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LEADERSHIP AND GENDER IN KAZAKHSTAN: AN INTEGRATIVE LITERATURE REVIEW

Abstract

The requirements for today's leaders have become more comprehensive and multifaceted due to increasing international labor migration, dynamic organizations' digitalization, and penetration of generative artificial intelligence into a business environment. Despite the increased requirements for managers' competencies, theoretical knowledge of Kazakhstani business leaders remains scarce, whereas the gender factor within this topicality is even more deficient. This paper aims to synthesize the new knowledge on leadership and gender in Kazakhstan through the sophisticated analysis of the existing publications and building the research agenda for future scholars. The integrative literature review grounded on R. Toracco's and J. Callahan's methodological guidelines was utilized for this research. The Scopus and Web of Science databases were used for searching the appropriate publications till 2024 inclusively. As a result three primary thematic areas: leadership styles, leadership skills, and women in leadership were identified. The review findings revealed that transactional and transformational leadership were the most popular styles among Kazakhstani managers. The research on women leaders is limited by female managers' barriers, progression, and coping strategies in higher education. The majority of the existing articles about leadership styles and skills did not consider gender and only a few analyzed it as a control variable. The theoretical significance of this work relates to the research agenda elaborated for prospective study. The identified specificity of Kazakhstani managers' leadership can be used by practitioners for the analysis and perfection of their leading function.

Key words: gender, leadership style, manager, women, transformational leadership, transactional leadership, leadership skills.

Introduction

Due to the high turbulence of both external and internal environments, contemporary Kazakhstani managers compete not only with their local colleagues but with rivals from regional and global zones. Current challenges demand new managerial skills and novel leadership types: authentic, agile, participative, inclusive, adaptive, and servant leadership, more often associated with feminine characteristics.

In the current context, understanding one's distinctive competencies and building sustainable competitive advantage is a crucial task not only at the micro but also at the macro level. The scarce information on peculiarities and certain characteristics undermines business practitioners' endeavors

to find their niche and diminishes the training effectiveness of future business leaders. Under the relevant information deficit about the Kazakhstani managers' leadership, a national manager's image is at risk of being generalized through the Western leadership frameworks without properly adapting it to the local context.

The Kazakhstani gender potential is a rich but underutilized intellectual resource that can become a basis for building sustainable competitive advantages in the business sector [1]. The UN Sustainable Development Goals, most of which are gender-sensitive, are a national priority of the Republic of Kazakhstan and are reflected in the Concept of Family and Gender Policy until 2030, giving an important place to the gender aspect of the nation's professional potential. The number of women entrepreneurs in small and medium-sized businesses in RK constitutes above 44%. Female managers represent the majority among financial and audit firm heads and 13.4% of top managers in large enterprises and lead 12.7% of legal entities and 9.1% of peasant farms. [2] Kazakhstani women's contribution to the Gross Domestic Product is around 40% [2].

As a result of the research shortage on leadership and gender in Kazakhstan, practitioners often draw their conclusions about the leadership potential of women and men based on gender stereotypes, according to which the ideal manager is endowed with masculine traits - assertiveness, dominance, aggression, and purposefulness [3].

The present article aims to synthesize new knowledge based on the accumulated scholarly works about business leadership in Kazakhstan and to build a research agenda for future academic works. The following research questions represent the article's tasks:

1. What are the qualitative and quantitative characteristics of the accumulated knowledge of business leadership in Kazakhstan?
2. What thematic areas exist within the business leadership research?
3. What role does gender occupy in the conducted research on managers' leadership in Kazakhstan?
4. What research methods have been used within the examined field?
5. What prospects for future research will be beneficial within the studied area?

The integrative literature review based on the sophisticated analysis of peer-reviewed articles on leadership in Kazakhstan from Scopus and Web of Science databases was the primary research method for this article.

The research has revealed that both local and international scholars demonstrate low interest in the examined area. The annual dynamics of publications on managers' leadership range from 0 to 3 for tens of years. The present study has identified that the research methods applied for investigating business leadership are mainly represented by quantitative surveys, around 1/3 of all academic works are rooted in qualitative methodology, and the mixed method is almost unutilized. The research findings allowed us to identify several thematic areas within the examined publications: leadership styles, leadership skills, and women in leadership. Gender potential is almost neglected in business leadership research, and the only field where women managers were investigated was higher education.

The practical significance of the present paper is the accumulation of knowledge on Kazakhstani managers' leadership competencies and styles that could be used by local companies to understand the advantages and disadvantages of domestic leaders. The generated directions for prospective research and methods in this field can serve as a solid guideline for future scholarly endeavors.

Materials and methods

The method of the integrative literature review was chosen for this work since it represents "a form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated" [4, p. 356]. Richard Toracco's approach to the Integrative literature review [4] and The Six W's of rigorous literature review by Jamie Callahan [5] constituted the essence of this research methodology. Three steps argued by Toracco: 1) initial search, 2) explanation of the applied methods, and 3) critical analysis were enhanced by Callahan's rigorous characteristics for conducting this type of review. The utilized search strategy is described following The Six W's form (table 1).

Table 1 – The Six W's: Substantiation of the Applied Method by J.L. Callahan

Component	Substantiation of accomplishment
Who	The data was searched by the author of this paper.
When	The data search was conducted in June 2024. The search was limited only by the final point (2024), while the starting period was not set since the number of the identified articles was not large and the task was to trace all the existing articles till now.
Where	The Scopus and Web of Science databases were the key data portals for this work. Peer-reviewed conference proceedings, articles, and book chapters were considered.
hoW	Initially, we started with the search words “gender”, “leadership”, and “Kazakhstan”. This search led to only 11 papers, most of which were focused on education. Further, the search strategy was broadened with the search words “leadership” and “Kazakhstan” which revealed 267 papers in Scopus and 129 papers in Web of Science. The snowball sampling through screening of the references from the most suitable papers assisted in finding additional works on the examined topic.
What	10 papers were excluded by language, other than English and Russian. 201 works were excluded from the Scopus list since were not related to the required areas - Business and management; economics, econometrics, and finance, and 101 articles were excluded from WoS being unrelated to Business economics. Out of remained 84 articles, 59 works were selected based on the content of their abstracts.
Why	21 works constituted the final pool of the thoroughly examined articles. They have been selected based on the following criteria: a study of a leading function, managers’ leadership, and a focus on Kazakhstani managers/leaders.
Note: Compiled by the author based on the source [5].	

Following table 1, the total number of initially defined sources in two databases – 396 items ended with 21 selected in compliance with several criteria. Additionally, several sources from WoS, already included in the selected list, were excluded due to overlapping with the Scopus sources. At the last stage of building the sources pool, 5 articles were added as a result of snowball selection: by searching the reference lists of the initially selected papers, other suitable and meaningful works were detected. The more detailed algorithm of the exclusion from the final dataset grouped along the Scopus and WoS lists is presented in table 2.

Table 2 – Search algorithm and criteria for sources inclusion in the literature review

	Web of Science	Scopus	Total
No of the total identified documents	129	267	396
Inclusion by English and Russian language	125	261	386
Inclusion by research area	24 (Business economics)	60 (Business and management; economics, econometrics and finance)	84
Inclusion by abstract content	15 (related to the macro level of the economy, geopolitical issues, and innovation were excluded)	44 (related to students’ and teachers’ leadership, macro level, green projects, finance, and diplomacy were excluded)	59
Exclusion by overlapping with WoS	Not applicable	6	53
Inclusion by the article content	9	7	16
Adding by snowball selection	2	3	5
Final pool for the integrative review	11	10	21
Note: Compiled by the author based on the conducted research.			

The choice of the Web of Science (Clarivate Analytics) and the Scopus (Elsevier) databases relates to several reasons. First, Scopus and Web of Science are the most popular, eligible, and complementary databases for integrative and systematic literature review due to their coverage of comprehensive interdisciplinary peer-reviewed academic works [5]. Second, both databases have integrated artificial intelligence that favors more accurate analysis of publication trends in the field, including their number, topicality, area, country of origin, number of citations, and other criteria. Third, Scopus and Web of Science represent the world's leading academic databases for researchers available in any country and mostly in English – the language of scientific debate between scholars around the globe. Due to this fact, the stipulated choice could provide better reliability and transparency of this research findings since each analyzed article is easily approachable almost from any part of the world. On the contrary, other databases such as GoogleScholar, Russian Science Citations Index, and Kazakhstani publications were not studied since among their articles there are also non-peer-reviewed works with low reliability, many conceptual or theoretical papers uneligible for our review, and papers written in local languages inaccessible for international scholars.

Due to the specificity of Scopus and WoS databases, there were different search algorithms. The search applied in WoS was grounded on the title, abstract, keywords, and author keywords, while in WoS – on the article's name, abstract, and keywords. Because of the different thematic areas available in the two data banks, in Scopus, the inclusion criteria embraced Business and Management, Economics, and Econometrics and Finance, whereas in WoS – Business economics.

Finally, 21 articles were scrutinized to answer five research questions stated in the Introduction to synthesize the research agenda in the form of the research propositions for future study [4].

Some aspects of the Kazakhstani managers' leadership are reflected in the works of local and international academics conducted on related topics, such as human resource management and organizational culture [6], [7], [8], [9]. Bakacsi et al. characterized the Kazakhstani ideal leaders as work-oriented, visionary, inspiring, determined, honest, diplomatic, and developing the team [6]. In small business studies, Mahmood and colleagues [8] found that Kazakhstan's most widespread leadership style was paternalistic, in which the leader took care of subordinates and demonstrated directive behavior to achieve organizational goals.

Díaz-Soloaga & Díaz-Soloaga postulated the orientation of Kazakhstanis on the production structure and relationships that relate to more remarkable restraint and conservatism of Kazakhstani managers compared to their Spanish peers [7]. A cross-cultural study by Poór et al. [9] based on about 400 foreign enterprises in Central-Eastern Europe and Kazakhstan showed that managerial decisions in RK companies were highly centralized, and managers experienced difficulties in dealing with subordinates, planning needs in HR and leading communications.

Research in the field of leadership and gender in business structures is rather constrained in Kazakhstan. International studies have repeatedly confirmed the positive impact of gender potential on the state economy, so a prominent women's representation on the board of directors increases the return on equity and business growth. [10] A Kazakhstani study demonstrated a positive relationship between the presence of women on directors' boards and environmental and social indicators of large businesses. [11] A meta-analysis of leadership styles of men and women over several decades, conducted by Eagly [12], revealed a more significant focus of men on transactional leadership, active and passive action in case of subordinates' mistakes, and a more excellent orientation on transformational leadership, support and remuneration of employees.

The conducted critical review of the preceding studies has demonstrated a significant shortage of research in the field of managers' leadership competencies in Kazakhstan. Fragmentary data on leadership skills and styles do not allow us to differentiate Kazakhstani leadership from other countries and moreover to assess the gender leadership potential of local managers.

Results and discussion

The accumulative knowledge of leadership in Kazakhstan is represented by 21 articles published in various scientific journals. Notwithstanding one of our inclusion criteria was relatedness to the business and economics area, most of the detected articles were cross-disciplinary. The distribution between different research fields was uneven: business, management and accounting – 8 articles,

economics – 1, social sciences – 4, education – 4, arts and humanities – 2, environmental studies – 1, and psychology applied – 1.

Another interesting aspect of the conducted analysis is the country from which their authors are: Kazakhstan – 35%, the U.S. – 22%, England – 10%, Bangladesh, Russia, and China – 6% each, Netherlands, United Arab Emirates, Hungary, Scotland, and Canada – 3% each. Among Kazakhstani educational establishments, KIMEP University and Nazarbayev University lead this list, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and Gumilyov Eurasian National University are represented by one article each. The more detailed analysis of the authors' profiles allowed us to conclude that the representation of some countries in the aforementioned list is somewhat conditional since several papers were written by Kazakhstani scholars on their temporary work contracts for universities abroad. Therefore, the actual percentage of articles prepared by locals is higher than 35% but still less than 50%, which shreds of evidence in favor of Kazakhstanis' low interest rates in the examined topicality.

The dynamic of publications in this field represents an exciting piece of information (figure 1).

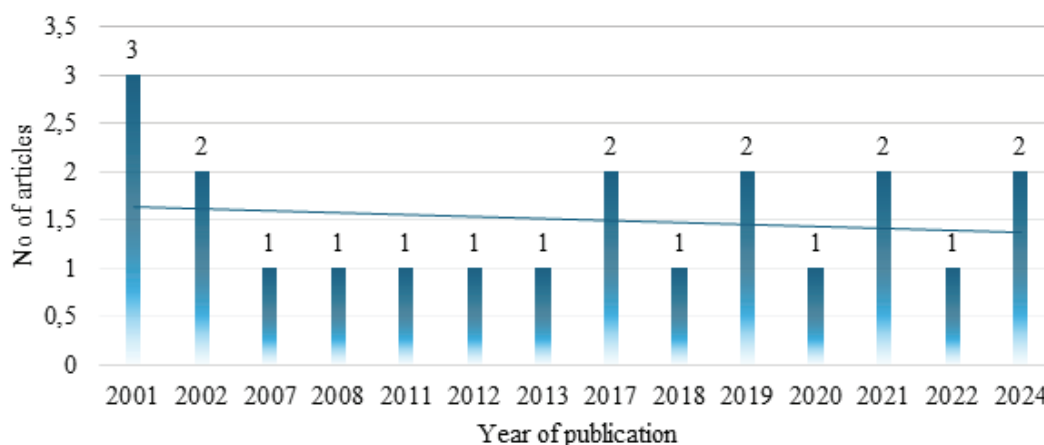


Figure 1 – Dynamics of publications on “Leadership in Kazakhstan” topic

Note: Compiled by the author based on the conducted research.

Following Figure 1, the first publications were written at the very beginning of the XXI century, the first ten years of independence did not bring any works about leadership in Kazakhstan within the business and management area. Insignificant positive dynamics have been observed since 2017, when 1–2 articles were published annually, excluding 2023. One can not conclude about the growth of interest in this topic from the academic community as the initial volume of 3 articles has never been achieved since 2001. The peak of publication activity manifested in 2001–2002 connected with the foreign authors who were originally from Post-socialist and Post-soviet countries [6], [13]. Alexander Ardichvili remains the most prominent author of Kazakhstani managers' leadership styles being the author /coauthor of four articles [13–16]. A more detailed analysis of Ardichvili's works demonstrated all four publications were prepared on the same sample of Kazakhstanis – 385 employees of manufacturing plants, including 118 managers. Monowar Mahmood and colleagues [8], [17–18] published three articles on business managers' leadership styles, and Aliya Kuzhabekova and Ainur Almukhambetova [19–21] dedicated three papers to women managers' leadership in the education context.

The methods applied in the articles on leadership in Kazakhstan

Mainly, the quantitative research method was utilized by the authors of the selected papers, with the largest sample of 385 employees and managers of factories [16] to the smallest of 77 accounting professionals [22]. More details on the used methods can be found in tables 3–5. Despite that several analyzed samples being cross-cultural studies included thousands of respondents, our review counted exclusively the number of Kazakhstani participants. On average, the samples were small and broad, since the studies engaged several different industries, cities, and organization types which might

reduce the quality of the sample to make conclusions on some points where a few tens of respondents were represented. [17], [23–26]

Two articles were written based on large samples generated from secondary data of GLOBE research with no certain information on how many participants were from Kazakhstan [6], [27].

The qualitative approach was used in six articles: in the form of case studies [19], [28], semistructured interviews [19–21], [29], and focus groups [29]. All the methods were mono ones, excluding one qualitative multimethod research that embraced focus groups and face-to-face interviews [29]. The number of conducted interviews ranged from one [28] with a top manager of a large company to 30 with women leaders from two Central Asian countries, among which only 15 conversations were with Kazakhstanis [19].

The mixed research method oriented for obtaining complex information on the research problem and raising the reliability and validity of the findings was applied to no one article included in the integrative literature review.

The assessment of managers' leadership styles and skills was conducted only in a few ways: via self-reported (self-completed questionnaires), self-reflection (interviews), and through subordinates' eyes when they filled in the surveys about their supervisors. No 360-degree assessment, peer evaluations, observations, blended instruments, artificial intelligence assessment tools, simulation exercises, business games, situational judgment items, or other forms of contemporary potential analysis have been involved.

Three major themes emerged in the process of the critical analysis of the articles included in the integrative literature review (figure 2).

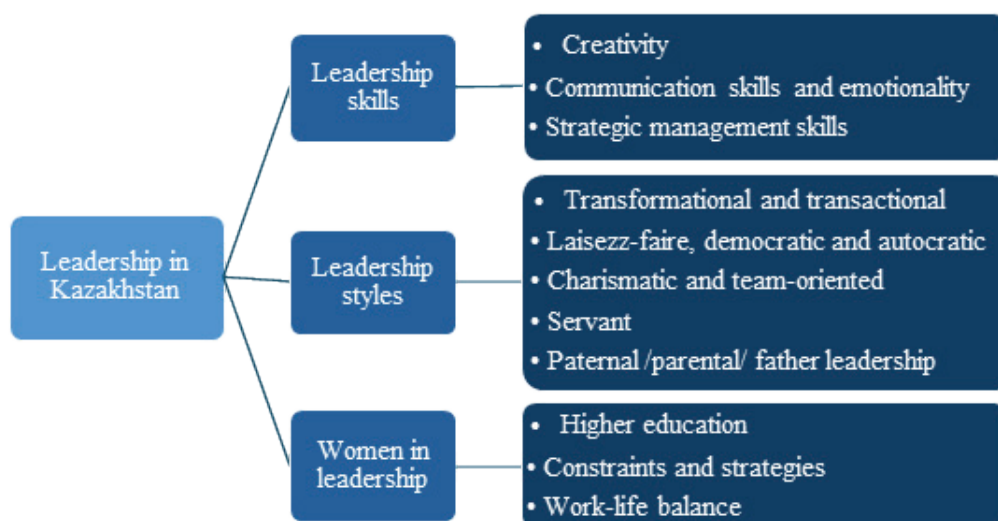


Figure 2 – Concept map of emerging themes

Note: Compiled by the author based on the conducted research.

The thematic area of leadership skills represents the smallest field that signals the scarcity of knowledge on Kazakhstani managers' competencies. Local leaders' strategic management is negatively influenced by clan culture and transactional leadership style [18]. For developing better business strategies and sustainable competitive advantages, business leaders must develop their learning skills and strive for continuous professional development [28] (table 3).

Following table 3, Kazakhstani managers rank their interpersonal communication skills and professional ethics as high, why hard skills of business environment diagnostics as insufficient [22]. Local leaders' cultural intelligence positively impacts their skills of controlling emotions and demonstrating empathy toward employees, whereas emotional intelligence contributes to creative management [25]. Local leaders' ability to build a positive work environment and favorable relationships with subordinates reduces the risks of abusive supervision and positively relates to organizational citizenship behavior [30].

Table 3 – Articles about leadership skills

#	Authors, year	Article title	Research method/ sample	Key findings
1	Mazhitov, Uddin, Mahmood, Ostrovskiy, 2024	Competitive advantages through strategy implementation: the role of people, plan, and process	Quantitative, 307 top- and mid-level managers from public and private companies	Clan culture and transactional leadership style play a minor deterrent role in strategy realization and building competitive advantages
2	Davis and Callahan, 2012	Professional development for company directors - a strategic leadership opportunity for HR? The case of Air Astana	Case study, an interview with an independent director at Kazakhtelecom and Air Astana	The top managers of large businesses require continuous learning and development to meet the competitive environment needs
3	Abdullah and Chaker, 2011	Competency skills in accounting: Perceptions of Kazakhstan Institute of Management Economics and Strategic Research (KIMEP), accounting graduates	Quantitative survey, 77 accountants from local and international companies (71% women)	Respondents perceived their interpersonal communication, professional ethics, financial accounting, and information development skills as high and their knowledge of the business environment, management accounting, and taxation skills as low
4	Altinay, Kinali, Madanoglu, Nurmagambetova, and Madanoglu, 2021	Mental aspects of cultural intelligence and self-creativity of nascent entrepreneurs: The mediating role of emotionality	Quantitative survey, 194 respondents (63.92% women)	Entrepreneurs demonstrating stronger (meta)cognitive cultural intelligence are prone to more significant emotionality with a positive influence on self-creativity
5	Gregory, Osmonbekov, Gregory, Albritton, Carr, 2013	Abusive supervision and citizenship behaviors: exploring boundary conditions	Quantitative survey, 357 employees of Kazakhstani banks	The negative link between abusive supervision and organizational citizenship behavior is stronger when personnel work under a certain manager's supervision for a longer time and when their satisfaction with wages is low
Note: Compiled by the author based on the sources [18, 22, 25, 28, 30].				

The research focused on different leadership styles and their relationship to national culture is presented in table 4.

Table 4 – Publications dedicated to leadership styles

#	Authors, year	Article title	Research method/ sample	Key findings
1	Van De Vliert, Einarsen, 2008	Cultural construals of destructive versus constructive leadership in major world niches	Quantitative research method, secondary data, 17,370 managers from 58 countries	The intellectual contrast between more dysfunctional and more functional leadership styles is considered insignificant in Kazakhstan
2	Low, 2007	Father leadership and small business management: The Kazakhstan perspective	Qualitative, focus groups with 23 business leaders and 14 face-to-face interviews	Father leadership is widely used in small- and medium-sized Kazakhstani enterprises. Leaders apply a directive and telling style and treat their subordinates as family members

Continuation of table 4

3	Darvishmotevali, Altinay, 2022	Green HRM, environmental awareness and green behaviors: the moderating role of servant leadership	Quantitative survey, 220 respondents (44.1% women)	The considerable impact of servant leadership on employees' proactive pro-environmental performance
4	Mahmood, Uddin, Ostrovski, Orazalin, 2020	Effectiveness of business leadership in the Eurasian context: empirical evidence from Kazakhstan	Quantitative survey, 321 managers of local and multinational corporations (26% women)	Transformational, transactional and paternal leadership impact organizational operations most considerably. Clan culture demonstrates a more significant moderating effect between leadership and organizational operations
5	Frolova, Mahmood, 2019	Variations in employee duty orientation: impact of personality, leadership styles and corporate culture	Quantitative survey, 284 employees (56% women) in Astana, Almaty, Kostanay	Parent leadership and democratic leadership styles demonstrate a considerable effect on all dimensions of duty orientation
6	Bakacsi, Sándor, András, Viktor, 2002	Eastern European cluster: tradition and transition	Quantitative research, secondary data, GLOBE	Kazakhstanis prone to charismatic and team-oriented leadership and less inclined to self-protective, humane, and autonomous leadership
7	Ardichvili, Kuchinke, 2002	Leadership styles and cultural values among managers and subordinates: A comparative study of four countries of the former Soviet Union, Germany, and the US	4,065 managers and employees from 10 companies in Russia, Georgia, Kazakhstan (N=385), Kyrgyzstan, Germany, and the US (44% women)	Transformational, transactional, and charismatic leadership are often used by Kazakhstani managers. Despite laissez-faire and management by objectives styles being used in Kazakhstan seldom, they were given the highest ranking by Kazakhstanis among other respondents
8	Ardichvili, 2001	Leadership styles and work-related values of managers and employees of manufacturing enterprises in post-communist countries	Quantitative survey: 2,391 managers and employees (44% women) of 9 manufacturing plants in Georgia, Russia, Kazakhstan (N=385) and Kyrgyzstan	Managers in all four countries scored higher on individualism, while employees – on masculinity. Kazakhstani and Kyrgyzstani managers are rated lower on long-term orientation compared to other countries' participants
9	Ardichvili, Gasparishvili, 2001b	Leadership profiles of managers in post-communist countries: a comparative study		Kazakhstani managers apply a combination of transactional and transformational styles. The component of transactional styles – management by exception is perceived most positively among managers from 4 countries
10	Ardichvili, Gasparishvili, 2001a	Socio-cultural values, internal work culture and leadership styles in four post-communist countries: Russia, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan	Quantitative survey: 695 managers from 9 Georgian, Kazakhstani (N=118), Kyrgyzstani, and Russian manufacturing plants	Kazakhstani managers demonstrate the highest scores on fatalism and paternalism. No differences in laissez-faire, and transformational leadership with other countries but less inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation compared to Russia and Georgia

Note: Compiled by the author based on the sources [6, 8, 13–17, 24, 27, 29].

Following table 4, father/paternal/parental leadership style remains popular among local managers [8], [17], [29]. Father leadership is liked by subordinates and practiced in small- and middle-sized enterprises [29]. The father style is considered effective in Asian clan culture and shows a considerable effect on all dimensions of employee duty orientation and overall organizational performance [17].

Local managers apply both components of transactional and transformational leadership styles [8], [13–17]. Kazakhstani managers' leadership is similar to their peers from Kyrgyzstan; in comparison with their colleagues from Russia and Georgia, they practice less inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation within a transformational style [15]. Despite dysfunctional leadership styles like management by exception, and laissez-faire, Kazakhstani managers more often use them than their colleagues from post-soviet countries, Western Europe and the U.S. Kazakhstani leaders have lower rankings on long-term orientation compared to their foreign peers [14–15], [27].

Local leaders scored higher on individualism, while employees – on masculinity [13]. Kazakhstanis are inclined to team-oriented, servant, and charismatic leadership and are less prone to self-protective, humane, and autonomous styles [6], [24]. The proneness of fatalism may negatively impact local managers' proactive behavior and strategic management [15].

The list of sources grouped in the thematic area of women in leadership is provided in table 5.

Table 5 – Studies focused on women in leadership

#	Authors, year	Article title	Research method/sample	Key findings
1	Mynbayeva, Minazheva, Sadyrova, Zoldassova, 2024	Examining leadership styles in higher education management: evidence from Kazakhstan	Questionnaire, 200 university managers (77.5% women)	Men managers demonstrated stronger leadership ability and business leadership style. Women managers practiced a more emotional, communicative style to build a positive work climate
2	Orynbek, Hui, Kalibekuly, Tadesee, Khalid, 2021	The influence of leadership style on teachers' job satisfaction in public universities in Kazakhstan	Multifactor questionnaire, 117 faculty members and 6 managers (82% women)	Managers use mostly transactional styles. Faculty members are more satisfied with transactional styles compared to transformational and dissatisfied with laissez-faire. Women are more satisfied with their jobs and bosses
3	Kuzhabekova, Almukhambetova, 2019	Women's progression through the leadership pipeline in the universities of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan	A qualitative horizontal comparative case study, 30 women university managers	Women's progression in leadership positions is limited by gender stereotypes and social expectations rooted in their care functions in families
4	Kakabadse, Tatli, Nicolopoulou, Tankibayeva, Mouraviev, 2017, p.10	A gender perspective on entrepreneurial leadership: female leaders in Kazakhstan	Interview, 18 female senior managers from various organizations	Women leaders practice "co-developing collaborative behavior that emphasizes positive relation-building, role modeling and mutual learning"
5	Kuzhabekova, Jananova, Almukhambetova, 2018	Analyzing the experiences of female leaders in civil service in Kazakhstan: trapped between economic pressure to earn and traditional family role expectations	Semi-structured interviews with 15 women civil servants from different regions	Young and single women and women in top positions practice more masculine leadership behavior, while women in early careers and in "female" fields utilize the motherhood/ sisterhood style, care for their subordinates, and build comfortable environments
6	Kuzhabekova, Almukhambetova, 2017	Female academic leadership in the post-Soviet context	Semi-structured interviews with 13 female academic leaders from private and public universities	Women leaders demonstrate adaptive behaviors based on patriarchic, Soviet, and neo-liberal, social expectations. Social beliefs that women lack politicking and strategic thinking skills are barriers to women's managerial careers
Note: Compiled by the author based on the sources [3, 19–21, 23, 26].				

Kazakhstani women managers demonstrate flexibility in the use of soft supervision more associated with feminine traits of emotionality and communicability and more rigid leadership often related to a masculine leadership style [20–21], [23]. The application of softer management aims to create comfortable work conditions for employees, mutual benefit, and collaboration [3], [23], [26]. The more masculine style is used by single and young women and those who occupy high posts, while more mature supervisors and first-line and middle-level managers apply a “sisterhood” approach [20]. Women use adaptive behavior strategies in both organizations and their personal lives to meet social expectations of their wives, mothers, and caregivers’ roles at home and business leaders’ functions in work arrangements [3], [21]. Women consider gender prejudice against female managers as lacking political and strategic skills and distribution of gender roles and household chores as the key barriers to top management careers [19], [21]. All research in this area excluding the work of Kakabadse et al. about entrepreneurs [3] and Kuzhabekova and Almukhambetova about civil servants [21] stems from the higher education area and does not shed sufficient light on women managers’ certain leadership styles and skills.

The gender role in leadership research

Gender does not occupy a significant place in leadership research. Conditionally, the accumulated publications can be divided into three groups: 1. Articles dedicated to women leaders [3], [19–21], [23], [26]. 2. Publications examined gender as a control variable [8], [13–16], [25], [30]. 3. Works ignored gender totally [6], [17–18], [22], [24], [27], [29].

The first group. Less than 30% of papers were concentrated on gender. The gender labor segregation in RK with a predominance of women in education has left its mark on leadership research. So, women managers’ leadership skills are mainly examined in one occupational field – higher education. Remarkably, there is no gender representation in the reviewed articles, since works about educational leadership studied exclusively women and male managers’s leadership in this context have remained unexamined. Considering that this group has already been analyzed in detail in the section above, no explanation of its content is given here.

The second group. A range of the studied papers did not consider gender as an integral part of their research and just listed it among the demographic characteristics of their sample and controlled it to exclude its possible effect on the final result. In their four papers on leadership, Ardichvili and colleagues concluded on the insignificance of gender as a control variable [13–16]. Mahmood and colleagues [8], Altynai et al. [25], and Gregory et al. [30] also noted the insignificance of such control variables as gender.

The third group. In some articles in this group, gender is not only neglected as a significant factor but even is absent in the description of respondents’ characteristics [6], [18], [27], [29]. Remarkably, gender was not analyzed even in the research, where women represented the majority of the respondents [17], [22].

It is noteworthy that the authors of this category are mostly women excluding one man. On the contrary, authors in the other two groups are men, excluding one woman in each of those groups. This fact might be engendered by women scholars’ attachment to the field where they represent the majority and feel more comfortable.

The research agenda

For building the research agenda, initially, prospects for future research from all 21 articles were thoroughly scrutinized. Only 14 papers contained advice for prospective research directions that have been grouped into thematic categories.

In terms of research methods and samples, the mixed research method and a wider array of methods should be applied to leadership research in Kazakhstan [13]. The samples should be larger and more diverse with a wider range of managers’ professional and life experiences [25]. Cross-cultural, multinational, and comparative studies with the inclusion of more countries with Post-soviet and Post-socialist history and broader representation of developed states are required [13]. Comparative studies should be conducted in different environments. The longitudinal and retrospective studies may bring more perspective on the evolution of Kazakhstani managers’ leadership styles and competencies to examine the same indicators in 5–10 years after the completion of sequential transition substages [8], [16], [30]. The application of other assessment instruments and performance measures is highly demanded [16] since the research was limited to a few leadership evaluation tools.

As for the subject of research, managerial behavior, green leadership, supervisors' creativity and empowerment, and managers' personality traits should be investigated [24]. A wide range of demographic characteristics, including gender, age, education level, marital status, tenure, etc. [3], [17] should be examined since the current research considers neither managers' features, nor organizational aspects. The reviewed publications almost ignored the impact of industry, managerial level, company types, managers' gender, age, education, tenure, and size of business. Such an approach leads to the generalization of management that is rather specific by its nature since every leader is an individual with certain demographic characteristics and distinctive features.

Since national culture dimensions by Hofstede and GLOBE [6], [13–16], [27] and their relationships with leadership styles were the core of several articles, prospects for studying different levels and types of culture appeared. It will be favorable to examine cultural value dimensions on several levels (country, region, organization), how organizational, industry, and professional cultures and political context can impact leaders' behavior, and to testify the relationships between entrepreneurship, organizational characteristics, and the macro and meso aspects of culture.

Only two future research perspectives were declared within the analyzed articles regarding gender integration. The first one was to consider gender as a respondent's demographic characteristics and its impact on the dependent variable [17]. The second one - women's experiences as academic leaders in developing and transitional contexts is recommended to analyze through the feminist neo-institutionalism concept [21]. Indisputably, gender must become a central component of business leadership research in Kazakhstan since for above thirty years of independence, Kazakhstani science still lacks an understanding of gender in leadership topics, and the gender potential of local managers is associated with a black box.

Conclusion

Managers' soft skills including leadership competencies represent one of the most influential aspects of contemporary management. This work aimed to synthesize new knowledge of business leadership in Kazakhstan and to define the most perspective directions of the future scholars' endeavors in the examined field.

The analysis of the publication dynamics on the topic signalizes academics' low interest in this field. The total number of the selected publications for tens of years constituted 21 and the average number of annual publications had never exceeded three papers. However, slight progress has been made in the last seven years, when the papers on managers' leadership started to be more regular. The majority of the authors in the investigated theme are foreign researchers, some of whom are temporarily employed by local universities.

The most popular research methods were quantitative in the form of questionnaires and less than 30% were based on qualitative approaches – semistructured interviews, case studies, and focus groups. The mixed method of research was not applied and the leadership evaluation instruments were limited to a few tools – self-assessment, evaluation by subordinates, and self-reflection during interviews. The samples were small in most cases with the largest of 385 respondents among which only 118 participants occupied managerial posts.

As a result of the integrative literature review the key emerging thematic areas and their limitations have been defined. The findings revealed that the most widely used leadership styles by Kazakhstani leaders were transactional, transformational, and paternal (father, parent), and the rarely used - management by exception, and laissez-faire. The application of contemporary leadership styles (authentic, adaptive, agile, inclusive, etc.) along with the use of different leadership styles by women and men in Kazakhstan remains a gap.

This research defined that the most investigated leadership skills were communication, elements of emotional intelligence, creativity, and strategic management. The gender perspective of leadership skills in Kazakhstan remains uncovered.

Based on the role of gender in the reviewed research, three groups of studies have been formed: 1. Focused on women; 2. Considering gender as a control variable; 3. Ignoring gender factor. The first group counted women in leadership roles but mainly in the higher education context, women's

leadership styles were partially investigated with the primary focus on their obstacles, ways of progression, and work-life balance. The second group of studies found gender insignificant within the leading function by involving it exclusively as a control variable. The third category included papers that neglected gender or just covered it in the respondents' characteristics description.

The implemented review allowed us to conclude that the leadership topic remains one of the least examined fields of Kazakhstani management science with scattered findings and negligence of gender aspect. Among the developed research agenda, several recommendations are the most meaningful:

1. Gender should become an integral part of any leadership research.
2. The mixed method of research will positively impact the research quality.
3. Massive research should be conducted to become a rigid basis of comprehensive knowledge of Kazakhstani business leaders.
4. Contemporary evaluation tools must be involved in managers' leadership styles and skills assessment: 360-degree assessment, peer evaluations, observations, artificial intelligence toolkits, simulation exercises, business games, and situational judgment techniques.
5. Research on women leaders should be conducted in different industries, including neutral and male-dominated but not restricted to women-intensive occupations.

The limitation of the present research is the coverage of only two world academic databases – Scopus and Web of Science that provided a search for peer-reviewed scholarly works but could cause the exclusion of some works, particularly those published in conference proceedings and local journals.

The theoretical implications of this work are associated with the synthesized knowledge of Kazakhstani managers' leadership styles and skills and the status of inclusion/exclusion of gender in leadership research. The use of the generated information on local managers' leadership can be applied by managers to improve their leadership function.

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ҚАЗАҚСТАНДАҒЫ КӨШБАСШЫЛЫҚ ЖӘНЕ ГЕНДЕР: ИНТЕГРАТИВТІ ӘДЕБИЕТКЕ ШОЛУ

Андатпа

Халықаралық еңбек миграциясының артуы, ұйымдардың қарқынды цифрлануы және генеративті жасанды интеллекттің бизнес-ортаға енуіне байланысты қазіргі көшбасшыларға қойылатын талаптар көп қырлы болып, күрделене түсуде. Менеджерлердің құзыретіне қойылатын жоғары талаптарға қарамастан, қазақстандық бизнес-көшбасшылар туралы білім жеткіліксіз, ал гендерлік аспектілер іс жүзінде зерттелмеген. Мақаланың мақсаты – қолданыстағы басылымдарды мұқият талдау және болашақ зерттеулерге арналған зерттеу күн тәртібін құру арқылы Қазақстандағы көшбасшылық пен гендер туралы жаңа білімдерді синтездеу. Зерттеу Р. Торакко мен Дж. Каллаханның әдістемелік ұсыныстарына негізделген интегративті әдеби шолу болып табылады. Scopus және Web of Science дерекқорлары 2024 ж. қоса алғанда сәйкес басылымдарды іздеудің негізгі көзі болды. Нәтижесінде үш негізгі тақырыптық аймақ анықталды: көшбасшылық стильдер, көшбасшылық дағдылар және әйелдер мен көшбасшылық. Шолу нәтижелері қазақстандық менеджерлер арасында транзакциялық және трансформациялық көшбасшылық ең танымал стильдер екенін көрсетті. Әйел көшбасшыларға арналған зерттеулер жоғары білім беру саласына бағытталған, көшбасшылық кедергілерді, қызметтік өсу мен қиындықтарды жеңу стратегияларын баяндайды. Көшбасшылық стильдері мен дағдылары туралы мақалалардың көпшілігінде гендер қарастырылмаған, тек кейбіреулерінде бақылау айнымалысы ретінде талданған. Бұл жұмыстың теориялық маңыздылығы кейінгі зерттеулер үшін маңызды болып табылатын ұсынылған зерттеу тәртібімен байланысты. Қазақстандық менеджерлердің көшбасшылығының анықталған ерекшеліктерін практиктер талдау және басқару дағдыларын жетілдіру үшін пайдалана алады.

Тірек сөздер: гендер, көшбасшылық стилі, менеджер, әйелдер, трансформациялық көшбасшылық, транзакциялық көшбасшылық, көшбасшылық дағдылар.

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ЛИДЕРСТВО И ГЕНДЕР В КАЗАХСТАНЕ: ИНТЕГРАТИВНЫЙ ОБЗОР ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

Аннотация

В связи с растущей международной трудовой миграцией, динамичной цифровизацией организаций и проникновением генеративного искусственного интеллекта в бизнес-среду требования, предъявляемые к современным лидерам, стали более комплексными и многогранными. Несмотря на повышенные запросы к

компетенциям менеджеров, знания о казахстанских бизнес-лидерах остаются недостаточными, а гендерные аспекты этого вопроса практически не изучены. Цель статьи – синтезировать новые знания о лидерстве и гендере в Казахстане посредством тщательного анализа существующих публикаций и формирования исследовательской повестки для будущих изысканий. В рамках данного исследования проведен интегративный обзор литературы, основанный на методологических рекомендациях Р. Торакко и Дж. Каллахана. Scopus и Web of Science выступили базами данных для поиска подходящих публикаций до 2024 г. включительно. В результате определены три основные тематические области: стили лидерства, лидерские навыки, женщины и лидерство. Результаты обзора показали, что транзакционное и трансформационное лидерство – наиболее популярные стили среди казахстанских менеджеров. Исследования, посвященные женщинам-лидерам, сфокусированы на сфере высшего образования, повествуют о препятствиях для лидерства, продвижении по службе и стратегиях преодоления трудностей. В большинстве статей о стилях и навыках лидерства гендер не рассматривался и только в некоторых анализировался как контрольная переменная. Теоретическая значимость данной работы связана с предложенной исследовательской повесткой, важной для проведения последующих изысканий. Выявленная специфика лидерства казахстанских менеджеров может быть использована практиками для анализа и совершенствования их управленческих навыков.

Ключевые слова: гендер, стиль лидерства, менеджер, женщины, трансформационное лидерство, транзакционное лидерство, лидерские навыки.

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