CHARACTERISTICS RELATED TO FEMALE & MALE LEADERS

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Abstract

The following research investigated gender and the leadership role and determined if there are differences in leadership styles, behaviors, traits, and characteristics between female leaders and male leaders. Literature suggests there are specific gender leadership differences between males and females in leadership styles, behaviors, traits, and characteristics. This qualitative study assessed 2 male and 4 female faculty members with face-to-face interviews. Results indicated distinctions between male and female leaders in leadership differences. The distinctions did not, however, support the notion that female leaders are less competent than male leaders.

Introduction and Background

Women are now found in leadership roles, as opposed to management roles, and it is unclear whether their leadership styles differ from those of male leaders or what the consequences of these styles might be. One of the most dramatic changes of the last few decades has been the movement of women into the American labor force. In 1950, only 33.7% of women participated in the labor force; however, by 1985 54.5% of women participated in the American labor force (Rix, 1998). Further, Parilla (1993) predicted that women would constitute 64% of all new labor force entrants by the year 2000.

Adler and Izraeli (1994) stated that women have always played a major role in educational administration. However, Adler and Izraeli (1994) noted that this participation in educational administration has occurred more at primary and secondary levels than at college and university levels. They identified 56.9% of educational administrators as female when all levels of public education were grouped together, noting that the emergence of a female secondary school principal was one major outcome of affirmative action. Similarly, Desjardins (1989) noted greater visibility of women within primary and secondary education leadership positions. Desjardins (1989) found that approximately 70% of all elementary school

administrators and faculty members are female. In addition, Desjardins (1989) also noted that approximately 60% of all high school faculty members and 40% of all high school administrators are female. Boatright and Forrest (2000) questioned whether specific gender-related differences in leadership style, behaviors, traits, and characteristics have emerged as a result of females rising to positions of importance in organizational hierarchies.

Eaton (1984) stated that more women were needed for leadership roles in two-year community colleges and four-year colleges. He identified only 50 female presidents in two-year community college settings. Further, only 5 females were identified among the 33-member board of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, and only 10 females were identified among the 25-member board of the Association of Community Colleges Trustees. During this same period, Eaton identified approximately 92,000 female and 142,000 male faculty members in community college settings. As a result, Eaton argued that it was important to insure proportional representation of women and other minorities within leadership, and decision making ranks. He argued that proportional representation of women and other minorities within critical leadership positions might increase opportunities for two-year and four-year institutions to meet the changing needs of increasingly diverse student bodies.

Vier (1993) agreed, adding that female leaders were underrepresented in four-year college and university settings as well. Vier also noted that a majority of women who obtained the presidential level in higher education tended to do so more often in two-year community college settings. Desjardins's (1989) analysis regarding community college and four-year college presidents revealed that the two-year community college setting had become an ideal arena for the training and empowerment of women as leaders in higher education. Eaton identified similar findings, noting that community colleges tended to serve female and minority student populations predominately, and more often than four-year college and university

settings. Thus, it appeared that two-year community college settings afforded greater opportunities and support for female leadership development than four-year colleges. Further, it appeared that two-year community college settings embraced, encouraged and fostered diversity among the student body, faculty and administrators more than four-year colleges and university settings. As a result, Eaton concluded that the two-year community college environment accounted for the presence of greater numbers of women in key leadership positions.

In contrast, women have achieved small noteworthy advances in leadership positions within four-year college and university settings since 1984. For example, Vaughn (1989) identified 72 female presidents in two-year college settings and 32 female presidents in four-year college settings in 1984. By 1992, there were 106 and 58 female presidents respectively in two-year and four-year college settings (Chliwniak 1997). According to Vaughn (1989), a major barrier to females assuming leadership roles in higher education settings is a lack of training and mentoring opportunities. Vaughn (1989) noted that many female presidents in higher education during the 1980's were participants at the National Institute for Leadership Development (NILD). Thus, it was hypothesized that the NILD was a critical entity for increasing numbers of females in leadership roles within higher education settings during the 1990's. For example, of the approximate 2,300 female participants in the NILD program during the late 1980's and early 1990's, 500 had advanced to vice-president and dean levels within their respective institutional settings while another 52 participants had ascended to presidential levels (Robertson & Tang, 1995). Still, other NILD female participants had gone on to become finalists for presidential vacancies within higher education settings outside of their respective institutional settings. Consequently, a gender change in leadership has continued to evolve during the decade of the 1990's from a predominate male one to one in which increasing numbers of females now occupy leadership positions within higher education settings.

According to Luthans (1998), theorists have made many attempts to define leadership, consequently current theorists have “narrowed their focus” to distinguishing the differences between a manager and a leader (p. 379). Bennis (1994) stated that there are many definitions of leadership, but leadership differs from managing. A manager administers, maintains, focuses on systems, and controls. A leader innovates, develops, focuses on people, inspires trust, and views the horizon. Weiss (2000) identified key leadership styles, behaviors, traits and characteristics of effective leaders. These key leadership styles, behaviors, traits, and characteristics included diplomacy, democracy, energy, idea generation, responsiveness to others, ability to command, and credibility. It was acknowledged that effective leadership styles, behaviors, traits, and characteristics varied significantly across contingencies and situations that were unique to particular settings. However, Weiss argued that: 1) being a manager did not guarantee that one was a leader, 2) effective leaders possessed capacities to influence others' performances in ways that managers did not, and 3) leadership was a position granted by subordinates while management was a role in which the individual was appointed.

Weiss (2000) further compared and contrasted the leadership styles, behaviors, traits and characteristics of leaders and managers, and found that managers accepted responsibility while leaders sought responsibility. In addition, Weiss found that managers demanded respect while following institutional objectives, and leaders gained respect by adding to institutional objectives. It was found that leaders functioned effectively within and across levels of decision-making. Functioning across levels of decision making included identification of existing problems, identification of alternative solutions, selection of better and best alternatives, implementation of agreed-upon alternatives, and collection of group and other related feedback. As a result, Weiss (2000) contended that leaders possessed and exhibited strategies that assisted others to achieve personal goals within institutional settings. Thus, managers were not

necessarily leaders who were legitimized and supported by others, especially subordinates. Attributes of leaders influenced how institutional visions and goals were developed and achieved.

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) reported that the question regarding differences between men and women in leadership roles remain unanswered. The authors also stated that studies of these differences tend to revolve around differences in leadership styles. Findings of a meta-analysis of studies with comparisons of leadership styles of men and women, showed that women were more inter-personally-oriented or democratic compared to men, and men were more task-oriented or autocratic than women, thus supporting the theory that differences were stereotypic. Data from a sample of managers (2,874 women and 6,126 men) showed that female leaders scored higher on inter-personally-oriented leadership styles and utilized certain task-oriented aspects such as contingent reward and active management by exception. Burke and Collins (2001) found similar findings with regard to self-reported leadership styles of female accountants, compared to male accountants; females were more likely to use interactive styles.

The stereotype of males as leaders has only functioned as a formidable barrier for females who aspire to achieve leadership positions (Oakley, 2000). The association of predominately masculine attributes within the leadership role has placed women at a disadvantage. Closely associated masculine attributes to the leadership role include dominance, autonomy, decisiveness, stability, and prowess (Muff 1982). Oakley (2000) argued that the symbolic function of the leader was of special significance to institutional productivity, goal attainment, and survivability regardless of assigned title, and areas or settings of functioning.

For these reasons, Oakley (2000) contended that questions emerged regarding females' capacities for functioning in leadership roles. Both Dobbins and Platz (1986) and Powell (1993) found that female leaders were perceived as less capable than their male counterparts. Similarly,

Griffin (1992) and Offerman and Beil (1992) found that females in leadership roles were perceived as exhibiting opposite leadership styles, behaviors, traits, and characteristics when compared to their male counterparts on competence-related traits. Oakley (2000) found that stereotypes continue to portray women as less capable leaders than men despite studies which found few significant differences in the innate abilities of male and female leaders.

Moreover, early studies by Chapman (1975) and Carpeno (1976) indicated that many female leaders in business and educational settings held perceptions that females were less likely to possess and exhibit effective leadership styles, behaviors, traits, and characteristics than their male counterparts. This self-perception of being less than their male counterparts was supported in part by verbalizations regarding the virtue of the female "nature" and of "being females" in general (Carpeno, 1976). Further, Desjardins (1994) found that female leaders were challenged frequently to act in "masculine ways" in order to convince subordinates and others, such as governing boards and trustees, that they were as capable of effective leadership as their male counterparts. Interestingly, Powell (1993) found that gender stereotypes tended to disappear when subordinates became familiar with female leaders as individuals.

Still, other studies suggested that leaders influenced the environments of institutions significantly, regardless of gender. For example, Heller (1979) noted that leadership attributes influenced interpersonal behaviors and actions within institutions. Specifically, Harper (1991) found that leadership styles, behaviors, traits and characteristics influenced work roles, and how individuals related to one another as a result of these work roles. Heller (1979), Harper (1991), and Weiss (2000) concluded that leadership styles, behaviors, traits and characteristics were key elements in institutional success and failure.

Since findings are inconclusive, and tend to be based on self-reports of female and male leaders, additional insights regarding female leaders, based on other’s reports, is needed.

Leadership styles, behaviors, and traits or characteristics for female leaders must be understood. This study explores the insight into how female leaders function, and how they are perceived by faculty members and employees in a university setting. Findings provide an understanding and a basis for the future study of hypothesized correlations between leadership efficacy and effectiveness, and gender. These findings also provide information regarding relationships between gender, leadership and institutional productivity, and goal achievement. Since the presence of women in leadership positions is a recent phenomenon, this study was needed to provide information related to female leadership efficacy and effectiveness in general.

Theoretical Frameworks

Lewin (1951) presented the change theory and identified three stages to the change process. These stages were 1) unfreezing, 2) moving to a new level, and 3) refreezing. During stage one or unfreezing, individuals who perceived that change was indicated had to convince, motivate, and move others toward the desired change. If the movement of others toward change was successful, unfreezing began and participants exhibited a readiness to undertake the change, and move toward a different level. During stage two, participant's problem-solved and generated solutions to accompanying problems of the belief that the change was good and in their best interest. In addition, behavioral changes emerged among participants, and individuals demonstrated a willingness to move beyond the current "status quo." Finally, as participants collaborated with others to develop plans of action regarding the change refreezing, or stage three, unfolded as participants demonstrated, integrated and incorporated accompanying new behaviors into a repertoire of functioning. During this time of refreezing, validation and reward of new behaviors and repertoire of functioning were crucial to the continuance of desired behaviors and completion of the change. As a result, validation and reward continued until demonstration and accompanying functioning occurred independently and automatically.

According to Arndt and Huckabay (1980), personal behavior theory asserted that leadership behavior and style was defined and characterized by one's personal qualities, attributes, personality and behavioral patterns. A coming-together of these personal and behavioral components emerges to define the leader, the leadership strategy, and the interactive process between leader and followers. In contrast, upper echelon theory focused upon behavioral manifestations that established leadership authority. According to Hambrick and Mason (1984), this process related to the establishment of leadership authority which enabled predictions regarding: 1) organizational outcomes; 2) processes related to identification, selection, and mentoring of managers; and 3) strategic institutional or organizational choices. Ideally, these behaviors and accompanying authority were congruent and comparable to institutional and organizational goals, and objectives. Hambrick and Mason (1984) argued that change occurred less traumatically and more frequently in institutions and organizations in which leadership behavior and authority were congruent and comparable to the institutional environment. Furthermore, Hambrick and Mason (1984) argued that adaptation by the institution and among organizational groups was facilitated, and enhanced.

Hambrick and Mason (1984) further pointed out that the upper echelons perspective states that organizational outcomes are a reflection of the top managers. Thus organizations act as they do according to managerial strategic and personal characteristics, including, managerial background characteristics. Examples of these characteristics include strategic aspects such as use of different types of flows of information and decision-making, and personal background characteristics such as age, tenure, functional background, education, socioeconomic roots, and financial position. The manager brings these characteristics to the administrative situation, which contributes to organizational outcomes.

The theory of rational or normative decision making outlined a logical process of defined steps during which the individual sought to identify consistent, organized, and well-defined choices (Sullivan & Decker, 1997). Major decisions are not the result of a major incremental process, but a result of many incremental choices at the exclusion of larger strategic issues (Sullivan & Decker, 1997). It is important that a leader develop the skills needed to quickly balance between lengthy processes and decisive action. However, this decision making process is not isolated from an individual's attitudes, values, and beliefs in that one's attitudes, values, and beliefs, with accompanying perceptions, contribute to the identification and evaluation of options that emerge out of the decision making process.

Purpose of Study and Methodology

The purpose of the study was to investigate gender and the leadership role and determine if there are differences in leadership styles, behaviors, traits, and characteristics between female leaders and male leaders.

The sample for the study was selected from a local university. The university is part of a national coalition of over 750 colleges and universities that seek to promote student service-learning, community action, and research on college campuses nationwide. The sample for the study consisted of six tenured and non-tenured faculty with the designated rank of assistant, associated and full professor at the university. Of this six, two were males, and four were females. Eight appropriate faculty members were approached; however, one declined on the day of the scheduled interview and one was a no show. Any supporting documents relative to the participation of the aforementioned were destroyed. Gender, rank, tenure, or non-tenured did not disqualify participants. The six faculty members worked within an institutional setting in which a male president was in place prior to 1996 and where a female president presently served. Clinical preceptors, staff, and adjunct faculty members were excluded from this study.

Prior to the taped interview sessions, participants were given the opportunity to ask the researcher questions and to read the study's abstract. All participants were interviewed individually at a location off campus that was easily accessible. Contact between participants was avoided to avoid social response bias. The site selected provided a room that was quiet and not accessible to others. The interviews were conducted within a two-week period from March 4, 2002 to March 14, 2002. Each perspective interviewee was contacted two weeks prior to the dates, and appointments were scheduled as per the interviewee's request. Each interview ranged from 45 - 60 minutes. The participants were asked to share their experiences in a narrative format. Responses obtained during the interviews provided in-depth information about leadership under the male and female presidents. During the interviews, the researcher assumed

the role of participant observer and facilitator of the discussion. Opened-ended questions were used to stimulate the production of narrative story telling accounts. Tapes were transcribed and typed verbatim upon the completion of each interview. The researcher read and listened to each tape to validate accuracy and integrity of the transcription. Transcripts were read without supporting tapes for relevancy to the research question. Upon the completion of this process, themes were identified, and the emerging data was grouped into themes of relevance.

Results and Discussion

Qualitative Results of Interview Questions

Question 1. Are there distinctions between male and female leaders in institutions of higher learning? Comments included the following from six interviews: ". . . from my experience, I don't personally think that there are any differences. You may find that . . . [the differences] are gender related;" ". . . her style was noticeably different. . . . She definitely wanted to be fair . . . but . . . it was clear who the favorites were," "Yes, I'm sure there are. . . . I actually find male leaders more approachable than female leaders," "I believe there are . . . . Our previous president felt that the institution was a family and he treated it as such . . . . Now we have an administrator who being female definitely does not believe in the family mood," "Yes. . . . Women are more inclined to sort of gravitate toward symbolic leadership rather than males. . . . Women are in tuned to things. . . . They change their leadership style more frequently than men. Based upon the situation . . . males are really into . . . the good ole boy network," and "Yes. . . . It's obvious over the years."

Question #2: Are there leadership differences? Comments included the following from six interviews: (1) "I personally find that you find good leaders among the genders . . . not because you're a female and a male," "Yes. . . . Delegation of authority . . . is definitely different than her predecessor. . . . I think she is running the school as a whole . . . compared to male leaders who

knew every person who was hired . . . . You felt that they hired you . . . . With female leadership the Academic Vice President is in charge of the hiring . . . .," "No two individuals are the same in leadership . . . . As far as gender goes I would say . . . men are more patriarchs . . . father figures versus women [who] tend not to be motherly at all," "Yes . . . the female that we have currently definitely has a more of a I want everything to be correct and I don't want to know what's going on kind of manner . . . . [She exhibits a] decentralized style . . . [whereas] our previous administrator [male] had more of a centralized style . . . [which] kept him informed. But he didn't necessarily have to be in control of everything," "Women put a lot of emotion into leadership, where men are more cut and dry . . . . I find that men are easier to work for because they're predictable where women are more unpredictable," and "I think both the women and the males who I would define as being effective stewards of their organizations basically had the same kind of traits. . . . So I think that the traits . . . are no different for a successful male than they are for a successful female."

Question #3: Are there differences in the way men and female leaders in institutions of higher education manage the fiscal health of the institution? Comments included the following from six interviews: "The last president [male] was a sports kind of person. . . . His emphasis was on sports. . . . Dr. [female] . . . looked at it globally, not just intramural sports. She . . . look[ed] at the departments . . . so that no aspect of the system benefited over and above another. . . . Fiscal health of the university is better under [female]," Regarding Dr. [female] being more perceptive on how to manage finances "I think so. . . . People who have worked in finances all their life prior to coming sometimes know how to look for certain things . . . . Regarding the differences being due to gender, I definitely do not think so," "[female] has a better grip on [the office]. . . . The university is better off now than it was [before]. . . . Women are better . . . [because] they say no easier. . . . With money you have to say no sometimes . . . [were as] men want to please," "Yes. The current female administrator comes from a fiscal background . . . . The previous male administrator believed that you rob Peter to pay Paul . . . . That's what sent the institution into the

financial problems," "I don't think that fiscal health can be discriminated between males and females; I think it depends on their background," and "[The] unit manager pretty much does as he or she sees fit. . . . Women are coming into instances where fiscally the institutions are running into trouble . . . . In the past, the ole boy network among men . . . inclined to keep it quiet . . . . I have not really paid attention to male presidents who have followed female presidents. . . . I don't know if females can do it any better than males . . . . It's what you can get away with . . . [and it] varies between public and private."

Question #4: Are there differences in the way male and female leaders manage stress within institutions of higher education? Comments included the following from six interviews: "[In the female]'s situation . . . the doors were open to us . . . . Dr. [male]'s approach was opposite, you had to go . . . to administration," "Regarding handling concerns and stresses related to change, for males and females, males . . . sent out memorandums to the faculty of what was happening. . . . They [males] would come and listen to the grievances . . . and try to explain why those things must come about," "Men have a tendency to let the dust settle . . . . Women are much more confrontational to an extent; [they] hit it head on," "If the previous administrator had difficult times, faculty members were not aware of that. . . . A calm demeanor [was in place]. The current administrator, unfortunately, when under stressful and difficult times, has actually cried, gotten angry, and lost her temper in public," "Female tends to do a lot of denial. . . . Male leader was just as bad. But normally I do believe you would find a male leader who would be more in tune and solve the problem," and "The male president really didn't care. . . . [He] was oblivious to their attitudes. . . . Females don't tend to be as blatant, assertive or aggressive. He was always about the family. . . . [He] talked about the institution as family . . . . Her degree is in business. . . [and] she's perceived as being more business oriented."

Question #5: Are there differences in the way male and female leaders initiate the change process within institutions of higher education? Comments included the following from six

interviews: "The old system had to be moved aside so that she could create a new system. . . . [For example] the beautification of the campus . . . it looks different [and] . . . the emphasis has shifted away from physical performance . . . to intellectual performance. . . . The philosophy was different." Regarding gender, being female made a difference "Obviously. I mean that made a difference." Regarding handling the change process "[female] . . . came down looking for . . . She mixes with you, she takes every opportunity to say hi," "Well, yes to a certain degree. . . . I don't know about initiating the change, because a lot of the changes are based on budget. . . . Males try to do a consensus thing. . . . They spent more time trying to let people see that it will be a good change, so they feel good about it. . . . The female one . . . may just announce that it [has] come," "Yes . . . women get more opinions prior to making their decision, whereas men get the opinions from few and pretty much have already made the decision. . . . Women are more democratic," "I can't really speak to the differences between male and female. . . . With this female administrator . . . change is rapid. There has not been any planning of the changes. It's just been done . . .. I'm trying to think . . . if we had any changes, . . . there must have been a better way that the previous administration dealt with change," "Women tend to theorize and talk things to death, where men gather information and make a decision based upon the information they have gathered. . . . Male leadership . . . [has a] real strong emphasis on athletics . . . [whereas] female leadership is based more on the good of the university," and "I really don't think . . . [there is] that much difference. . . . Female managers will sometimes . . . interpret behavior . . . as being directed at them personally . . . as a matter of consequence they'll shut you down . . . . [Men] do it directly and abruptly. Females do it over time and I think more gradually."

Question #6: Do manager styles differ for males and females? Comments included the following from six interviews: "Men will incorporate men first before they will incorporate women . . ." Regarding Dr. [female] integrating males and females "Definitely. . . [male] had the fighting approach, but [female] took on the dialogue approach and that made all the difference. [Female] .

. . will come down and sit with you . . . [and] quietly listen. She made suggestions . . . was there . . . [and] people felt more empowered . . . [and that they] really contributing . . . [which was] entirely different from Dr. [male]'s approach. . . . She did quite a bit because of who she was as a person, gender included," "(As far as faculty involvement) I can't really see any significant differences there," "Women are more verbal, they want to discuss issues versus [with] men it's cut and dry . . . . [Female] . . . was more visible . . . . I always felt like [male] was patronizing me. I feel more equal with [female]," "I think that its personality related more than anything else. . . . His personality [was] that he wanted people to feel comfortable . . . . Her personality is such that maybe she's not comfortable talking . . . . I don't necessarily think that is gender related. . . . His [personality] was always more relaxed . . . . As far as fiscal resources of the university, her impact has been extremely positive . . . . [There is an] impact on the faculty and the quality people that we used to have . . . . The university has suffered. . . . He was very much in the realm of participatory management . . . . She is more along the lines of an autocrat," ". . . females are going to come out on the short side. . . . A female, who still goes back to that lets keep everybody routine, this mothering . . . fights against us in a leadership position . . . . Women have more problems in their positions than men do," and "[Male] didn't do anything with the computer . . . . The female president that succeeded him was very competent and at ease with the computer . . . . The sense of what I get, of what I hear, not what I know, is that she has turned a lot of faculty off . . . . We [men] can get away with some things that women can't, because they are coming in relatively new and the predominant environment they have to operate in is male dominate."

Table 1

Qualitative Results of Interview Questions

Interviewee#	Question Answers					
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
First	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Second	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Third	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Fourth	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Fifth	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sixth	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Discussion

Findings regarding distinctions between male and female leaders demonstrated that 5 out of 6 respondents answered "yes." Findings regarding there are leadership differences were that 4 out of 6 answered "yes." Findings in regard to gender differences in fiscal health management were that 3 answered "yes" and 3 answered "no." Findings regarding gender differences in stress management were that all respondents answered "yes." Findings regarding there are gender differences related to the change process, all respondents answered "yes." And findings regarding that there are gender differences in manager styles were 4 out of 6 answered "yes." Thus in most cases, differences between male and female leaders were reported for all issues with the only exception regarding fiscal management.

The literature pointed out that questions have emerged regarding females' capacities for functioning in leadership roles and findings support both sides of the argument. For example, early studies indicated that female leaders in business and educational settings were less likely to exhibit effective leadership styles, behaviors, traits, and characteristics than their male counterparts (Chapman, 1975; Carpeno, 1976). In later studies, findings were that the female leader tends to be perceived as less capable than her male counterpart, exhibiting opposite leadership styles, behaviors, traits, and characteristics (Dobbins & Platz, 1986; Griffin, 1992; Offerman & Beil, 1992; Powell, 1993).

Alternatively, other studies suggested that leaders with leadership styles, behaviors, traits and characteristics influenced the environments of institutions significantly regardless of gender (Heller, 1979; Harper, 1991; Weiss, 2000). Powell (1993) reported that gender stereotypes tended to disappear when subordinates became familiar with female leaders as individuals. Oakley (2000) pointed out that it is stereotypes that portray women as less capable leaders than men, and in fact, studies have found few significant differences in the innate abilities of leaders.

The findings from this study, that in most cases differences between male and female leaders were reported for all issues, are consistent with the stereotypical view pointed out by Oakley (2000) and others: that there are differences between male and female leaders. Most respondents reported distinctions between male and female leaders with leadership and style differences. Specifically, findings showed gender differences regarding stress management and change initiation. However, these findings do not support conclusions that female leaders were perceived as less capable than their male counterparts. Several individual responses reported that it was the leadership characteristics rather than gender differences that differed between the male and female example, which is consistent with previous findings (Heller, 1979; Harper, 1991; Weiss, 2000). It is also noted that no differences were found regarding fiscal health management, which again points to the role of leadership qualities rather than gender differences. Participants reported that the female leader had a background in fiscal management, and therefore, was more effective than the male leader.

The change theory (Lewin, 1951) points out that there are three stages to the change process, and during the first stage an individual must convince, motivate, and move others toward the desired change. Without successful completion of this process, participants may not be ready to undertake the change. Findings from this study repeatedly pointed out that the female leader did not tend to complete these steps; thus gender discrepancies reported may

actually reflect differences in leadership abilities regarding the change process. Responses included: "males try to do a consensus thing, they spent more time trying to let people see that it will be a good change," and the female "may just announce that its come."

The personal behavior theory (Arndt & Huckabay, 1980), points out that the person's attributes, personality, qualities and behavioral patterns define leadership behavior, and style. This theory helps to point out that when a respondent concludes that the leadership differences may be due to the personality rather than gender, they are actually reporting on leadership characteristics. It may be that gender is a part of personal behavior, which combines with other factors to yield leadership behavior. In this case, distinctions may be found between male and female leaders, but gender would not be the specific link to inferior performance. This conclusion is supported with this study's findings such as the response: "I personally find that you find good leaders among the genders . . . not because you're a female and a male."

The upper echelon theory (Hambrick & Mason, 1984), focuses on behavioral manifestations that establishes authority and facilitates certain outcomes such as fiscal stability and campus improvements. It appears that the female leader may have demonstrated this ability. An example of this theory in action is indicated by one participant who reported, "(the female) has a better grip on (the office)…. The university is better off now than it was (before)…. Women are better… (because) they say no (to fiscal situations) easier… With money you have to say no sometimes… (whereas) men want to please (the staff and faculty)."

The rational or normative decision making theory points out that decision making includes a logical process with defined steps; included in this process is the use of well-defined choices. Major decisions are viewed as resulting from many incremental choices, involving a balance between lengthy process and decisive actions (von Neumann & Morgenstern, 1944). Again, it may be that the female leader in this study failed to demonstrate these aspects of the

decision-making process, which may have affected her ratings as a leader. Since she tended to make quick changes, it may be this leadership ability that distinguishes her from her male counterpart, rather than gender differences. This is an area identified as a need for additional study. Larger sampling is needed to establish validity or uniformed changes as defined by her inner circle. Three recurring themes were identified within the narrative interviews. They are identified as: nurturing, fiscal stability, and commitment.

Nurturing. Webster (1990) defines nurture as to nourish, care and provide for. However, Sullivan & Decker (1997), identify the role of the nurturer as the facilitator of growth and group maintenance. Further, the authors implied that the person who assumes the role of nurturer must be willing to facilitate group issues, needs and functioning, and be the one who can focus upon group needs at the exclusion of one's own needs. This concept is not gender specific. According to Gherardi (1994), gender is never isolated from the organizational environment. Members of the organization are always "doing gender" while they are engaged in developing culture, formulating policies, procedures, and rules that determine what will or will not constitute fair practices and/or interactions between the two genders (Gherardi, 1994, p. 592).

Participants' perception of nurturing was conveyed through the stories they told. One participant described nurturing as a sense security, protection, and loyalty. Also, it was felt that during the former president's tenure, nurturing was one of his strong characteristics, and that the president instilled a sense of family, loyalty, and job security. The male president took care of both faculty and all employees of the university. This participant shared a story of a faculty member who had become ill, whose sick leave was exhausted, and feared termination of employment as a result. During a faculty meeting, the president made it clear that this faculty member was family and that the faculty member's position would remain intact.

Another participant conveyed a story about how monies designated for employee

retirement were distributed, and how the criteria for the distribution of these monies was changed by the female president without providing an opportunity for discussion among those impacted by this change. It was the belief of faculty members that the president "changed the requirements, rather than changing the people who met the requirements." It was believed, by this respondent that the former president could have been more "just" in this process. This participant conveyed a sense of longing for the time when faculty were family, noting that the former president would provide and care for the university, and he would have found a method that was both fair and just.

Another participant also felt that nurturing was a motivating process that fostered an ethical relationship between the two parties; consequently, "relationship sets the parameters of their interaction" (Husted & Husted, 1995, p. 45). Further, the feeling was that nurturing, as was once known, no longer existed under the female leader. There was the perception among the participants that the new female president was "running the school as a whole in the ways she does things." Some participants questioned if the female president really liked being a president since she showed signs of "burn-out." Husted and Husted(1995)raised the question that when people lose their enthusiasm, endurance and interest, perhaps they never had it to begin with, thus pressure is a way of revealing ones investment in the organization leadership process.

Another participant took exception with the fact that now there was limited access to the president; in particular, in the hiring and firing practices. When a new faculty was hired under the former president's leadership, he would personally meet with the recommended candidate and spend time talking with this person. Under the university's new leadership, the practices of hiring and firing faculty and staff were delegated to the vice president of academic affairs. If the vice president recommended the dismissal of an employee, the president would sign the necessary papers without meeting with the employee. As a result, if faculty members felt their

dismissal was unjust the only recourse would be the appeal process. However, the former president was involved in the hiring and firing decision-making process, with the final word.

Again, the personal behavior theory points out that the person's attributes, personality, qualities, and behavioral patterns define leadership behavior and style. This theory helps to point out that when a respondent concludes that the leadership differences may be due to the "nurturing" personality characteristic, they are actually describing leadership characteristics. In this study, the male leader appeared to be the most nurturing which appeared to be liked by respondents. Since nurturance is typically associated with the female persona, this study finding lends support to the fact that these leadership characteristics, rather than gender differences, were responsible for study outcomes.

Fiscal Stability. According to Marqus and Huston (1996), cost can be defined as the ability of an organization to provide a service that is both efficient and effective in the delivery while "generating a needed revenue for organizational survival" (p. 116). Further, in this process the accountability of accounting becomes the responsibility of a designated person (p.117). Hence, fiscal stability is not without essential planning and accountability. Therefore, the undertaking of this task must be inclusive of those who have expertise in this area. In the discussion of the university's current fiscal stability, participants felt the university was more financially stable under the new president than her predecessor, and that the focus was now on academics rather than sports. However, it was also noted that participants concluded that this ability for fiscal management was based on prior experience rather than gender differences. One participant did not feel gender was relative to one’s leadership abilities: "It's either they are built to lead or not to lead."

While one participant did feel that women were more resourceful in managing finances and prioritizing than their male counterparts, in most cases, the current president's former

expertise and experiences were contributing positive factors to the current fiscal planning and stability of the university. Further, it was believed that the current leader's priority of financially and academically securing the university was an important component for organizational survival; unlike the former president, whose emphasis was on sports and building a sports stadium. Under the current female president, the focus has shifted to positive academic student outcomes, and providing resources and faculty that will contribute to positive outcomes for students and the university.

Marquis and Huston (1996) cautioned that organizational fiscal planning must not be a fixed rigid strategy, and that flexibility and the incorporation of both short and long term goals are essential for organizational survival (p. 118). Although participants felt the female president appeared unpredictable in her decisions, "you don't know what you are going to be hit with," there was a strong consensus that she remained on track with setting both the short and long term goals, with particular regard for fiscal management with regard to students and the university.

It appears that in regard to this issue, the rational or normative decision making theory can be used to best describe the responses regarding fiscal management. The female leader appears to have had a well-defined goal of improving the university, after which included improved fiscal management and increased academic standing. While this leader lacked the ability to provide a lengthy and fully explained process for the implementation of these goals, the changes did take place. These changes led to the perception of her leadership ability in this area.

Commitment. Commitment is defined as "the state of being bound emotionally or intellectually to some course of action" (American Heritage Dictionary, 1990). To advance this definition within an organizational structure, Luthans (1998) defined organizational commitment as a behavior that is demonstrated by one’s willingness to: 1) be part of the organization, 2) commit and remain a member of the organization, and 3) to demonstrate a commitment to the

organization through ones demonstration of "high efforts on behalf of the organization," and congruency with the organizations, beliefs and goals (p. 148). According to Heckscher and Donnellon (1994), this concept is further explored by Walton (1985) who defines commitment as "a set of organizational principles and practices designed to create a partnership between labor and management to improve organizational performance" (p. 179).

Participants believed both presidents were committed to the university's survival with each having their own set of priorities. However, they felt the male president was more vigilant in the deliverance. The participants were unanimous in their perception of this president being "a strong leader," and one who could stimulate others to action, thereby intensifying the faculty and staff's commitment to the university. Luthans (1998) equates strong organizational members commitment to "core values" (p. 552). According to Luthans, both the values and commitment of strong leadership shape strong cultures in the combination of a strong leader.

The male president, in this case, was committed to providing a source of cultural experiences for students and the community. He felt the need to undertake the development of a performing arts center to facilitate this commitment. Although the president received less than favorable support from many, he forged on. The president began with giving the charge to his administrative team to make the vision a reality. The president knew it was important to align others to action if the vision was to become a reality. He utilized political strategies to market his vision by traveling to another country with the governor of the state. He persuaded the governor to support and approve funding for the new cultural center.

Another participant shared a story about the male president's commitment to the university, and the continued effort for the university to remain as one campus in the city. For several years, there was an effort to merge this university with another in the same city. The president was adamant and refused to merge. Although this was not a popular political position

at that time, his refusal strengthened his commitment to the university and the community.

Still other participants viewed the female president's commitment to the university and faculty less committed than the male president. This commitment was more from a financial perspective. Further, participant's felt that the female president was slower in moving to action than the male president, "she talks things to death, instead of making a decision." A participant viewed the commitment demonstrated by the female president as always being tied to financial issues; therefore, there were questions raised about her commitment to the faculty and the community. Some participants reported that the president's commitments were not always consistent or predictable. Consequently, there was the perception that her commitments were less than timely in their delivery.

The upper echelon theory helps to describe the findings related to commitment and leadership. In this theory, leadership characteristics, both strategic and personal, predict leadership authority and organizational outcomes (Hambrick & Mason, 1984). Respondents clearly describe the male leader's authority along with their conclusion regarding his commitment. The female leader's commitment, while pertaining only to fiscal management, was also described within the context of her authority regarding this matter. Thus respondents describe leadership characteristics such as commitment, a factor which may have led to perspectives regarding leadership abilities and organizational outcomes.

Findings Related to Leadership Styles

According to Krotz (2002), women have moved forward in achieving ownership of businesses in the U.S. The rate has increased by 103% in the past decade, and females have moved from junior staffers to the executive suite. The author, however, contends that styles of leadership are affected when a gender comparison is used, but it is further evident that in this process "females have an edge" over their male counterparts (p. 1).

Nelton (1996) reported differences in gender leadership styles. Firms that were managed by women were likely to offer benefits such as: 1) flextime, 2) paid personal leave, 3) sick leave, and 4) tuition reimbursement. However, they were also less likely to provide medical and retirement benefits. Secondly, women leaders perceive success differently from their male counterparts. Success for women was measured by quality of services, or product delivered or provided to the client they served. Female leaders also believed that they provided a service or a product where the client could "reap the rewards," that this too was a measure of success. The current study findings did not appear to support this female leadership style.

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) and Burke and Collins (2001) each reported study findings which supported the theory that women tend to display more interactive styles than men, and women tend to be more interactive and democratic and men tend to be more task-oriented and autocratic. These results were based on self-reports of study participants. These findings were consistent with theories that gender stereotypic differences are linked to leadership styles of men and women. Findings of this study did not support these conclusions.

The current study showed that stereotypic roles, such as females being more interpersonal, were not found to be linked to leadership styles. Participants in the current study perceived the leadership of the female president as "symbolic," changing more frequently and being situational driven. They perceived that she was less approachable, and her style was noticeably different from that of her male counterpart. Some participants expressed frustration regarding the time frame between identifying a problem and making a decision about managing the problem. One participant felt the president "worried things to death" instead of making a decision in a timely manner. Another felt she belabored the issue, and took "forever to do something." Another complaint was that consultants were used in excess, and that as a result of a consultant’s visit nothing good was accomplished. While the female leader was proficient at

fiscal management decisions, she appeared to be less effective regarding other university decisions. In turn these distinctions regarding style may be attributed to gender differences. The decision making theory helps point out that, in fact, these discrepancies are due to lack of ability.

Conclusion

It is concluded that most respondents found distinctions between male and female leaders with leadership and style differences. Specifically, these distinctions were found in areas of stress management and change initiation. However, these distinctions did not support the notion that female leaders are less competent than male leaders. It is also concluded that gender differences in fiscal health management were not supported since 3 participants answered "yes" and 3 answered "no." Individual comments led to the conclusion that it was personality and leadership characteristic differences rather than gender influences that resulted in findings.

Since this study utilized only a small sample of volunteer subjects on an availability basis; it is possible that the findings may not generalize to a larger population. Possible limitations of this study were volunteer bias, sample selection, subject group size, and geographic location. In addition, most of the study participants were female which may have affected results. Extraneous variables such as test reactivity and accuracy of self-reporting might have been present and unaccounted for.

This study provided qualitative information regarding male and female distinctions in leadership. Since this study pointed out that there may be distinctions between leaders, but that these differences may not be gender specific and do not imply inferior quality in female leadership, further investigation is needed to determine the relationships between these variables. A study is needed to determine if specific leadership characteristics, associated with quality leadership, are stereotypically viewed as related to either gender. This would help distinguish between actual leadership abilities demonstrated and stereotypic perceptions. In addition, since

a limitation of this study provided a small sample size and unequal representation of male and female participants, the future study will need to correct for these conditions. A much larger sample, which distinguishes between male and female responses, must be included.

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