The purpose of the study was to determine if similar personality types exhibit the same kind of leadership behavior irrespective of gender.

Data was collected from 459 leaders and 378 subordinates during the years 2006-2010 as part of a leadership development program. Respondents completed the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Finish version of the Leadership Practices Inventory (using a five-point Likert scale). Factor analysis revealed a five factor model, accounting for 52.2 percent of the variance. Cronbach’s alpha were “visioning” (5 items) 0.69, “challenging” (four items) .64, “enabling” (ten items) .87, “modeling” (four items) .59, and “rewarding” (two items) .83.

Male leaders appraised themselves as more challenging than their female counterparts, whereas female leaders rated themselves more enabling and rewarding than their male counterparts. Followers’ appraisals of their leaders’ indicated similar results. On visioning, modeling and overall transformational leadership there were no differences between leaders from either their self perceptions or reports from their constituents. The authors explain: “The results of this study support social role theory, since enabling and rewarding can be regarded as feminine behavior amongst the TF-leadership dimensions. These dimensions represent taking care of everybody, creating an approving atmosphere in the workplace and arranging small reward events when goals are met. Challenging, in turn, expresses more masculine behavior, meaning questioning old methods, maybe sometimes in a rather aggressive way, and this may be more suitable behavior for men according to the social role theory” (p. 55).

Personality affected both self-ratings and constituents’ appraisals differently with male and female leaders. Women with intuitive and feeling preferences were more rewarding than their male counterparts, and this was the opinion of both constituents and the leaders themselves. From constituent perspectives’ extraversion, thinking and judging female leaders were regarded as more enabling than men with similar preferences and perceiving men were regarded as more challenging than female leaders. In terms of challenging, the extraverted and intuitive female leaders ranked themselves higher than their introverted
and sensing counterparts. The situation was similar with men, and additionally perceiving male leaders regarded themselves as more challenging than judging ones. Concerning enabling, female feeling leaders ranked themselves higher than thinking female leaders did. Extraverted men regarded themselves as more enabling than their introverted counterparts, and according to the constituents, the thinking women and feeling men were more enabling. When looking at the overall transformation leadership profile, extraverted and intuitive women scored themselves higher, and additionally in the case of men, the intuitive and perceiving ones regarded themselves as more transformational.

The authors suggest that once leaders understand the “leadership behavior tendencies of certain personalities, leaders could concentrate on making their own leadership more visible and clear to all their subordinates. Knowing one’s personality is helpful when evaluating one’s own behavior, both its strengths and weaknesses. Furthermore, being conscious of different personalities helps interaction with and understanding of others” (p. 58).