

# Leadership Qualities of Females Entering Male-Dominated Occupations in Educational Institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** In the process of training management personnel, the development of leadership qualities and in particular the study of gender differences in leadership styles are particularly relevant. The importance of this issue is reinforced by official statistics, which show that women are increasingly represented in traditionally male-dominated occupations. This category includes women working in law enforcement agencies and the Federal Penitentiary Service. **Methods.** The assessment instruments applied to a comparative study of leadership qualities in young men and women studying at educational institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service were as follows: (a) the questionnaire developed by us to assess cadets' knowledge of leadership characteristics, (b) the Leadership Skills Inventory, (c) the Leadership Self-Assessment Short-Form Survey, (d) the Communication and Organizational Skills Inventory (COS-2), (e) the Management Orientations Inventory, (f) the Cattell 16 PF Questionnaire (Form A), (g) the California Psychological Inventory, and (h) the Self-Management Ability Inventory. The Mann-

Whitney U-test was used in data processing. **Results.** In total, 661 participants (365 males and 296 females, aged 18 to 23) took part in the study. Differences were found between male and female students in their perception of the importance of each of the personality traits examined, as well as the most important qualities of an ideal leader. Female students rated their leadership qualities lower than male students, which is accompanied by a more critical attitude towards themselves. Female students were also more sensitive, diplomatic, careful, conventional, and prone to suppressing their feelings than male students. **Discussion.** The findings on personality differences between male and female students correlate with previous studies on leadership styles, which suggests that female students are more oriented towards emotional and communicative styles, while male students are more oriented towards transactional and authoritative styles. The findings suggesting a lack of gender specificity in the cadet self-governance system are likely related to the specific nature of education at a departmental university and, according to Russian authors, are due to the age-specific nature of student populations. **Conclusion.** For the first time, data have been obtained that reflect the need to develop leadership skills among FPS cadets. In this process, it is important to consider gender specificities and focus on the development of different qualities among young men and women.

## Keywords

leadership, leadership qualities, self-assessment of leadership qualities, ideal leader, gender characteristics of leadership

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## Introduction

The development of leadership qualities is becoming increasingly important for students at Russian universities, including cadets at educational institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia. For the latter, this task aligns with the requirements of the Concept for the Development of the Penitentiary System until 2030 (RF Government Order No. 1138r of April 29, 2021, On Approving the Concept for the Development of the Penitentiary System of the Russian Federation until 2030), which mandates the implementation of measures to train highly qualified personnel within the penitentiary system. The demands placed on its employees are increasing, aimed at creating a reserve of management personnel with well-developed leadership qualities and experience. Consequently, the purposeful development of leadership qualities in cadets and the development of technologies to

ensure the effectiveness of such work are particularly important during their training at educational institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia.

Despite these requirements, however, gender differences in the process of training management personnel in educational institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia are completely ignored. We should note that over the past 10 years gender characteristics of leadership have been actively studied in relation to feminist trends in society. Women are increasingly seeking leadership in business, economics, and politics, as well as in many other sectors. Women's representation in traditionally male-dominated occupations, such as pilots, the military, including those serving in war zones and law enforcement agencies, is growing. However, this trend has been slowed by the so-called 'glass ceiling' and 'sticky floor' effects—phenomena that refer to invisible barriers that prevent women from occupying management positions and advancing beyond entry-level positions (Isupova & Utkina, 2018; Shabsough et al., 2025).

For example, a study conducted by Deloitte found that the share of women among the leaders of the largest companies is only 6.5%. Specifically, it is noted that in the business sector, "according to expert estimates, the proportion of women is highest among the leaders of small companies with revenues of less than 800 million rubles, it decreases to 12% in large companies and to 6.5% in the 200 largest companies" (Golubosh, 2021, p. 15). The share of women CEOs varies significantly across different economic segments. It reaches its highest point in education, where women manage almost half of all companies (42%), and its lowest point is in the mining, public, and security sectors (up to 6%) (Gominyuk, 2025). In 2018, V. Utkina, together with sociologist O. Isupova, studied the status and role of women in government. They identified several reasons why women are underrepresented in Russian politics. The first is stereotypes about the division of responsibilities – women care, men manage. The second is the double or even triple workload, which leaves women little time for full participation in politics. The third is a combination of age- and gender-based discrimination—gender ageism. It makes it more difficult for women to find a job and advance in their careers (Isupova & Utkina, 2018).

Official statistics indicate that gender inequality persists in Russia, thus preserving a largely patriarchal society. However, it is worth noting that gender issues related to the study of female leaders are also extremely relevant in psychology worldwide. For example, a study by Pennsylvania authors found that male leaders were perceived to be less competent in solving work problems and working relationships, less suitable for their positions and less effective than female leaders when assessing their perception of mistakes in traditionally male-dominated occupations (Thoroughgood et al., 2013).

Traditionally male-dominated occupations primarily include executive authorities, such as penal institutions (PI) and military units. Psychologists from Serbia, Montenegro, and Bosnia and Herzegovina conducted a cross-cultural study of the gender distribution of police positions in all three countries, finding a similarity in that women are assigned to typically female positions (administrative, as well as positions in the penitentiary

department and the counteraction department) (Tomić & Mićović, 2025). The authors also note the previously mentioned 'sticky floor' phenomenon – the predominant representation of women in lower-level positions is dictated by gender discrimination, working conditions incompatible with family life, harassment, etc. (Tomić & Mićović, 2025). Clearly, service in the PI has its own unique characteristics, associated with considerable psychological and sometimes psychophysiological stress. It also involves meeting difficult demands. For penal system employees to be effective, they should possess certain traits, such as strictness, responsibility, honesty, high stress tolerance, endurance, and deep professional literacy. At the same time, researchers analyzing female labor in penal system organizations point to the need to employ females, but a rigid management style discourages women from working in this system (Magomedova & Ivanov, 2022; Tsvetkova & Kulakova, 2021). Furthermore, foreign researchers note the internal informal division between female and male positions as another obstacle to increasing the number of female managers in penal system organizations (Tomić & Mićović, 2025). Consequently, correctional institutions are currently underusing the strengths of female staff, which has a negative impact on the effectiveness of institutions.

Because the nature of law enforcement requires specific personality traits, only 1% of women who join the force advance and occupy leadership positions (Boldyreva, 2018). However, their work is crucial, as women often possess qualities such as perseverance, tolerance, the ability to build effective relationships, responsiveness, and attentiveness. These personality traits enable successful careers in many departments of the penal system. However, to fully realize the potential in this field, it is not enough to have only these qualities. Service in the system cannot be effective without developing leadership qualities, which are essential in all management and educational activities.

Social and legal psychology attaches great importance to leadership and its development. For example, B. Bass believes that leadership plays an important role, if not the most important, in industrial companies, educational and military institutions and social movements and is therefore an important research subject (Bass, 2009). R. M. Stogdill and C. L. Shartle believe that many people possess leadership potential, but that its development requires specific conditions: exposure to certain cultural values, free access to information, the ability to introspect, and the ability to identify outstanding personal qualities (Stogdill & Shartle, 1955). O. Onasanya defines leadership as "the ability to persuade people to do what is required, and, in organizations, the ability to get people to work voluntarily, without coercion" (Onasanya Opeyemi, 2022, p. 450). Key leadership skills include navigating complex and emergency situations, as well as strategic forecasting. With these skills, a leader can be adaptive and flexible, which, according to researchers, is the most favorable leadership style (Glomseth & Boe, 2025). However, not only managers should develop leadership skills.

Biks (2025) notes the need to develop leadership skills among employees to further delegate management functions and improve organizational performance. The author found that police effectiveness is directly related to the level of leadership skills among

employees. Police effectiveness is also influenced by the promotion of employees who demonstrate ethical leadership qualities (Modise, 2025), which are aimed at maintaining trusting and respectful interactions within the organization. However, the authors do not disaggregate their samples by gender, which is a significant limitation of their research.

We should emphasize that the communication and organizational skills of the FPS cadets are fundamental and universal personality traits that are essential for the development of their leadership potential. Consequently, research aimed at studying leadership qualities in female cadets, the purposeful development of leadership qualities in them, and the development of psychological conditions that ensure the effectiveness of such work are particularly important during their training at educational institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia. Therefore, we conducted a study to examine gender differences in various aspects of leadership qualities between female and male cadets who have chosen a traditionally male-dominated occupation (the FPS).

## Methods

The study used the following assessment instruments:

- The questionnaire developed by us to assess cadets' knowledge of leadership characteristics;
- The Leadership Skills Inventory by E. S. Zharikov and E. A. Krushelnitsky to assess the general level of development of leadership qualities (Ladanov & Urazaeva, 1987);
- The Leadership Self-Assessment Short-Form Survey to assess subjectively perceived leadership;
- The Communication and Organizational Skills Inventory (COS-2) to identify the two most important components of leadership – communication and organizational ones (Raigorodsky, 2007);
- The Management Orientations Inventory to assess the respondents' orientation towards a task or team (Santalainen et al., 1988);
- The Cattell 16 PF Questionnaire (Form A), (Kapustina, 2004) to examine cadets' personality traits;
- The California Psychological Inventory to assess the socio-psychological characteristics of personality (Petrov & Smetanina, 2010);
- The Self-Management Ability Inventory to assess the ability to maintain self-control in various situations (Peysakhov & Gabdreeva, 1988).

Statistical data processing was performed using the Mann-Whitney U-test to compare two independent samples.

## Results

The study was conducted at educational institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia (the Federal Penitentiary Service Academy in Ryazan and the Vladimir Law Institute of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia). In total, 661 participants (365 males and 296 females, aged 18 to 23) took part in the study.

Initially, we used the questionnaire developed by us, which enabled us to clarify the students' perceptions of leadership, leadership competencies, and their readiness to assume a leadership role. The majority of respondents from both gender groups demonstrated a sufficient level of knowledge about the phenomenon of leadership and its importance for the personal and professional development of employees in penal institutions. Cadets are aware of the specificities of organizational work, have sufficient expertise in interpersonal relations and have a clear understanding of how to act in conflict situations.

Their own readiness to become a leader within the cadet group can be described as 'rather partial' ( $M_x = 2.45$  in the male sample and lower,  $M_x = 2.24$  in the female sample). As can be seen from the average values, male cadets exhibit a greater readiness to assume leadership roles than female cadets. A comparison of gender groups revealed that male cadets rated their interpersonal competence ( $p < 0.001$ ), their knowledge of leadership and its importance for penal system employees ( $p < 0.01$ ), their knowledge of organizational activities and conflict management ( $p < 0.05$ ), and their readiness to assume leadership and unit management roles ( $p < 0.001$ ). Cadets in each group also demonstrated a similarly moderate interest in developing their leadership qualities.

In the first stage of our empirical study, we examined the perceptions of leadership in male and female cadets using a psychosemantic approach. To explore leadership image, participants were asked to first write a list of leadership qualities and then rank them by importance. A total of 36 frequently cited qualities were selected from the list. These qualities were then ranked on a five-point scale. Female cadets demonstrated a more demanding attitude towards the leader: the average ratings of the importance of all the proposed qualities in the female sample were higher than in the male sample (Table 1).

According to the females, the most important qualities of a leader are as follows:

- "lack of aggression" ( $M_x = 4.64$ ),
- "responsibility" ( $M_x = 4.51$ ),
- "emotional stability" ( $M_x = 4.47$ ),
- "psychological stability" ( $M_x = 4.44$ ),
- "communication and organizational skills" ( $M_x = 4.43$ ),
- "attentiveness" ( $M_x = 4.41$ ).

For males, the list of the most important leadership qualities was generally the same, but there were some differences:

- "responsibility" ( $M_x = 4.31$ ),
- "psychological stability" ( $M_x = 4.24$ ),
- "emotional stability" ( $M_x = 4.20$ ),
- "discipline" ( $M_x = 4.19$ ),
- "reliability" ( $M_x = 4.19$ ).

As can be seen from the resulting lists, female cadets' perceptions rely more on the fulfillment of leadership tasks ( $M_x = 3.69$  in the female sample and  $M_x = 3.45$  in the male sample) and high self-esteem ( $M_x = 3.20$  in the male sample and  $M_x = 3.44$  in the female sample).

We compared the mean scores for the importance of leadership qualities assessed by young men and women. Table 1 presents our findings.

**Table 1**

*Mean scores for the importance of leadership qualities in the samples of male and female cadets*

What qualities do you think a leader should have?	M	F	U	p
Lack of aggression	4.39	4.64	44862.5	0.00000276
Wariness	3.96	3.99	53816	0.92927404
Discipline	4.19	4.35	50564.5	0.09554134
Psychological stability	4.24	4.44	49648	0.02682350
Cheerfulness	3.61	3.77	50611	0.14737352
Sincerity	3.64	3.89	47746	0.00743620
Reliability	4.19	4.35	50529.5	0.09186130
Attentiveness	4.18	4.41	48803.5	0.01174094
Responsibility	4.31	4.51	49558.5	0.01842154
Sensitivity	4.00	4.22	49089	0.02745464
Defending one's opinion	3.89	4.10	49190.5	0.03445016
High level of self-esteem	3.20	3.44	48310.5	0.01644438
Need for achievement	3.58	3.89	46734	0.00191618
High level of aspirations in life	3.45	3.69	48219.5	0.01431170
Emotional stability	4.20	4.47	47704	0.00156725
Prognostic abilities	3.87	4.10	48493.5	0.01581564

What qualities do you think a leader should have?	M	F	U	p
Independent goal setting and planning	3.96	4.25	47381	0.00304622
Communicative competence	4.05	4.33	47110.5	0.00138422
Communication and organizational skills	4.09	4.43	45300.5	0.00003133
Proactive attitude	3.92	4.23	46778	0.00123777
Rationalism	3.77	3.98	49356.5	0.04417686
Determination	4.16	4.30	51050	0.15959219
Self-control	4.14	4.36	48966.5	0.01667183
Independence	4.04	4.28	48922.5	0.01995557
Strong will	4.03	4.26	48677	0.01512995
Hard work	4.02	4.25	48300.5	0.00969502
Self-confidence	4.12	4.28	50156	0.07369249
Courage	4.04	4.19	50886	0.16056986
Honesty	4.01	4.24	48556	0.01383516
Initiative	3.96	4.18	48547	0.01543714
Resourcefulness	4.01	4.25	47883	0.00583411
Bravery	4.08	4.16	53290	0.74035961
Developing a strategy for achieving goals and developing cadet activity	4.06	4.26	49396.5	0.03462762
Unifying students for conscientious academic and daily activities	4.06	4.28	48865.5	0.01819576
Motivating the cadet team to achieve a common goal	4.10	4.27	50668.5	0.11988999
Successful completion of assigned tasks	4.16	4.33	50350	0.08350286

Statistical analysis showed that girls gave higher ratings to those qualities in which differences were found at high ( $p < 0.001$ ), medium ( $p < 0.01$ ), and low ( $p < 0.05$ ) significance levels. The results showed that girls attached higher importance to most of the leadership qualities proposed for assessment. Significant differences were found in the significance of 26 positions out of 36 proposed. At the highest level of significance ( $p < 0.001$ ), differences were found in such leadership characteristics as "lack of aggression" and "communication and organizational skills"; at the medium level of significance ( $p < 0.01$ ) – "sincerity", "need for achievement", "emotional stability", "independent goal setting and planning", "communicative competence", "proactive attitude", "hard work", and "resourcefulness". Additionally, we should note that female cadets rated the qualities that directly describe leadership in a cadet group significantly higher ( $p < 0.05$ ), including "developing a strategy for achieving goals and developing cadet activity" and "unifying students for conscientious academic and daily activities".

In the next stage of the study, respondents were asked to rate the presence/absence of these leadership qualities in themselves. In their self-assessment of leadership qualities, female cadets demonstrated a more critical attitude towards themselves. For most of the proposed attributes (26 out of 36), the average ratings in the female sample were lower than in the male sample. A comparative analysis of the subjective assessments of leadership qualities by male and female cadets was then conducted (Table 2).

**Table 2**  
*Female and male cadets' self-assessments of leadership qualities*

What personality traits do you think you have?	M	F	U	p
Lack of aggression	0.83	0.93	48642	0.00010524
Wariness	0.68	0.54	46333.5	0.00018643
Discipline	0.82	0.86	52213	0.24432144
Psychological stability	0.81	0.73	49632	0.01302402
Cheerfulness	0.62	0.68	51116	0.15104547
Sincerity	0.63	0.74	48058	0.00246133
Reliability	0.78	0.72	51043	0.10245345
Attentiveness	0.65	0.70	51432	0.19095430
Responsibility	0.82	0.86	51586.5	0.11965137
Sensitivity	0.66	0.74	49868.5	0.03260178

What personality traits do you think you have?	M	F	U	p
Defending one's opinion	0.63	0.59	51952	0.31481396
High level of self-esteem	0.31	0.29	52660.5	0.48354163
Need for achievement	0.52	0.41	48461	0.00843638
High level of aspirations in life	0.32	0.28	52330	0.38375241
Emotional stability	0.72	0.55	45139.5	0.00001193
Prognostic abilities	0.49	0.36	46873	0.00064352
Independent goal setting and planning	0.48	0.47	53635.5	0.85567893
Communicative competence	0.53	0.49	52066.5	0.35553964
Communication and organizational skills	0.45	0.44	53359.5	0.75368865
Proactive attitude	0.48	0.48	53887	0.94999424
Rationalism	0.52	0.46	50685.5	0.11474963
Determination	0.62	0.57	51380	0.20360244
Self-control	0.71	0.64	50180.5	0.05205694
Independence	0.67	0.69	52902	0.57173785
Strong will	0.54	0.41	46912	0.00076578
Hard work	0.62	0.58	51779.5	0.27943799
Self-confidence	0.64	0.54	48257.5	0.00548628
Courage	0.60	0.36	41318	0.00000000
Honesty	0.70	0.73	52488	0.42282015

What personality traits do you think you have?	M	F	U	p
Initiative	0.52	0.42	48643.5	0.01086110
Resourcefulness	0.59	0.48	48001.5	0.00426656
Bravery	0.68	0.28	32281	0.00000000
Developing a strategy for achieving goals and developing cadet activity	0.51	0.32	43795	0.00000098
Unifying students for conscientious academic and daily activities	0.49	0.34	45630	0.00005942
Motivating the cadet team to achieve a common goal	0.52	0.36	45097	0.00002216
Successful completion of assigned tasks	0.68	0.62	50565.5	0.08605100

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The following qualities, essential for a leader, were identified by the female cadets as the most developed: "lack of aggression" ( $M_x = 0.93$ ), "responsibility" ( $M_x = 0.86$ ), "discipline" ( $M_x = 0.86$ ), "sincerity" ( $M_x = 0.74$ ), "sensitivity" ( $M_x = 0.74$ ), "psychological stability" ( $M_x = 0.73$ ), "honesty" ( $M_x = 0.73$ ), and "reliability" ( $M_x = 0.72$ ). The least characteristic for girls, in their opinion, are "bravery" ( $M_x = 0.28$ ), "high level of aspirations in life" ( $M_x = 0.28$ ), "high level of self-esteem" ( $M_x = 0.29$ ), "developing a strategy for achieving goals and developing cadet activity" ( $M_x = 0.32$ ), "unifying students for conscientious academic and daily

activities" ( $M_x = 0.34$ ). In the group of male cadets, the most pronounced characteristics were "lack of aggression" ( $M_x = 0.83$ ), "discipline" ( $M_x = 0.82$ ), "responsibility" ( $M_x = 0.82$ ), "psychological stability" ( $M_x = 0.81$ ), "reliability" ( $M_x = 0.78$ ), "emotional stability" ( $M_x = 0.72$ ), and "self-control" ( $M_x = 0.71$ ). The lowest ratings were given to such characteristics as "high level of self-esteem" ( $M_x = 0.31$ ) and "high level of aspirations in life" ( $M_x = 0.32$ ). We should note that, although the "lack of aggression" indicator ranks first among both males and females, this indicator is significantly lower among females.

As Table 2 shows, in contrast to their overall assessment of leader image, male cadets demonstrate a more positive and loyal self-image when assessing their own leadership qualities. Thus, according to the results of a significance test, female cadets significantly higher rated themselves as possessing leadership qualities such as "lack of aggressiveness" ( $p < 0.001$ ) and "sincerity" ( $p < 0.01$ ). Males significantly higher evaluated their "wariness" ( $p < 0.001$ ), "need for achievement" ( $p < 0.01$ ), "emotional stability" ( $p < 0.001$ ), "prognostic abilities" ( $p < 0.001$ ), "strong will" ( $p < 0.001$ ), "self-confidence" ( $p < 0.01$ ), "courage" ( $p < 0.001$ ), "resourcefulness" ( $p < 0.01$ ), "bravery" ( $p < 0.001$ ), "developing a strategy for achieving goals and developing cadet activity" ( $p < 0.001$ ), "unifying students for conscientious academic and daily activities" ( $p < 0.001$ ), "motivating the cadet team to achieve a common goal" ( $p < 0.001$ ).

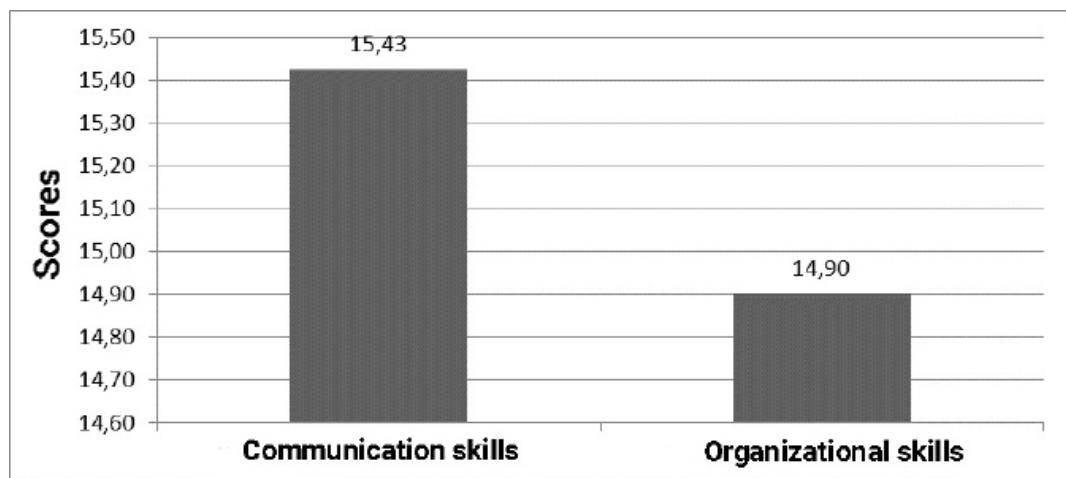
A comparison of the leader's image and the self-image shows that, in general, the various components of these images have a relatively high percentage of congruence among the cadets ( $M_x = 86.12$ ). Moreover, we should note that the degree of congruence is significantly higher in the male sample ( $M_x = 89.76$  for males and  $M_x = 81.63$  for females;  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, young men have a higher and more positive self-assessment as a leader, while young women place higher demands on both themselves and their leader.

The assessment of cadets' leadership qualities using the Leadership Skills Inventory, and the Leadership Self-Assessment Short-Form Survey showed that cadets from both groups self-assessed their leadership skills at a high level. However, according to the results of these instruments, it was also higher for male cadets than for female cadets ( $M_x = 7.80$  in the male sample and  $7.15$  in the female sample). Their assessment of their leadership ability indicated a moderate level of leadership qualities ( $M_x = 29.70$  in the male group and  $M_x = 27.91$  in the female group). Moreover, both indicators were significantly higher in the male sample ( $p < 0.001$ ). Overall, cadets have well-developed leadership qualities and have sufficient potential to improve those qualities and become effective leaders.

The assessment of the communication and organizational skills of male and female cadets revealed a high level of development. The mean score for the communication skills scale in the male sample was  $15.78$ , while in the female sample it was  $14.99$ . The mean score for the organizational skills scale was  $M_x = 15.07$  in the male group and  $M_x = 14.70$  in the female group. A comparative analysis confirmed a significantly higher level of communication skills in males ( $p < 0.01$ ).

**Figure 3**

*Mean scores for communication and organizational skills in cadets of educational institutions of the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia*



Testing of the significance of differences between males and females revealed that males had higher scores for the communication skills scale ( $U = 47224$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). No significant differences were found in organizational skills.

The assessment of the leadership orientations of cadets at the Federal Penitentiary Service of Russia revealed no significant differences between males and females, and demonstrated a dominant task orientation in both groups ( $M_x = 17.19$  for males,  $M_x = 17.56$  for females).

The assessment of personality predictors of leadership development revealed that male cadets are characterized by a more pronounced competitive effort and a tendency to authoritarian behavior. Female cadets are more emotional and sensitive and tend to suppress their feelings (Table 3).

**Table 3**

*Comparison of personality predictors of leadership qualities in male and female cadets*

Socio-psychological characteristics of personality	Means		U	p
	M	F		
Dominance (Do)	61,98	59,45	47220,5	0,00519700
Responsibility (Re)	60,59	63,36	46012,5	0,00101200

Socio-psychological characteristics of personality	Means		U	p
	M	F		
Socialization (So)	65,93	68,38	47085	0,00442500
Self-control (Sc)	55,92	58,28	49219,5	0,04885100
Commonness (Cm)	72,63	74,46	49214	0,04850600
Femininity/masculinity (F/m)	41,24	49,15	27278	0,00000000

According to the results presented in Table 3, females scored significantly higher on responsibility ( $U = 46,012.5$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), socialization ( $U = 47085$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), self-control ( $U = 47219.5$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), commonness ( $U = 49214$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), and femininity ( $U = 27278$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Males, on the other hand, scored higher on dominance ( $U = 47.220.5$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Males showed a more pronounced competitive effort, a more persistent pursuit of power, and were more likely to express and defend their own opinions. Female cadets were characterized by a higher level of self-organization, discipline, a desire to follow rules, and control their emotions and behavior. However, they were also characterized by greater sensitivity to criticism.

The next stage of the empirical study involved a comparative analysis of the development of personality traits between female and male cadets using the Cattell 16 PF Questionnaire (Form A). Table 4 shows the results.

Personality traits	Means		U	p
	M	F		
A (Warmth)	12,01	12,86	45142,5	0,00025900
B (Reasoning)	7,62	8,07	48957	0,03694900

Personality traits	Means		U	p
	M	F		
E (Dominance)	13,61	13,35	48891,5	0,03351100
F (Liveliness)	13,88	13,17	47493,5	0,00714500
I (Sensitivity)	9,37	11,97	28444,5	0,00000000
L (Vigilance)	10,02	9,26	46061,5	0,00104400
N (Privateness)	11,33	12,18	43631,5	0,00001900

The results showed significant differences in personality traits between male and female cadets for the following parameters: Female cadets were characterized by higher scores on Warmth ( $U = 45142.5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), Reasoning ( $U = 48957$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), sensitivity ( $U = 28444.5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), and Privateness ( $U = 43631.5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). Males, in turn, demonstrated greater dominance ( $U = 48891.5$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), Liveliness ( $U = 47493.5$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ), and Vigilance ( $U = 46061.5$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ).

In the next stage of the empirical study, we examined self-management ability using The Self-Management Ability Inventory. A comparison of the male and female cadet samples using the Mann-Whitney U test revealed no significant differences in self-management ability. Therefore, the self-management system of the FPS cadets has no pronounced gender specificity and is characterized by a slightly lower overall level of development. Planning and correction are the most difficult stages of self-management for both male and female cadets.

## Discussion

According to the results obtained, the cadets in both groups distinguish between the roles of manager and leader and show a greater willingness to serve as unit manager instead of leader during their service. Obviously, the role of the team leader is perceived by cadets as more complex and challenging, as it is not based on formal functions or

authority, but rather a form of social activity within a group and only emerges through the practical application of various aspects of group activity. Using a psychosemantic approach to assess the image of a leader among young men and women, we have shown that women give greater importance to most leadership qualities than men. In self-evaluating their leadership qualities, female cadets demonstrated a more critical attitude towards themselves.

Overall, the data obtained showed that female cadets were more extroverted, sensitive, compassionate, more sophisticated and perceptive in social interactions, and with a higher level of verbal culture. Young men have a greater need for self-affirmation and independence; they are more stubborn and assertive, expressive and impulsive, but also show greater wariness and suspicion of others. This generally corresponds to gender-role stereotypes of leadership: Females are more emotional and communicative, while males value business and organizational skills more (Ayman & Korabik, 2010). This also aligns with Del Giudice's (2015) findings on differences between women and men in traits such as extroversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness, openness, and neuroticism. Goryachkina (2015), on the other hand, believes that the manifestation of leadership qualities is determined, rather than by the gender of a person, but by the level of development of male and female characteristics, which in turn determine the development of different personality traits but do not inhibit the development of leadership qualities. In fact, our data confirm this conclusion.

The study of the communication and organizational skills of male and female cadets revealed a high level of their development. Cadets of both genders feel quite comfortable in new environments, quickly establish contacts and seek to expand their circle of acquaintances, and are willing to help others and take responsibility for decisions in difficult situations. In this case, a high level of these qualities was also observed among male cadets. When assuming management, the cadets concentrate more on the effectiveness of the group's activities, high working speed, and the achievement of the highest possible performance indicators, etc. The issues of team members' freedom of action, their ideas, initiatives and critical comments are of little importance to them and are not the focus of management attention, which is consistent with the specificities of service in the penal system.

The study of personality predictors of leadership qualities revealed that, while cadets of both genders share similar personality traits (sociability, emotional stability, dominance, calmness, and courage), male cadets are characterized by a more pronounced competitive spirit, rationality, expansion, and an authoritarian tendency. Female cadets, on the other hand, are more sensitive, diplomatic, careful, conventional, and prone to suppressing their feelings. This is consistent with the results of the study by Tazhutdinova (2019), which indicates that male and female characteristics as personality traits affect the focus of a leader's activities and the choice of means by which they maintain their leadership position.

We attribute the lack of gender-specific characteristics of the FPS cadet self-government system both to the age-related psychological characteristics of adolescence and to the lack of development of these qualities in cadets who acquire only professional knowledge and lack sufficient experience and professional skills. They have difficulty planning the means to achieve the goals and the sequence of their application, as well as adjusting their actual actions, behaviors and the self-government system itself. We believe that this may also be due to the specific nature of education in a departmental university (a strict schedule, the need to comply with orders, clearly defined requirements for cadets and their behavior, etc.). Similar results have previously been obtained by T. A. Trifonova, who found that the qualitative differences in gender characteristics of the voluntary component of self-concept in young men and women between the ages of 17 and 25 are insignificant, which, according to the researcher, is due specifically to age characteristics (Trifonova, 2004). M. Z. Gadzhidadaev and his co-authors argue that self-management abilities are mainly associated with individual characteristics rather than gender. The authors found that students with pronounced leadership qualities demonstrate a high level of development of this ability (Gadzhidadaev et al., 2021). Data obtained from a sample of cadets at educational institutions of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Russia also indicate the low significance of gender in the development of personal self-management. M. S. Korotaeva found that the ability to exert volitional control positively correlates with academic and professional motivation. Students who focus on achieving success in their studies and professional tasks demonstrate the highest level of personal self-management (Korotaeva, 2020). V. I. Morosanova and V. N. Krasnikov emphasize the significant role of regulatory personality traits (independence, flexibility, determination) in the development of self-management (Morosanova & Krasnikov, 2012). M. A. Pakhmutova focuses on the relationship between self-organization and self-management with integral personality features (results-oriented, proactive, flexible, etc.) (Pakhmutova, 2018). Cadets' self-organization skills are probably underdeveloped due to the strict schedule imposed by the specific nature of training in the FPS system.

A limitation of the study is its limited scope. Our respondents were cadets of the Federal Penitentiary Service educational institutions, where service training is generally characterized by the cultivation of traditional masculine characteristics in future cadets.

### **Conclusion**

Overall, the study allowed us to draw several conclusions. First, there were significant differences between female and male students in both their perception of the importance of individual leadership qualities and their perception of the essential qualities of an ideal leader. Secondly, female cadets' self-assessment of their leadership qualities was significantly lower than that of male cadets. This may be due to the traditionally masculine nature of their profession, where the image of a leader is portrayed as a hard, principled, and authoritarian individual.

Male cadets rated their interpersonal competence, their knowledge of leadership and its importance for penal enforcement system, their knowledge of organizational activities and conflict management higher; they also demonstrated a higher level of readiness to assume leadership roles and unit management. However, female cadets showed a more demanding attitude to leadership. Female cadets were more oriented towards an emotional and communicative leadership style, while male cadets preferred a more transactional and authoritarian style. Female cadets demonstrated a higher level of self-organization, discipline, and a desire to follow rules and control their emotions and behavior. However, they also demonstrated greater sensitivity to criticism.

The study, which was the first to achieve results, demonstrates the need for development work to enhance leadership qualities among FPS cadets. However, we should emphasize that different qualities should be cultivated in male and female cadets. Key targets for psychological and pedagogical work to develop leadership qualities in female cadets include "emotional stability", "communication and organizational skills", "initiative", "motivating the cadet team to achieve a common goal", "courage", and "bravery". For male cadets, these qualities include "communication and organizational skills" "initiative", "developing a strategy for achieving goals and developing cadet activity", "unifying students for conscientious academic and daily activities", and "motivating the cadet team to achieve a common goal". These qualities are characterized by the greatest degree of discrepancy between the ideal leader and the actual leader. In other words, in the perceptions of the cadets, they are quite important for a leader, but they are characterized by a low level of development.

Consequently, the study revealed differences in various aspects of leadership abilities and qualities between young men and women studying in the Federal Penitentiary Service educational institutions and identified those that need development and correction. The study also demonstrated that the development and correction of leadership qualities in young men and women requires a differentiated approach that takes into account the gender characteristics of their development.

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## Author Contribution

**Tatiana P. Skripkina** developed theoretical foundations and methodical instruments for the study, analyzed and interpreted the data, prepared, revised and edited the manuscript.

**Natalia M. Martynova** collected the data and prepared statistical data.

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## Conflict of Interest Information

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.