide no support to accept the Queen Bee theory once again. In fact, many of the participants, those who had the opportunity to work with a woman manager said that the woman manager empowered them and made them realize their potential. They gave them the responsibilities to learn and gave them the recognition to advance.

Table 8.0 Gender of Manager Then and Now

Is your Manager a man or a woman		How about your last job? Was your Manager a man or a woman?	
	Responses		Responses
Man	41 62.1%	Man	44 66.7%
Woman	25 37.9%	Woman	22 33.3%

Phil Smith, the Chairman of Cisco UK and Ireland, said in an interview: “from a purely business perspective, at least 50%^[SEP] of the population are female, and if they’re not working for me, they’re working for someone else. The question I keep returning to is: how^[SEP] do I create an environment that’s attractive to women?” (Grant Thornton, 2017). Our study participants thrived in organizations that took active measures to hire (most of the 11 interviewees were head-hunted by the organizations), develop, encourage and facilitate their growth to aspire them to reach to managerial positions without them having to sacrifice or feeling pressured to choose between family and career. Women constitute 46.6% of the UAE labor force. To support them, in 2015, the UAE created the Gender Balance Council to help organizations create women-friendly working environments, adopt gender balance policies, promote work-life balance, and introduce women leadership development programs. Sheikha Manal bint Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, president of the UAE Gender Balance Council, said in an interview: "this initiative further strengthens [the UAE] efforts to reduce the gender gap across all sectors, enhance the UAE’s ranking in global competitiveness reports on gender equality and achieve gender balance in decision-making positions, as well as promote the UAE as a model for gender balance” (Arabian Business, 2017). 65% of our quantitative study participants indicated that the company they work for has equal gender employment policies and claimed that their company offers equal gender promotion opportunities. An article published in HBR (2013) claimed that the equal employment progress stalled in the US in the last years, primarily because of the national efforts to pressure firms to regulate equal opportunity. This explains the findings from the 2016 WEF report that revealed the number of women in senior positions has been declining in recent years and it currently stands at its lowest point since 2008. At the first meeting of the United Nations panel on women’s empowerment in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, in February 2017, the UAE declared that “women’s empowerment is a key target in the UAE’s national strategy its intention...and the country aims to be among the top 25 nations worldwide excelling in the field of women’s empowerment” (Gulf News, 2017). Our study suggests, that unlike the US the local gender equality agenda has made significant positive impact on the UAE workforce, especially that the government is monitoring and measuring the implementation of this initiative within the private and public organizations to ensure the stringent adaptation of the law. This was evident as well in this quantitative study as 65% of the participants stated that their organization has equal employment policies and 80% stated that they did not believe their manager treats them differently because of their gender.

Chapter 5: SUMMARY OF THE RESEARCH

5.1. Summary of the Research

This research set out to examine the careers of working women in Dubai and investigate the mediating role of gender in the leader and subordinate relationship, job satisfaction, and career prospects. We presented the background to the problem and outlined the global underrepresentation of women in senior roles. We argued, that in addition to the frequently discussed social and corporate factors that inhibit women's career, we argued, that female gender-specific behaviors and attitudes play a significant role on the women career prospects. We prompted the question *are women likely to have better career advancement opportunities under women leadership?* And proposed to investigate if women managing women will provide favorable environments for women career advancement.

We critically reviewed the existing literature on the social and the organizational factors contributing towards the leadership gap, and the role of gender in job satisfaction, leader and subordinate relationship and career advancement. We also presented and discussed the mediating role of LMX and the transformational leadership style on the career progression of women, within the social and the corporate frameworks. The reviewed literature positioned gender as a key factor that influenced leader and subordinate relationship, job satisfaction, and job retention.

We provided an overview of the research methodology, the design, and the research methods. We also discussed the validity, the reliability, and the ethics of the study. Based on the research questions and the objective of the research, we opted to base the study on the constructivism/interpretivism ontology and the positivism/objectivism epistemology; and apply a mixed methods approach and a convergent parallel design. We defined that the research would be initiated with quantitative questionnaires to verify and validate existing theories within the local context. Followed by qualitative face-to-face interviews to understand the experiences of the working women, and their roadmap to success to expand the knowledge

We presented the analysis and the discussion of our findings in relation to the literature reviewed and the research questions. The quantitative data analysis provided full support to gender and leader and subordinate relationship dimension, and no support to job satisfaction and career prospects. Findings have shown that reporting to a female supervisor has an insignificant effect on the career advancement of female employees and that transformational leadership, together with the transactional leadership reward-base exchange behaviors, exhibited by both male and female supervisors, offset the role of supervisor gender on career progression. We argued that these results may be specifically attributed to the unique UAE work environment. Along with leadership style, the data also revealed that women-friendly organizations are central to women advancement to top management levels. Considering that none of the participants recall experiencing the Glass Ceiling, this again was further attributed to the unique UAE environment, since the country has been actively taking initiatives and passing legislations to help organizations create women-friendly working environments, adopt gender balance policies, promote work-life balance, and introduce women leadership development programs.

5.2. Research Implications

The above contextual and behavioral limitations provide future research opportunities. Future research on women career progression and success in the UAE can include local UAE female participants, to compare their experiences with those of the expat women reported in this research, especially, and taking into consideration the Emiratization initiative of the UAE government - that incentivizes Emirati women to attain leadership positions within the private sector. Similar research can also be undertaken within the UAE public sector, taking into consideration that women make up 66% of the public-sector workers out of which 30% are in leadership roles (GulfNews, 2016). Finally, and with the observation of the link between transformational leadership and women career advancement, more detailed statistical analysis and research is recommended, including regression and correlation analysis to test the theory.

Practically, our findings point to the fact that organizations should be aware of the underlying gender-related work behavioral differences and take an active position to better manage and support the female employees. This study determined that women are more satisfied working for women managers, and they have better career advancement opportunities working for transformational leaders. Therefore, organizations should invest in training and developing more managers to become transformational leaders to coach them to lead successfully. Results from two studies (Parry & Sinha 2005; Kelloway & Barling 2000) statistically reveal that transformational leadership can be learned and that managers who receive the adequate training can successfully alter their behaviors and become transformational leaders. On the other hand, and considering the age parameters of our quantitative study sample (72% of the participants reporting to women, compared to 51% of the participants reporting to men are aged between 26 to 35 years) and in relation to the study findings and implications, it is imperative that junior to mid-level women employees are managed by women managers, who will create a “communal environment” [that considers] the individualized behaviors [of women]” (Eagly et al., 2003: 822) to empower them, teach them and give them the tools that will help them advance in their career. Alternatively, organizations with fewer woman managers can create women mentorship programs to support their female staff. The importance of women mentors was mentioned by a few of our interviewees, who claimed that their female mentors gave them valuable advice on how to avoid many pitfalls, helped them develop their strengths, and guided them through the corporate labyrinth to reach the top.

5.3. Conclusion

The greater need for women in senior positions and the boards justifies the increased need for more effective and women-specific career development and advancement initiatives. Corporates that take into consideration the findings derived from this study will be able to hire, train and develop better women leaders, achieve better financial results, and sustain their competitive advantage (HBR, 2016). The findings of this study will as well help male managers with women subordinates to acknowledge gender-specific factors and emphasize on behaviors that lead to a better leader and subordinate relationship, improve job satisfaction, and positively influence women career advancement. Recognizing the critical role of women in the economy and by understanding the gender specific needs of women to help them advance in the workplace, constitute a huge step forward towards reducing the leadership gender gap. Sally Blount, the Dean of Kellogg School of Management, writes: “at least 50% of the women graduating from top MBA programs in 2017 will exit the full-time US workforce within 10 years of graduating—either because they choose to step out or are forced out” (KelloggInsight, 2017). Potentially, the arguments presented in this study would help organizations identify appropriate strategies to support the career growth of those female employees, who choose not to apply their own glass ceiling and aim to reach the top.

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