



Gendered Leadership and Role Congruity in Jakarta's Public Relations Industry

Nadya Natalia Hendrawan¹ and Deborah N. Simorangkir^{2*}

ABSTRACT

This article answers two questions regarding female PR leaders in Jakarta: 1) Is the role congruity of female leaders correlated with the subordinates' perceived compliance? and 2) What leadership style do subordinates prefer for their female leaders? An online survey was conducted on 109 PR professionals in the Jakarta area to answer these questions. The first research question is calculated using Spearman's rank coefficient correlation test to determine the correlation between role congruity and perceived compliance. The second research question is calculated using descriptive statistics to determine the sample's preferred leadership style. Data were analyzed using the perspectives of the Role Congruity Theory and Compliance and Gendered Leadership. Findings show that: 1) Role congruity is positively correlated at a significant solid level with the subordinates' perceived compliance toward the female leaders, 2) Subordinates have equal preference for female leaders with masculine and feminine leadership styles. It is concluded that there have been changes in the impact of role congruity of female leaders. However, the role congruity and subordinates' perceived compliance in the PR industry are still positively correlated. This study reveals that female leaders in Indonesia's PR industry can gain compliance from their subordinates. However, the preference for leadership styles adopted by female leaders is equal between masculine and feminine leadership styles.

Keywords

Role congruity; female leaders; compliance; gendered leadership; public relations

To cite this article (7th APA style):

Hendrawan, N. N. & Simorangkir, D. N. (2024). Gendered leadership and role congruity in Jakarta's public relations industry. *Journal Communication Spectrum: Capturing New Perspectives in Communication* 14(1), 28-38. <https://doi.org/10.36782/jcs.v14i1.2532>

INTRODUCTION

Due to the gender imbalance in the field of public relations, it is thought that it is a feminine one. Being perceived as a female-dominated profession hides the fact that gender discrimination still exists in the PR sector, particularly the glass-ceiling problem that prevents women from reaching top managerial positions. Women are underrepresented in attempts to move up the organizational hierarchy, which is known as the "glass ceiling" (Xiang, Ingram & Cangermi, 2017). Race, age, educational background, but most noticeably, gender, might all be contributing factors to the "ceiling" that prevents women from moving up the leadership ladder.

Society views that there are distinct gender work divisions (Eagly, 1987). While men are supposed to play agentic, resource-seeking, and dominating roles, women on the other hand are supposed to play social, domestic, or subservient ones (Eagly, Wood, & Diekmann, 2000). These

^{1,2} Swiss German University, The Prominence Tower, Jalur Sutera Barat Kav. 15, Alam Sutera, Banten, Indonesia

* **Corresponding author:** deborah.simorangkir@sgu.ac.id

gender preconceptions have an impact on how people are seen at work, which is why there is a glass ceiling (Jones & Pal, 2022).

The Role Congruity Theory, which contends that people's perceptions of the congruity between gender roles and leadership positions affect their attitudes and actions toward female leaders, notably their compliance, can be used to explain this occurrence (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

The three Role Congruity Theory tenets are as follows: First, males are significantly connected with agentic traits, whereas women are substantially related with community traits. Second, in order to get the cooperation of their subordinates, people must behave in accordance with their gender roles. Third, women in leadership positions could find that their managerial obligations go against gender expectations.

There are two forms of compliance, behavioral compliance and attitudinal compliance, according to Rahim and Buntzman (1988). Attitudinal compliance refers to actual intrinsic changes in the subordinates based on the superiors' persuasion, whereas behavioral compliance refers to subordinates acting in accordance with the wishes of the superiors in order to receive positive feedback (Rahim & Buntzman, 1988).

Along with role compatibility, female leaders' leadership styles are also linked to their followers' compliance. In contrast to male leaders, who are supposed to adopt a task-oriented leadership style, female leaders are encouraged to practice relationship-oriented leadership. The gendered leadership style is a theory that analyzes the differences between masculine and feminine leadership (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

This research aims to answer two questions regarding female PR leaders in Jakarta: 1. Is role congruity of female leaders correlated with the subordinates' perceived compliance? and 2. What leadership style do subordinates prefer for their female leaders?

Social Role Theory

Men and women are expected to fulfill different social responsibilities as a result of gender stereotypes, or the gender role, according to Eagly and Wood (1982). Women are anticipated to engage in socioemotional or expressive behavior, whereas males are expected to engage in task-oriented or instrumental activity, according to accepted views about the division of labor between men and women (Parsons & Bales, 1955; Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Recent research (Eagly et al., 2020), however indicates that gender stereotypes have changed over time, and that women's relative advantage in communion has increased, however men's relative advantage in agency has not changed. Moreover, the belief in competence equality between male and female leaders has increased, along with belief in female superior competence.

Role Congruity Theory

Role Congruity Theory is based off the Social Role Theory, but emphasizes on how gender roles coexist with other duties, particularly the leadership role (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The theory asserts that the congruency between gender roles and other roles, notably leadership roles, is a crucial variable that affects subordinates' judgments and the repercussions of discriminatory conduct (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

There are three key propositions of the Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002): *First*, males are more likely to exhibit agentic features (e.g. aggressiveness, domineering, and self-assuredness) while females are more likely to adopt communal features (e.g. nurturing, sympathetic, helpful, and gentle). The leadership position itself is highly associated with agentic characteristics.

Second, to gain compliance, individuals must behave adherently to gender norms. *Third*, women in leadership positions may discover that their managerial responsibilities conflict with gender norms. Women in leadership positions frequently felt compelled to adopt more agentic characteristics to fit the role that is highly associated with masculinity (Cuadrado et al., 2012).

Gender stereotypes in the workplace reinforce the glass ceiling, resulting in women occupying organizational positions of less power and status (Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2017). The barriers or the "ceiling" faced by women in their career advancement come from organizations, families and societies (Yukongi & Benson, 2005), making it difficult for women to reach top management positions (Dessler, 2005). Role congruity theory, therefore, recommends women to "temper their agency with communion in order to emerge as leaders" (Schock et al., 2019, p. 189).

Gendered Leadership

The concept of gendered leadership emphasizes the distinctions between male and female stereotypical expectations (Harragan, 1977). There are two types of leadership style that are highly associated with the concept of gender roles namely masculine leadership style and feminine leadership style (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Engen et al., 2001).

Masculine leadership style is more task-oriented and associated with agentic characteristics (Rüzgar, 2018). Leaders with masculine leadership style focuses more on completing the tasks that are required to achieve organizational goals (Rüzgar, 2018). The advantage of this style is the capability to ensure that workers effectively manage their time and tasks are carried out flawlessly and promptly, by emphasizing the need for workplace procedures, task-oriented leaders also set an example for employees (Rüzgar, 2018).

Feminine leadership style, on the other hand, is relationship-oriented and emphasizes communal characteristics. Leaders who adopt a feminine style of leadership concentrate on the well-being of the team members and the communication within the team (Rüzgar, 2018). In this sense, they offer motivating forces like rewards, attempt to manage work environment clashes, have more easy-going collaborations with representatives to find out about their assets and shortcomings and establish a non-cutthroat workplace (Reilly, 1968).

Compliance

The concept of compliance describes the relationship between actors within an organization: the representatives of the organization as well as participants at lower levels (Etzioni & Lehman, 1980). There are two types of compliance which are attitudinal compliance and behavioral compliance (Rahim & Buntzman, 1988). Behavioral compliance refers to how much a target person conforms behaviorally to the wishes of an actor, while attitudinal compliance refers how much a target person is inclined to conform to the wishes of an actor, regardless of whether they act accordingly (Rahim & Buntzman, 1988).

Public Relations is a form of strategic communication that stimulates interactions between audiences and helps to strengthen audience ties. Numerous studies have regarded PR as a gendered profession (Aldoory & Toth, 2004) that is female concentrated (Pompper & Jung, 2013) and feminized (Simorangkir, 2012).

Despite female domination in the industry, the number of females in leadership positions is still scarce. Kurnia and Putra (2004) states that 52% of PR practitioners in Indonesia run a technician role and only 19% run a managerial role.

Based on the existing literature, the following hypotheses are made regarding female leadership in Jakarta's PR industry:

- a. Hypothesis #1
 - H1. Role congruity of female leaders is correlated with the subordinates' perceived compliance.
 - H⁰1. Role congruity of female leaders is not correlated with the subordinates' perceived compliance.
- b. Hypothesis #2
 - H1. Subordinates prefer their female leaders to have a feminine leadership style.
 - H⁰1. Subordinates do not prefer their female leaders to have a feminine leadership style.

METHOD

To analyze the correlation between female leaders' role congruity and subordinates compliance, a quantitative approach with survey method is used in this study. The data is collected by distributing self-administered questionnaires through Google Form.

Population is a particular group of people that is being studied in a research (Cavana et al., 2001). In this study, the population is PR practitioners in the Jakarta area. According to PERHUMAS, one of the biggest PR associations in Indonesia, there are 800 active members of PR professionals in the Jakarta area. However, the number of PERHUMAS members does not reflect the total number of PR practitioners in Jakarta, thus the population in this research is considered an unknown population.

Calculated with the Unkown Population formula by Sugiyono (2016), the sample size of this study is 100 people, who are approached with purposive and snowball sampling. The sample is limited to Indonesian citizens living in Jakarta who have worked in the PR industry for the minimum of five years and have had a direct female leader, with current roles as PR practitioners in a PR agency or corporate PR.

Correlation analysis is a statistical method used to examine whether or not a specific variable depends on other variables and to quantify the strength of the link between a variable and other variables (Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). To analyze the correlation between female leaders' role congruity and subordinates compliance, Spearman's Rank Coefficient Correlation test is used in this research. Spearman's Rank Correlation Test is an analysis that assesses the tendency of patterns in one variable in connection to the tendency of patterns in other variables (Winter et al., 2016).

The strength or degree of the straight line link between two or more variables depends on how realistic the linear relationship is (straight line), with the value of the correlation coefficient shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation Coefficient Value

Correlation Coefficient	Interpretation
< 0.20	Very low correlation
0.20 - 0.39	Low correlation
0.40 - 0.70	Medium correlation
0.71 - 0.90	High correlation
> 0.90	Very high correlation

Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficient test is used to determine if a certain variable depends on other variables and to rate how strongly that relationship is present. In this research, the strength of correlation between the variables is described by using the absolute value of r as suggested by Evans (1996):

Table 2. Correlation Coefficient Value

Score	Value
.00 - .19	"Very Weak"
.20 - .39	"Weak"
.40 - .59	"Moderate"
.60 - .79	"Strong"
.80 - 1.0	"Very Strong"

Source: Evans (1996)

The limitation of this research method lies in the fact that the sample is limited to Indonesian citizens living in Jakarta who have worked in the PR industry for the minimum of five years and have had a direct female leader, with current roles as PR practitioners in a PR agency or corporate PR. To get the sample, the author directly approached PR practitioners via social media direct messages and asked the prospective respondents to share the questionnaire with their colleagues and acquaintances. Moreover, findings from this research cannot be generalized statistically due to the snowball sampling method.

Reliability Test

Reliability refers to the degree to which an instrument or indicator consistently computes its intended attribute (Rose & Johnson, 2002). To check the consistency of the measurement, a reliability test is highly needed. In this study, Alpha Cronbach is implemented to ensure the reliability of the study. The following are the indicators for reliable Alpha Cronbach (Hinton et al, 2004):

1. 0.90 and above, meaning excellent reliability
2. 0.70 to 0.90, meaning high reliability
3. 0.50 to 0.70, meaning moderate reliability

4. 0.50 and below, meaning low reliability

Validity Test

In quantitative research, a validity test is required to determine whether the research actually conveys reality (Rizqi, 2017). According to Sujarweni (2015), the criteria of validity are:

1. If $r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$, means the data is valid
2. If $r\text{-count} < r\text{-table}$, means the data is not valid.

In this study, Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is utilized to compare the observed correlation coefficients' magnitude to the partial correlation coefficients' magnitude. The analysis factor can be implemented if the result is more than 0.5.

Normality Test

Normality test is one of the types of Classical Assumption test, which refers to the statistical test used to ascertain how variables relate to one another (Ainiyah et al., 2016).

Normality test is conducted to test if the data's normal distribution holds true (Santoso, 2010). Data that has a normal distribution is appropriate for investigation. The data can correctly reflect the population since it has a normal distribution and is bell-shaped. The degree of skewing (skewness) can be used to differentiate between aberrant and normal data.

In this study, the Saphiro Wilk test is applied to evaluate normalcy. If the p value is higher than 5% ($p > 0.05$), then the data is normally distributed. On the other hand, if the p value is lower than 5% ($p < 0.05$), then the data is not normally distributed. If the data is not normally distributed, then the data must be analyzed with a Non-Parametric Test.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Respondents Profile

There are the total number of 109 respondents in this study, whose profile is described based on age, gender and current workplace. The respondents are 45.9% aged 26-35 years old, 39.4% aged 35-45 years old and 13.8% aged more than 45 years old. The majority (61.5%) of the respondents are female and 36.5% are male. Lastly, 54.1% of the respondents are currently working in a PR agency while 45.9% are working as a corporate PR.

Reliability and Validity Test Results

After the actual test was completed, 116 respondents had joined the survey however only 109 respondents' data could be processed, and the reliability and validity test was also applied to the post-test questionnaire. Reliability is tested by using Cronbach's Alpha and the validity is tested by using KMO Measure of Sampling Adequacy.

Table 3. Reliability Test

No	Variable	Cronbach's alpha values
1	Role Congruity	$\alpha = .815$
2	Perceived Compliance	$\alpha = .717$
3	Leadership Style Preference	$\alpha = .820$

Table 4. Validity Test

No	Variable	KMO Bartlett's
1	Role Congruity	$\alpha = .816$
2	Perceived Compliance	$\alpha = .773$
3	Leadership Style Preference	$\alpha = .868$

Normality Test Result

The classical assumption test used in this research is the Normality Test which is conducted to see if the data distribution is normal. Data collected is tested using the Shapiro-Wilk Test. For a data to be considered as normally distributed, the significance value must be higher than 0.05.

Table 5. Normality Test

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	Df	Sig.
PC_TOT	.825	109	< .001
PCB_TOT	.973	109	.019
PCA_TOT	.848	109	< .001

As can be seen in Table 5, the significance are all below 0.05, thus, the data is not normally distributed. Therefore, this research uses the non-parametric test.

Subordinates Perception of Female Leaders's Role Congruity

The questionnaire shared to the respondents comprises of three indicators that represent each key proposition of role congruity theory, with descriptive statistics results as follows:

1. *The respondents agree that men typically adopt agentic characteristics and women typically adopt communal characteristics.* This point shows that the respondents own prejudices or stereotypes on how men and women must act, which is the basic concept of role congruity theory.
2. *Their female leaders have communal characteristics, which conforms to their gender role.* The respondents agree that their female leaders are affectionate, helpful, sympathetic, nurturing and are good communicators –meaning that the subordinates think their female leaders are congruent with their gender roles. Role congruity argues when the actions of a specific gender conforms with the gender roles, they will gain compliance from their subordinates (Eagly & Karau, 2002), which will be explained in the next section.
3. *The respondents see their female leaders as aggressive, too bossy, overconfident and too demanding.* As explained in the previous section, women tend to adopt agentic characteristics in order to gain compliance from their subordinates because agentic characteristics are generally seen as more suitable for managerial roles (Eagly & Karau, 2002). However, when an individual's action does not conform to their gender roles, they will not gain compliance (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Thus, when female leaders adopt agentic characteristics they will receive criticism which is validated in this data finding where female leaders are perceived as over-confident, too bossy, too demanding and too aggressive.

Correlation Between Role Congruity and the Subordinates' Perceived Compliance on Female Leadership

Based on the role congruity theory, managerial positions are characterized with agentic traits, meaning that females in leadership positions do not conform with their gender roles (second and third key proposition) (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Even if they adopted agentic characteristics in order to be accepted as a leader, as shown in the previous discussions, they will receive criticism for not behaving according to their gender roles. Thus, the female leaders should not gain compliance from their subordinates.

Table 6. Spearman Correlation Test

	Correlation	Perceived Compliance	Role Congruity
Role	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	.356**
Congruity	Sig. (1-tailed)	.	<.001
	N	109	109

However, this research discovered an opposite findings:

1. The respondents perceive that they have been behaviorally complying to their female leaders, described through three compliance actions in the questionnaire which are complying with supervisors' directives and orders, do as suggested by the female leaders as well as obeying to deadlines and work procedures.
2. The respondents are also expected to not comply attitudinally with the female leaders, thus, the questionnaire statements for attitudinal compliance are in negative statement forms. However, the findings show that *the respondents are also complying attitudinally to their female leaders.*

As shown in Table 6, there is a positive correlation in weak significance level between role congruity and perceived compliance with the correlation coefficient of 0.356. It is also statistically significant ($<.001$), meaning that the finding can represent the population in a natural setting.

Therefore,

The higher the role congruity of the female leaders, the higher the subordinates' perceived compliance, and

The lower the role congruity of the female leaders, the lower the subordinates' perceived compliance

Subordinates' Preference on Female Leadership Style

The respondents agree that their female leaders are congruent to gender roles, and is assumed as the success factor of the compliance gaining. Having seen the positive correlation between female leaders' role congruity and subordinates' perceived compliance, in addition, this research would like to examine the samples' preferred leadership style of their female leaders. The findings of leadership style preferences are identified by using descriptive statistics with no statistical significance. Therefore, the result of the leadership style cannot represent the actual population in a natural setting.

Table 7. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Statistics		Mean
		Min	Max	
Masculine Style	109	4.00	6.00	4.86
Feminine Style	109	4.00	6.00	5.10

Based on the analysis, the number of subordinates who prefer female leaders with masculine leadership style and feminine leadership style are equal or balanced. Although feminine leadership style actually gained more preference compared to masculine leadership style with the mean difference of 0.24, the difference is not significant thus it is still considered as equally distributed.

To explain opposite findings compared to the Role Congruity theory which assumes that female leaders cannot gain compliance from their subordinates, there are several assumptions of other factors that are not included in this research model, which include:

1. The female leaders adopt communal characteristics in their leadership. Based on the role congruity theory, when an individual's actions conform to their gender role, they tend to gain compliance from their subordinates.
2. The compliance does not only rely on the gender of the supervisors but also the subordinates' personal interest.
3. Indonesian high context culture emphasizes the way subordinates perceive their compliance towards their leaders, making them more obedient to their supervisors due to the high power and status of the supervisors (Gudykunst & Kim, 1984).

Public Relations in Indonesia

The findings of this study reveals that recently the female leaders in Indonesia's PR industry have gained compliance from their subordinates. The changes can happen for many reasons including the rise of more women empowerment movements among younger generations and globalization. The positive result of compliance gaining can also occur because the demographics of the respondents

are mostly coming from PR agencies that typically have more female leaders, perform less hierarchical leadership and use more casual interactions which is one of the communal characteristics.

However, the number of subordinates who prefer female leaders with masculine leadership style and feminine leadership style are equal or balanced. This is explained by the Role Congruity theory since women are expected to adopt communal characteristics which is reflected in feminine leadership style but are also expected to fulfil the responsibility in the managerial positions, that is expected to be performed in an agentic way, which is represented by masculine leadership style.

Even though women have traditionally dominated Indonesia’s public relations industry in numbers, that is not the case when it comes to leadership. This has led to many women leaving the corporate world and to join an agency, where women appear to succeed (Simorangkir, 2011, 2013). Fitch et al. (2023), describes the state of female leadership in Indonesia’s PR as having a “significant sectoral segregation along gender lines within the Indonesian public relations industry, where it is perceived as a masculine profession in resource sectors such as oil and gas and a feminine profession in hospitality, fashion and retail sectors”. Such gendered segregation also affects the perceptions about public relations leadership. Female PR professionals are often viewed as the ‘face’ of the company and therefore should be physically attractive. Such notion undermines women’s competency in leading and reducing them to mere pretty faces (Fitch et al., 2023).

On the other hand, because the public sector is regarded as masculine, PR leadership in government is also dominated by men, and though women have just as much chances as men to enter the field, men are more likely to have managerial positions, while women are more likely to have technician positions (Kriyantono, 2019). Even Indonesia’s leading PR professional association, PERHUMAS, has to the date of this article’s publication, only appointed one female chairperson, Prita Kemal Gani (2011-2014). This indicates that stereotypical understandings of masculine and feminine leadership attributes remain dominant within the Indonesian public relations industry (Fitch et al., 2023).

Answers to The Research Questions

Based on the findings and analysis explained in the previous sections, the following are the answers of the research questions.

a. Research Question 1

Is the role congruity of female leaders correlated with the subordinates' perceived compliance?

Answer

Role congruity is positively correlated at a weak significant level with the subordinates' perceived compliance toward the female leaders.

b. Research Question 2

What leadership style do subordinates prefer for their female leaders?

Answer

The number of subordinates who prefer female leaders with a masculine leadership style and the number of subordinates who prefer female leaders with a feminine leadership style are equal or balanced.

Hypothetical Testing

The first hypothesis is answered by using the Spearman’s Rank Correlation Test, with the result as follows.

Role congruity of female leaders is correlated with the subordinates' perceived compliance.	Accepted
Role congruity of female leaders is not correlated with the subordinates' perceived compliance.	Rejected

The second hypothesis is answered by using the Descriptive Statistics Test, with the result as follows.

Subordinates prefer their female leaders to have a feminine leadership style.	Rejected
Subordinates do not prefer their female leaders to have a feminine leadership style.	Accepted

CONCLUSION

There are two research questions answered in this research which are the correlation between role congruity and subordinates' perceived compliance on female leaders and the leadership style preferences, with the case study of the PR workers in the Jakarta area. This research aims to provide updated study on role congruity in the PR industry in Indonesia as well as to provide insight to the general public about the correlation between role congruity and subordinates' perceived compliance on female leaders, with the case study of the PR workers in the Jakarta area.

Based on the results, the following conclusions are made: 1) Role congruity is positively correlated at a strong significant level with the subordinates' perceived compliance toward the female leaders, 2) The number of subordinates who prefer female leaders with masculine leadership style and the number of subordinates who prefer female leaders with feminine leadership style is equal or balanced. These findings are in line with recent studies using the Social Role Theory, which indicates that gender stereotypes are changing (Eagly et al., 2020).

Since this study analysed the correlation between role congruity and female leadership in the PR industry, it is beneficial for two reasons. First, it is beneficial in the academic field by providing empirical evidence in the study of role congruity and its impact on female leaders in the PR industry, especially to provide an updated study on Indonesian society since role congruity theory was developed based on American society. Second, it is beneficial for the general public by providing new insights to the general public about the impact of role congruity for female leaders in the PR industry.

It is highly recommended for future research to use quantitative as well as qualitative methods in order to obtain a deeper understanding. In order to avoid generalization of the answers of the research questions, it is also necessary to use specific words to describe the object of study which in this case is the female leaders.

The changes of subordinates' perceived compliance is also interesting to be further studied. Meanwhile the theory stated that female leaders will gain low compliance from their subordinates, this research discovered contradictory findings that can be studied further to figure out the reasoning behind the behavior changes. Lastly, future studies might also need to do comparison studies of two or more groups of the sample such as comparing the impact of role congruity on male vs. female leadership, or comparing the perceived compliance between male vs. female subordinates.

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