

# **Gender differences and motivation to lead: how role characteristics and training and development practices influence career choice**

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This paper examines the antecedents of the decision to apply for leadership role by taking into account both individual and organizational factors and the moderating effect of gender on the relationship. A survey (Study 1) and a factorial study (Study 2) were conducted. First, the Motivation to Lead (MTL) scale was administered to 108 participants. Secondly, profiles of hypothetical open leadership positions were presented (N=539) and specific applying decisions were rated by respondents. Multilevel analyses indicated that that Affective and Social-normative MTL are significant predictors of the intention to apply for leadership role. With regard to the characteristics of the leadership position, task complexity, monetary reward and T&D are positively related to the intention to apply; while a relocation tends to reduce it. Moreover, interaction effects showed that a high level of Social-normative MTL leads to the increase in the likelihood to apply for female employees. In terms of task characteristics, a complex task increases the intention to apply more for women than for men, while high team diversity seems to lower men's intention to apply whereas it enhances the likelihood to apply for women. Finally, mentoring increases the women's likelihood to apply for leadership roles, whereas it seems almost unrelated to men's intention to apply.

Keywords: motivation to lead, leadership development, gender, career choice, factorial survey, multilevel model