Trends in Women’s Leadership Development Theory: How the Transformational Leadership Characteristic of Women Values Individuals and Processes

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Activity

- Think about the skills, qualities, and attributes that women bring to their leadership roles in the context of higher education.

- In groups, list as many adjectives as possible to describe these qualities.
Leadership Landscape for Women

- Typically, men are perceived as having the qualities necessary to lead.
- Leadership is still viewed as a masculine domain, especially by those who hold traditional gender role schemas and traditional views of leadership roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007).
- Role Congruity Theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002).
Common Leadership Styles of Men and Women

- **Men**: Agentic qualities - autocratic and directive, typically focusing on systems, structures, rules, outcomes, tasks, and hierarchy.

- **Women**: Communal qualities - democratic and participatory, typically focusing on relationships and creating positive working atmospheres.

(Eagly & Johnson, 1990)
Trends in Leadership Development Theory

- Move from transactional leadership to an emphasis on a **transformational** style of leadership (collaboration, relational, consensus-building), e.g., Burns, 1978.

- Shift **from** command-and-control and hierarchical leadership **to** inclusive and empowering leadership.
Generational Shift

• The shift to transformational leadership is particularly critical given a generational shift in expectations of leaders and organizations.
  
  (Kezar & Lester, 2008)

• Generation X and the “Nexter” generation typically value egalitarian leadership characterized by frequent, honest communication.
  
  (Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 2000)
Transformational Leadership

- A meta-analysis of 160 leadership studies revealed that women more commonly use a participative or democratic style of leadership.
  (Eagly & Johnson, 1990)

- Transformational leadership enhances both organizational culture and its effectiveness.
  (Eagly, 2007; Judge & Piccolo, 2004)
Transformational Leadership

• “In the United States, women are increasingly praised for having excellent skills for leadership and, in fact, women, more than men, manifest leadership styles associated with effective performance as leaders.”

(Eagly, 2007, p.1)
Organizational Culture

- Despite the effectiveness of a transformational leadership style, not all organizations embrace this collaborative approach (Kezar et al., 2006).
- Organizational culture itself can influence the emergence of leadership styles.
- The acceptance of leaders, for example, largely depends on the tone set by the dominant group, influencing perceptions about what it takes to be a good leader.
Organizational Environments Can Be “Gendered”

- The gendered nature of organizational structures “ensures that women have limited access to positions of power in the organizational hierarchy. Stereotypically masculine traits are still equated with good management practices.”

  (O’Neil, Hopkins, & Bilimoria, 2008)
Organizational Cultures Can Be “Gendered”

From *Harvard Business Review*

“It’s not the ceiling that’s holding women back; it’s the whole structure of the organizations in which we work: the foundation, the beams, the walls, the very air.”

(Myerson & Fletcher, 2000)
Barriers Women Leaders Face

- Women face greater difficulty in obtaining leadership positions and succeeding in male-dominated organizational structures.  
  
  (Eagly & Carli, 2007)

- Discrimination, stereotypes, prejudices, and organizational politics all represent barriers to the advancement of women to high-level leadership positions.

  (Eagly, 2007)
Even though effective leadership is attributed to a transformational leadership style which women frequently bring, there is a **lack of women in high-level leadership** in business, politics, and higher education.
Women in Political Leadership (2007)
“This vision of a hierarchically ordered universe has been drawn on with great success historically and continues as the orienting gender story among the majority of conservative Protestants today.”

(Gallagher, 2004)
Survey Data
1,900 CCCU Faculty

Statement: “Female faculty at my college/university are treated equally to male faculty.”

- 24% of female respondents strongly agreed
- 47% of male respondents strongly agreed

Survey responses reflect an “unfortunate pattern of gender polarization, a pattern that reveals more acutely the level of gender inequities on CCCU campuses.”

(Joeckel & Chesnes, 2009)
“In short, gender inequities have become subtly institutionalized, woven seamlessly into the daily, unquestioned workings of the school -- hence the invisibility of sexism on campus, as indicated by our data -- reinforced by a theological, political, and social campus climate that has become normative and therefore functionally homogenous. It is this homogeneity, among other dead weights, that stalls attempts to eradicate sexism.”

(Joeckel & Chesnes, 2009)
“...at conservative religious institutions, women face a stained-glass ceiling, with the Bible and church tradition routinely used to justify gender discrimination. While I am at times troubled by the alienation I feel, I remain far more concerned about the lack of female role models for students at Christian colleges and universities.”

(Mock, 2005)
CCCU Senior Level Leadership – 2008
Presidents = 5%  Cabinet-Level = 16.5%
Gender Balance in the CCCU 2008
Background and Purpose of the Women’s Leadership Development Institute

• Launched Three-Tiered Executive Leadership Development Initiative - 1996

Presidents’ Institutes

CAOs’ Institutes

Women’s /Leadership Development Institutes

(160 women; 31 people of color)
1998 – 2008
Women’s Leadership Development Institutes
The WLDI/LDI Year

- A four-day Institute at Cedar Springs
- Provision of leadership articles and books
- Design of a year-long Professional Development Plan
- Networking with Resource Team leaders
- A two or three-day shadowing experience on another campus
- A follow-up gathering/Advanced Leadership Institute
160 Female Participants in the LDIs and WLDIs

2005 & 2010 Surveys - Over 50% had advanced professionally

- 2 Presidents
- 10 Provosts
- 16 Vice Presidents
- 22 Deans
- 12 Directors
# The Single Most Beneficial Aspect?

(A 79% Response Rate from Participants)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content of the WLDI sessions</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Informal conversations with other women</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking with experienced administrators</td>
<td>25.8%</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shadowing/mentoring experience</td>
<td>35.5%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
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Open-Ended: The most Important Dimension?

- “The connection with other women who understand leadership as a calling.”
- “The ability to dig deeper with other women leaders and also continue those mentoring opportunities. It has literally changed my life.”
- “Strong confirmation and affirmation of my gifts and calling as an academic leader.”
Open-Ended: The most Important Dimension?

- “Meeting and seeing other women lead in major administrative roles. It serves as a role model for me.”

- “The shadowing experience gave me the opportunity to investigate, reflect, and dialogue about my potential in leadership. It encouraged me to ask the hard questions....

- “Concrete equipping – in both materials and in relationships – to understand what’s needed to succeed as a leader.”
What Can We Learn?

- The importance of a multi-tiered approach to leadership development:
  - Three age-related phases of women’s careers:
    - the idealistic achievement phase
    - the pragmatic endurance phase
    - the re-inventive contribution phase

(O’Neil & Bilimoria, 2005)
What Can We Learn?

- The Importance of Board Composition

“Put simply, ... the more women board directors a company has in the past, the more women corporate officers it will have in the future.”

(Catalyst, 2008)
What Can We Learn?

Key Components:
- The Use of Leadership Assessment Tools
- The Importance of Mentoring and Coaching
- The Value of Establishing Professional Networking
- The Power of Women-Only Leadership Training

*Women’s Leadership Development: Strategic Practices for Women and Organizations* (Hopkins et al., 2008)
What Can We Learn?

- The Power of Institutional Models
  - Selection Process for Emerging Leaders
  - Organized Plan of Readings/Events
    (e.g., "Leaders are Readers" Group)
  - Interviewing/Shadowing Opportunities on Campus
  - Opening/Culminating Off-Site Weekend
  - Support from the Top - Essential??

Leading from the Top, Alongside, or Below (Hestenes, 1999)
“It properly falls to the academy, given its values of equity, excellence, and innovation, to redefine leadership for this new era and to demonstrate new pathways for identifying, preparing, and supporting women and people of color for the presidency of postsecondary institutions.”

(Bornstein, 2008)