

## Analysis Of the Ways in Which Women Leaders Develop and Discuss Leadership

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### Abstract

This study seeks to evaluate the leadership discourses of fifteen female leaders through the use of a narrative survey. The sample of participants is designed to be representative. The stories consistently explored the themes of adhering to one's ethical principles and striving for constructive world transformation. These concepts initiate a discourse concerning the moral dilemmas that leaders encounter. The primary suggestion of the study is to emulate forthcoming leadership techniques based on a feminist ethic of care. Furthermore, it argues that ethical leadership considerations should encompass both the objective and the surrounding context. The primary objective of this study is to determine the correlation between the feminist ethic of caring and the acquisition of leadership skills in relation to women's career decisions. This study employs a narrative survey, utilising Kenneth Burke's conceptual framework, to get insights into the perspectives and encounters of women in leadership roles. The objective of this study is to shed light on the intricate connections among women, leadership, and the feminist principle of caring through the assessment of narratives shared by women holding leadership positions.

### Introduction

In January 2007, several female members of the American Psychological Association (APA) voiced their extreme displeasure with the publishing of a Special Issue on Leadership in the American Psychologist. These individuals felt that the issue failed to adequately address the needs of women in leadership positions. According to Chin and Sanchez-Hucles (2007), the source of their dissatisfaction was the perception that the publication failed to take into account issues relating to diversity and identities that intersect. Following the conclusion of the aforementioned discussion, the American Psychologist journal issued a public statement in response to the controversy. The Women's Committee of the National Council of Schools of Professional Psychology, The Society for the Psychology of Women, and the Executive Committee of Division 35 of the American Psychological Association are among the many groups that have given their support to the proclamation. In addition to this, both the editor-in-chief of the American Psychologist, Dr. Norman Anderson, and the editor of the special issue, Dr. Robert Stemberg, have issued public apologies for their roles in the publication. In addition, Anderson has given his approval for the printing of a following special edition that will be concentrated on leadership and will place an emphasis, in particular, on the issues of gender and diversity. There are two unique reasons why this controversy has the potential to be instructive. In the first place, it highlights the continuous marginalization of gender concerns within the area of leadership study, in addition to other forms of diversity. The second argument contends that gender is still studied

within the area of social sciences as if it were a fixed identity rather than a socially constructed idea that is influenced by speech and mutually influences prevalent cultural norms. This is in contrast to the first assertion, which contends that gender is studied as if it were a dynamic identity. J. Chrisler included an attachment in a piece of correspondence that was dated February 2, 2007, that contained information regarding Stemberg's apology. Stemberg expressed regret and provided clarification, stating that the omission of gender and diversity considerations resulted from his organization of the special issue based on various paradigms for studying leadership (such as the trait paradigm, the situational paradigm, and the systems paradigm), rather than categorizing it by different demographic groups for whom leadership is pertinent (such as men, women, and underrepresented minorities). Stemberg expressed regret and provided clarification. Following the completion of their research, the individual stated that they would prefer to work for a "mixed organization." In addition, they said that they planned to deliver two further pieces, one of which would concentrate on "leadership in women" and the other on "leadership in culturally diverse groups." It is of the utmost importance to take into account the preposition that he has chosen. An essentialist perspective is one that oversimplifies the complexities of gender by classifying all individuals, regardless of their gender, into fixed sets of characteristics and traits (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 2003). The act of centering attention on the characteristics of women leaders can be interpreted as adopting an essentialist perspective. Anderson's statements of remorse reflected Stemberg's perspective, as he said, "There are numerous aspects of this matter that we can take pride in!" Anderson's expressions of remorse reflected Stemberg's perspective. In addition, he mentioned that he had previously submitted a formal request for a feature story to be published in the APA Monitor. The article's topic would have centered on female psychologists who held leadership positions. (Attached to personal correspondence, February 2, 2007, J. Chrisler). The Division 35 of the American Psychological Association (APA) and other relevant stakeholders attempted to shift the dialogue from an essentialist point of view to an ideological point of view in an effort to reframe the discourse on the influence of gender on leadership. This was done in an effort to redefine the discourse on the impact of gender on leadership. This was accomplished by arguing that the aforementioned papers neglected to recognise the role of diversity in creating the conception of leadership effectiveness, leadership styles, and leader qualities (Chin & Sanchez-Hucles, 2007). This was successful in achieving the desired result. It is essential to make this important shift in concentration. Although the study of women and leadership is a relatively new addition to the leadership literature, it is important to keep in mind that the vast majority of the earlier research conducted on this topic did not consider gender to be a significant factor or incorporate the distinctive experiences of women into the conceptualization of their studies. This is something that should be taken into consideration when reading this. As a consequence of this, it is possible to make the observation that men have played a

big part in both expressing and influencing the prevalent narratives of leadership, with the primary focus being on drawing on their own personal experiences. The problem of women being underrepresented in leadership posts within the United States, as well as the prevalent concept that masculine attributes are needed for effective leadership, are two significant components of the male-centric mindset that surrounds leadership. The third component of the male-centric mindset that surrounds leadership is the belief that women should not be in leadership roles. Despite the passing of several decades that have been distinguished by an upward trend in the presence of women within the workforce, the representation of women in leadership positions in the United States continues to be disproportionately low. This is the case despite the upward trend in the presence of women within the workforce over the past several decades. According to Brady (2005, Mar. 25a), the percentage of women who hold high-earning positions is extremely low, with only 5% of women occupying top-earning positions, 16% of women holding official responsibilities in corporations, and 13.6% of women serving on boards of directors. In addition, there are just nine women in executive leadership positions in companies that are ranked in the top 500 in the United States. The power dynamics and gender dynamics that are present in the context of society as a whole are mirrored and maintained within organizations, which act as microcosms of society. Since the release of Kanter's groundbreaking study "Men and Women in the Corporation" in 1977, several academics have participated in discussion revolving around the gendered dynamics present within various organizational systems. A number of scholarly works, including Mills and Tancred (1992), Acker (1990, 1992), Buzzanell (1994), Court (1997), Ferguson (1984), Fondas (1997), and Acker and Tancred (1992), have been referenced. According to Fine and Buzzanell (2000), the writers exhibit a preference for "male modes of cognition, emotion, behavior, and identity formation, while simultaneously devaluing their female counterparts" (p. 130). This is because the authors believe that male modes of cognition, emotion, behavior, and identity formation are superior to their female counterparts. In addition, they provide light on the various ways in which the inclusion of men is prioritized within organizational structures, policies, and practices, while women are relegated to the background. It has been noticed, on the basis of empirical evidence, that organizations have a tendency to hold in high respect and provide incentives for leadership styles that are defined by masculine features (Chin, 2004). This is the case despite the fact that there are many different types of leadership styles. According to Fine and Buzzanell (2000), the common belief in the setting of the United States and other western nations is that leaders exhibit characteristics that are traditionally associated with men. These characteristics include directness, assertiveness, dominance, and authoritativeness. notwithstanding the recent rise in the number of women holding managerial positions, academic research reveals that exceptional managers continue to be disproportionately associated with male attributes (Powell & Butterfield, 1989; Powell, Butterfield, & Parent, 2002). This is the

case notwithstanding the recent rising trend in the representation of women in managerial jobs. Izraeli and Adler (1994) found that there is a significant connection between masculinity and leadership, despite the fact that masculinity is a socially created notion that displays diversity across different cultures. According to Schein (2001), the outcomes of their research reveal that the assumption that "think manager—think male" is a universally seen phenomenon, in particular among males (p. 682). This is particularly true among males. The common perception that those in positions of authority must be of a more masculine nature is one factor that has led to a dearth of female candidates for important leadership positions in the United States. Nevertheless, the notion that leadership is synonymous with masculinity has important implications for the study of leadership theory. Within the arena of academic leadership discourse, the underrepresentation of women's perspectives and experiences has had a profound impact on the development and comprehension of leadership theory. This study focuses mostly on the perspectives and experiences of white women. However, the authors acknowledge that there is a dearth of representation and inclusion of men and women of color, as well as Latinos and Latinas, in the existing theory of leadership. The purpose of this study is to investigate the ways in which different discourses provide depictions of white women who hold positions of authority. The purpose of this research was to determine whether or not the discursive constructions of leadership by women offer novel viewpoints on the theory and definition of leadership. The following questions served as the investigation's guiding principles:

#### **Writings about women in leadership roles**

In the discipline of leadership studies, gender issues are frequently disregarded as unimportant. The vast majority of academic research that has been done on the topic of women in leadership roles has focused primarily on illuminating the differences that may be observed between the leadership styles used by males and those adopted by females. There have been a number of studies that have offered data to support either the existence of a distinctive leadership style among women or the lack of any significant differences, if any, between the leadership styles of men and women.

#### **How women take charge**

This particular avenue of inquiry has given findings that are conflicting, as was indicated earlier. It has been observed that women leaders, in contrast to male leaders, have a tendency to make use of approaches that are caring, inclusive, and collaborative in order to cultivate involvement and build equal settings (Adler, 2005; Chin, 2004; Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001; Greenberg & Sweeney, 2005; Rosener, 1990; Greenberg & Sweeney, 2005; Rosener, 1990). In addition, the firm makes use of transformational leadership as a method to motivate and encourage employees to take on unique and difficult responsibilities. According to Kouzes and Posner (1990), the academic discipline of Women's Studies in Communication places an emphasis on the significance of exhibiting acceptable behavior and providing constructive criticism to

persons in positions of lower authority. In addition to this, it encourages individuals to consider the collective interests of the group rather of focusing simply on their own personal interests (Burke & Collins, 2001; Rosener, 1990, Trinidad & Normore, 2005). This is something that has been shown to improve group dynamics. In addition to this, it highlights the significance of cultivating customized relationships with subordinates, as stated by Yammarino et al. (1997). According to the findings of a survey that was carried out on Fortune 500 businesses by Bass et al. in 1996, subordinates consistently ranked female leaders higher than their male counterparts in terms of transformative leadership. In addition, academic research has shown that women have a greater tendency than males do to engage in acts of altruism, as shown by the findings of Greenberg and Sweeney (2005). males, on the other hand, have been shown to be less likely to engage in acts of altruism. In addition, Fletcher (1999) has found that women typically make decisions regarding their careers with the goal of being of service to other people in mind. In addition, Otten (1995) found evidence that women tend to participate in communication that is marked by compassion and closeness in their interactions with one another. This body of research reveals that there are differences in the leadership styles utilized by men and women, with women having a tendency to use ways that are more communicative, nurturing, cooperative, and egalitarian than males do. In addition to looking into the leadership styles of women, researchers have also investigated the professional motivations of women. According to the findings of study that was carried out by Whatley (1998), female educators view their job in teaching as a vocation or mission, which they describe as a political act with the intention of addressing issues of injustice and social imbalance (Smulyan, 2004). According to Bridges (1989), women who have a strong sense of drive are more likely to pursue careers in areas such as teaching, social work, medicine, and human services as opposed to occupations that carry a higher level of societal prestige. This predisposition is congruent with their goal of bringing about revolutionary change in the globe. The observed differences in behavior between men and women are not very significant, according to a comprehensive evaluation of studies on women's leadership styles conducted using meta-analyses (Eagly & Johnson, 1990; Kolb, 1999; Powell, 1990). This was determined by looking at a number of studies on women's leadership styles. According to Maccoby and Jacklin (1974), the research that was done at the time that purported to disclose sex differences was potentially deceptive due to the omission of studies that showed no such differences from the existing body of literature. This was the case with the research that was carried out at the time. Pounder and Coleman (2002) argue that despite the limitations of studies on gender differences in leadership, it is vital to investigate the underlying causes behind individuals' perceptions of such inequalities, even in cases where there are no actual differences. They state that this is the case even in situations where there are no actual differences. In the case of metastudies, acknowledging the predominant emphasis that is placed on examining behavioral differences between males and females may provide some



insights into the inconsistent results that have been demonstrated within this field of research. The idea of "variations in behavior" is one of the essential ideas that must be kept in mind. The majority of the main research that has been done on women's leadership styles heavily relies on data that was provided by the women themselves. Several research, including Adler (2005), Burke and Collins (2001), Chin (2004), Greenberg and Sweeney (2005), Rosener (1990), and Yammarino et al. (1997), have found this to be the case. The research that has been presented does not provide adequate evidence to support the assumption that men and women deploy different leadership styles in real-world circumstances. People who are able to Having said that, it is important to point out that Marlene G. Fine 185 may indicate a leadership strategy that is supported by a subset of women. It's possible that the circumstances in which women are expected to lead can hinder their ability to carry out their duties in accordance with this particular conception of leadership and leaders. In spite of the fact that there is a possibility of discrepancy between belief and implementation, the body of research covering women's leadership styles provides an alternate viewpoint on leadership that differs from typical representations of males in leadership roles. This concern is in line with the career decisions that women make and their professed desire to contribute to the well-being of others. Nevertheless, it is essential to approach the investigation of women's leadership styles with caution and critical analysis, regardless of whether the investigation is based on self-reports or on observed behavior. It takes on a controversial attitude within the discussion that surrounds the topic of women in positions of authority. An essentialist point of view is required to be taken up at the outset if one is going to investigate the differences between the leadership styles of men and women. In addition to this, it reduces the idea of leadership to a set of characteristics that are not consistent with one another. In addition, several studies contribute to the reinforcement of gender roles within corporate settings by contextualizing the portrayal of women's leadership styles within a larger framework of organizational discourse pertaining to the management and leadership competencies demanded in the contemporary economy. This is done by placing the portrayal of women's leadership styles within the larger framework of organizational discourse. A large amount of emphasis is placed throughout the contextualization on the unique and valuable contributions that women make to companies. Greenberg and Sweeney (2005) contend that women have leadership capabilities that are very favorable in contemporary work contexts that are defined by diversity, open information sharing, crucial collaboration, and the significance of teamwork within top-performing firms (p. 36). According to Trinidad and Normore (2005), socialization processes have instilled a predisposition for transformational leadership approaches in women. This belief stems from the authors' belief that women have been exposed to these processes. The authors argue that women are more qualified than men to effectively lead increasingly diverse workforces in global economic businesses and that this qualification advantage favors women. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003) argue

that the emphasis on "women's unique capabilities" serves to ascribe gendered attributes to specific skills, thereby perpetuating the gendered categorization of women's roles within organizational contexts. In their study, they used the phrase "women's unique capabilities" to refer to the attribution of gendered attributes to specific skills. Despite the recognition of the significant perspectives that women contribute to businesses, there are barriers preventing women from accessing and utilizing abilities that have traditionally been identified with males. These barriers exist in spite of the fact that women have the ability to do so.

#### **CONCLUSION**

This study draws on women's discursive conceptions of ethical leadership in order to provide new routes for future research on leadership as well as the development of leadership theory. The fact that all of the women who participated in the study were of the Caucasian race, the vast majority of whom were American, and that they only represented a limited spectrum of ethnic variety is a limitation of the study. The leadership experiences of women who represent a diverse variety of racial, national, and ethnic identities ought to be the focus of study that will be conducted in the future. In addition, the results of this inquiry are only suggestive. The conceptual notions that are obtained from narrative surveys have the potential to be applied to the development of theories and to serve as the conceptual framework for new lines of inquiry in the field of study. This study offers some preliminary evidence in support of placing scene and purpose on the list of elements of ethically justified leadership. In addition to this, a paradigm of ethical leadership that is founded on a feminist ethics of care is provided. In light of these two discoveries, there is a need for additional research as well as the development of theoretical frameworks.

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