

# GENDER, MOTIVATION, AND COPING IN THE EVALUATION OF LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS

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**ABSTRACT.** The effects of gender, coping, and motivational orientation in evaluating individual leadership were investigated. The setting was an intensive leadership development program at a leading business school. A Sentence Completion Technique, Jackson's Personality Research Form, and Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices were used to predict peer ratings of leadership at the end of the nine-month program. The data reveal significant gender differences on the measures of motivation, with men showing higher levels of agentic-instrumental tendencies and women exhibiting higher levels of communal-social qualities ( $p < .05$ ). These qualities, in turn, were differentially correlated with evaluations of leadership. Women exhibiting strong agentic characteristics were negatively perceived as leaders ( $p < .05$ ). There was no relationship between agentic or communal qualities and evaluations of leadership received by male leaders. Finally, individuals with active coping tendencies were evaluated as more effective leaders for males and females. The findings are discussed in terms of gender role congruency theory.

Recent researchers have emphasized the effects of personal and situational factors on the emergence of an individual as a small-group leader (e.g., Lord, DeVader, & Alliger, 1986). Included among these personal factors have been personality traits and gender, particularly characteristics that contribute to an individual's emergent leadership effectiveness across different settings through time (e.g., Ellis, 1988; Howard & Bray, 1990; Lombardo & McCall, 1988; Zaccaro, Foti, & Kenny, 1991). Emergent leaders are individuals who assume leadership roles in leaderless groups (e.g., informal meetings, work teams) or in groups in which leaders are incompetent or have been deposed. As individuals become identified as leaders in one situation or group, they frequently are labeled leaders in other situations and groups, improving their likelihood of being appointed or promoted into more senior managerial positions.

Emergent leadership is usually a matter of ability, initiative, resourcefulness, and persistence. Nevertheless, research has suggested that recognition (e.g., acceptance, hiring, salaries, and promotion) may be less certain for women than for men (Baron & Bielby, 1985; Nieva & Gutek, 1981). Most research on gender effects on leadership emergence has been conducted in business organizations (i.e., field studies). Researchers also have examined gender effects in assessment studies (i.e., research assessing the styles of individuals who were not selected initially to occupy leadership positions) and laboratory studies (usually conducted with college students). A meta-analysis of these studies conducted by Eagly and Johnson (1990) showed that stereotypical gender differences were less pronounced in organizational studies than in assessment or laboratory studies. Their findings support the argument that the criteria organizations use for selecting managers and the forces they maintain for socializing managers into their roles minimize tendencies for men and women to manifest gender-stereotypical behaviors in leading or managing other people.

Even in organizational settings, however, gender-based expectations for behavior may influence the styles and evaluations of male and female leaders. Individuals develop expectations for their own and others' behavior based on their beliefs about the behavior that is appropriate for men and women (Eagly, 1987; Gutek & Morasch, 1982; Schein, 1975). In an organizational setting, individuals also develop expectations about behavior that is appropriate for a manager or leader (Phillips & Lord, 1982). It therefore is likely that leaders are perceived simultaneously in terms of their gender and their organizational role. Indeed, research supports the idea that expectations for managerial behavior

depend partly on managers' gender (e.g., Eagly, Makhijani, & Kionsky, 1992; Heilman, Block, Martell, & Simon, 1989; Russell, Rush, & Herd, 1988), and several reviewers have reported a differential pattern of evaluation of male and female leadership (e.g., Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Dobbins & Platz, 1986; Eagly et al., 1992; Powell, 1990; Watson, 1988). For example, women in leadership roles tended to be evaluated negatively relative to men when their leadership style was characterized by stereotypically masculine features, particularly when their style was autocratic or directive. Moreover, women's leadership was evaluated less favorably than men's when the leaders occupied traditionally male-dominated roles and when the raters were men.

### **Relationships among Gender, Motivation, and the Evaluation of Leadership**

Gender differences in motivational orientation have been deemed to be important mediating factors in fashioning differential leadership styles. Some researchers have examined the relationship between the evaluation of leadership effectiveness and gender-mediated differences in leadership style. Masculine and feminine styles can be understood in terms of the content of stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. Factor-analytic studies of people's stereotypes about men and women (e.g., Broverman, Vogel, Broverman, Clarkson, & Rosenkrantz, 1972; Eagly & Steffen, 1984) have shown that popular beliefs about male and female behavior can be summarized, following Bakan (1966), in terms of differences on two dimensions: the agentic and the communal. Women are expected to display high levels of communal (social) qualities, including needs for affiliation, lack of self-centeredness, concern with others, spontaneity, playfulness, and emotional expressiveness. These qualities reflect a more social orientation, openness to experiencing stimuli, especially feelings, and a direct connection to other people. Men are expected to have high levels of agentic (instrumental) attributes, including being independent, masterful, assertive, and instrumentally competent. These qualities reflect a tendency to promote the self, especially self-confidence.

When applied to leadership, gender role stereotypes suggest that female-stereotypical forms of leadership are interpersonally oriented and collaborative, whereas male-stereotypical forms of leadership are task oriented -and dominating (see Cann & Siegfried, 1990). These findings are consistent with the reasoning that the gender role congruency of female leaders' behavior influences the degree to which they experience role conflict and violate other people's expectations about their behavior (e.g., Betz & Fitzgerald, 1987; Jago & Vroom, 1982; Nieva & Gutek, 1981; Powell, 1990; Terborg, 1977; Watson, 1988). To the extent that women exhibit a masculine style, they amplify their role conflict and increase the chances of receiving unfairly negative evaluations. Eagly and Johnson's (1990) meta-analysis showed that the tendency to devalue female leaders was larger when women behaved autocratically than when they behaved in accord with any other style.

Gender role congruency has different ramifications for the evaluation of male leaders' behaviors because male leaders do not face a basic role conflict analogous to the conflict that female leaders face in their dual status as women and leaders. Expectations about behavior that is appropriate for a leader coincide largely with beliefs about the behavior that is appropriate for men, as numerous social scientists have maintained (e.g., Bass, 1990; Eagly et al., 1992; Kruse & Wintermantel, 1986; O'Leary, 1974). Whereas the details of female leaders' behaviors may be scrutinized because of their role conflict, male leaders are not ordinarily constrained by the attitudinal bias of their coworkers. Hence, men are freer to carry out leadership in a variety of masculine or feminine styles without encountering negative reactions because their leadership is ordinarily perceived as legitimate. Assuming a generally satisfactory level of competence, a broader range of behaviors whether those behaviors are congruent or diverge from the male gender role, are more likely to be tolerated in male leaders.

In summary, because the male gender role legitimizes leadership in men, male leaders may be freer to diverge from stereotypes of masculinity. Female leaders are relatively constrained in the behaviors that will be perceived as effective because of the conflict they face as women and leaders.

### **Relationship between Coping and Emergent and Effective Leadership**

A growing body of research has addressed the personal characteristics that contribute to the emergence and effectiveness of an individual as a leader across a wide variety of situations. Impetus for this trend was provided by meta-

analyses of the early trait data (e.g., Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Lord et al., 1986; McCann, 1992). The findings of those studies indicate that, contrary to previous conclusions, certain individual characteristics, related to affective regulation, stress tolerance, and self-direction were positively associated with leadership effects in many different situations.

Recent researchers have reported positive correlations between effective leadership and a variety of individual characteristics, including internal locus of control orientation (Anderson, Hellriegel, & Slocum, 1977; Boyatzis, 1982; Goodstadt & Hjelle, 1973; Miller & Toulouse, 1986); problem-focused coping (L. E. Atwater & Yammarino, 1993; L. S. Atwater, 1992); stress tolerance (Fiedler & Garcia, 1987; Howard & Bray, 1990; McCall & Lombardo, 1983); self-confidence (Howard & Bray, 1988; Klemp & McClelland, 1987; Lombardo & McCall, 1988); and social perceptiveness and response flexibility (Ellis, 1988; Zaccaro, Foti, et al., 1991; Zaccaro, Gilbert, Thor, & Mumford, 1991).

Consistent with the recent interest in personality and leadership, we have proposed a psychological model of leadership that emphasizes the construct of *active coping* (Pratch, 1995; Pratch & Jacobowitz, 1997; Shanan, 1990). Conceptually, active coping is characteristic of a psychologically healthy personality structure. Such a structure can tolerate the tension inherent in openly perceiving internal and external events that are challenging or conflict arousing. Moreover, this structure maintains the ability to formulate and carry out strategies to resolve or transcend the challenges or conflicts it encounters. These strategies, which operate consciously and unconsciously, are designed to optimize the adaptive balance between internal psychological needs, aspirations, and morals, on the one hand, and environmental demands, regulations, and constraints, on the other. There is evidence that active coping contributes to the evaluation of small task-group leadership (Pratch, 1995; Pratch & Jacobowitz, 1998).

The model also proposes that active coping is a necessary but not sufficient determinant of effective leadership. Other characteristics, such as motivational orientation, also are required. One test of this model analyzes the differential contributions of active coping and motivation in the evaluation of male and female leaders.

Accordingly, we examined the relationships among gender, motivation, and active coping in MBA students participating in a leadership development program. This program lacked formal role guidelines, maximizing the freedom of personality factors to shape leader behaviors. In addition, the students were selected on the basis of their perceived leadership characteristics. Given those structural forces for minimizing stereotypical personality differences, we expected men and women in the program to differ little in their motives and to perform equally well as leaders. Rather, the individual's coping tendencies should be the key factor in the emergence and evaluation of his or her leadership effectiveness.

## METHOD

### *Setting and Population*

Data for this study were drawn from a larger study on personality factors influencing small task-group leadership in MBA students at the Graduate School of Business at the University of Chicago. The setting for the study was an intensive nine-month Leadership Education and Development program (LEAD), which was designed to make students take responsibility for their own education by defining, planning, and implementing a real-life task in an unstructured task group. Although supervised and graded by faculty, the program was conducted similarly to a leaderless group. The situation was deliberately fluid and undefined, leveling structural factors that might legitimate the authority of a particular individual or class of individuals. Each year, a group of approximately 50 first-year MBA students developed, planned, and carried out a leadership course required of all incoming students. Because they conducted this course, the participants were known as facilitators. Participation gave facilitators two course credits for which they did not pay.

In 1993, 118 first-year MBA students applied to be facilitators. Forty-eight students were selected by a committee composed of faculty and the current year's facilitators. The selection process involved the evaluation of applicants' essays and interviews. In particular, the selection committee considered the applicant's abilities to function as a part of a team, to lead other students, to inspire trust and motivate others, to be a good "counselor," to manage time, and to handle other commitments for the spring and fall.

The entire group of 48 students met during the spring of 1993 three times a week for three hours each session to develop and plan the fall course. They also met in smaller committees outside the large group throughout the spring and summer. During the fall, they delivered the class they had designed to the incoming students.

Regulations regarding the performance of standard duties and routine activities in LEAD were initially minimal. There were virtually no predefined roles or procedures. The students had to find on their own means of gathering and distributing information to one another, as well as procedures for decision making, planning, and problem solving. Each week a different subgroup of students had the formal responsibility to move the overall group toward its goal. However, the aim of the group was itself vague; students were asked only to design and implement an innovative class on leadership.

Because of the ambiguity and fluidity of role relationships and responsibilities in the program, an opportunity was created for leaders to emerge across a variety of different task-group situations. That is, students who were perceived to be the most effective leaders also were those who emerged as leaders in terms of informal advancement in the group. Because the emergence or success of a person as a leader frequently hinges on peer perceptions of his or her leadership effectiveness, the program provided an ideal setting for the empirical study of the effects of gender, motivation, and coping on the perception of small task-group leadership effectiveness.

### ***Participants***

The criterion for taking part in this study was that the individual had to have been a 1993 facilitator. The participants included 17 women (mean age = 26.7 years,  $SD = 3.2$  years) and 31 men (mean age = 26.4 years,  $SD = 1.8$  years). Their overall mean age was 26.7 years ( $SD = 2.4$  years, range = 23-37 years). Eighty-eight percent of the students were White, 4% were Indian, 4% were Greek, and 1%, African American. Eighty-nine percent were United States' citizens; the remaining participants were citizens of Canada, Greece, or India. Seven percent were married; one woman was married.

### ***Instruments, Measures, and Items***

#### *Predictor Variables*

Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices (APM; Raven, Court, & Raven, 1988) was used to control for the potentially confounding effects of intelligence. The APM was constructed to provide a reliable measure of intellectual efficiency that could be used with individuals of more than average intellectual capacity and that could differentiate between individuals of even superior ability. Specifically, the APM was designed to assess educative ability. The process of education involves making meaning out of a confused area of discourse, going beyond what is given to perceive that which is not immediately obvious, spawning new insights, and developing (chiefly nonverbal) constructs that facilitate the handling of complex problems involving several mutually dependent variables. These are capabilities required in managerial decision making and leadership (see Raven et al., 1988). Studies have shown that the APM is one of the best single measures of general intelligence (reviewed by Raven et al., 1988). Additional measurement information, including information on the development of the APM and a review of the empirical evaluation literature, is reported in the manual.

The Personality Research Form E (PRF-E; Jackson, 1989) is a 352-item self-report instrument designed to provide a set of scores for personality traits broadly relevant to the normal functioning of individuals in a wide variety of situations. The PRF-E contains twenty 16-item scales based on motivational constructs developed by Murray (1938), such as achievement, aggression, and play. The median reliability (K-R 20) for the 20 scales is above .91. The manual provides documentation for the convergent and discriminant validity for the 20 scales and reports extensive evidence for the internal consistency and stability of the instrument over time.

*PRF-E operations.* Twelve scales were selected to assess motivational orientations related to leadership style. The choice of scales was based on their theoretical relationship to gender-stereotyped personality characteristics. The Achievement, Aggression, Autonomy, Dominance, and Endurance scales were chosen for their ability to create a

measure of agentic orientation ( $\alpha = .68$ ). The Affiliation, Change, Impulsivity, Nurturance, Play, Sentience, and Succorance scales were considered for their ability to form a measure of communal orientation ( $\alpha = .70$ ). The use of these factors as higher order constructs related to male-female differences in motivational orientation was based on the assumption that students' self-descriptions would correspond to their actual behavior and therefore that their PRF-E profiles would be reflected in their leadership styles. This assumption is supported by the high convergent validities of the scales (alphas as high as .74).

A Sentence Completion Technique (SSCT; Shanan, 1965) was designed to assess active coping as a structural characteristic of personality functioning. It focuses on mental health rather than psychopathology, examining the individual's capacity to adapt and grow. Specifically, it assesses the respondent's capacity to deal with stress. The test itself is a stressful situation: The respondent must make a decision about what to say and commit the self to that response. Although one knows (in completing this test) that one is revealing something about oneself, the particular meaning of that statement is not clear to the respondent. Therefore, the instrument measures coping behaviors that are only semiconsciously controlled. The SSCT consists of 40 sentence stems, 10 stems making up one of four categories. Items in the first two categories elicit responses indicative of the extent to which the respondent is open to experience and capable of clearly articulating aims (Category 1) and sources of frustration and difficulties (Category 2) in terms of people, things, and events in the external environment. Items in the last two categories examine the respondent's tendency to overcome obstacles and continue to strive to achieve aims in a constructive and effective fashion (Category 3) while maintaining positive self-esteem and a gratifying sense of accomplishment (Category 4).

Responses are scored positively or negatively depending on whether the respondent indicates an active or passive orientation to the environment and self. In addition, responses are scored for the investment of psychic energy into one of three motivational categories: self; other people; and impersonal objects, activities, or both. "Self" responses are always scored negatively. "Object" responses are generally scored positively unless they refer to the gratification of primary biological or narcissistic needs (e.g., references to food or money). Person responses also are generally scored positively unless they indicate excessive dependency needs. Theoretically, the differentiation between self (S), objects (O), and persons (P) reflects major aspects of the respondent's motivational hierarchy. One is expected to view persons and impersonal objects as primary valences in the personal field and to organize constructive activity in reference to them. Although some investment in the self is expected among "normal" individuals, exaggerated investment in the self can be expected to leave little energy for coping constructively. Another category of scores involves the number of "rejections" of items. Rejections are scored when responses are not articulated (i.e., when they are absent or vague). There are three types of rejections. Rejection 1 is scored when the respondent does not answer a sentence stem; there is a breakdown of coping with this item. Rejection 2 is scored when the respondent avoids revealing anything about the self; this is essentially a rejection of the question itself. Finally, Rejection 3 is scored when the respondent reveals something about himself or herself but the statement is vague or ambiguous; one does not know exactly what he or she meant. The Final Score reflects adjustments for defensive behaviors and for signs of pathology. High scores are indicative of the respondent's global ability to respond adaptively to stress and to grow; low scores signify excessive reactivity to or dependence on internal impulses or drives and the environment.

The SSCT has been in use for 30 years for a variety of research and applied tasks, such as the selection of medical school students (Jacobowitz, 1976) and research on adult development (Jacobowitz, 1984; Shanan, 1985). Interjudge reliabilities range from .8 to .9, and test-retest reliabilities (over a year) range from .6 to .8. Predictive and construct validity have been demonstrated in a wide variety of settings (reviewed by Shanan, 1990). Previously, we used the SSCT to assess active coping (Pratch, 1995; Pratch & Jacobowitz, in press-b).

*SSCT operations.* Answers elicited by items in the first two item categories reflect the extent to which the respondent manifests the tendency to identify, openly and clearly, aims and sources of conflict in the perceptual field. The last two categories assess the respondent's readiness to surmount difficulties and to achieve personal aims autonomously, constructively, and successfully. Responses in Categories 1 and 2 are scored as positive or negative according to whether they are focused internally or externally and in terms of whether they are articulated clearly. Category 3 is scored as positive for adaptive, outwardly focused, and autonomous coping responses. Category 4 statements that reveal positive feelings about the self or self-esteem are scored positively. Items in Categories 1 and 2 also are scored P+ (or P-), O+ (or O-), or S- to reflect the respondent's motivational priorities.

The first author scored the SSCTs without knowing any respondent information. Interrater reliability for the categories on 20 tests selected randomly from the entire sample and scored by the second author, who also did not know any respondent information, without discussing scores with the first author was .9.

### ***Criterion Variables***

The facilitators were asked to evaluate every other facilitator's leadership behavior during LEAD. The evaluations were made at the end of the program but before grades were distributed. Because there were 48 facilitators, the ratings yielded 47 sets of scores for each participant. Two scales were combined to provide an aggregate measure of leadership effectiveness: Leadership Competence and Overall Leadership Effectiveness. The Leadership Competence scale had the following ratings: 1 = incompetent (has failed on many occasions to perform satisfactorily), 2 = doubtful, 3 = adequate but not outstanding, 4 = very competent and 5 = extremely competent (could always be counted on to do a superior job). The Overall Leadership Effectiveness scale had ratings ranging from 1 (very poor) to 7 (outstandingly effective). The facilitators were asked to consider everything a facilitator was expected to do (e.g., working with other facilitators to develop and implement LEAD, getting along with corporate sponsors, getting along with faculty and peers, etc.) and to assess every other facilitator on his or her overall effectiveness as a leader. To ensure reliability, the 48 facilitators met as a group with one of us before assigning ratings. The scales were discussed and specific operational definitions of scale items were generated and agreed on.

The mean Leadership Competence scale score was 3.14 ( $SD = 0.48$ ). The mean Overall Leadership Effectiveness scale score was 3.97 ( $SD = 0.61$ ). Although scaled differently, a 5-point scale is basically a ratio of a 7-point scale. In addition, in this sample, the standard deviation of the 5-point scale also was a multiple of the 7-point scale. Thus, the scales were proportional, indicating that the two scales could be added together without losing information.

Moreover, the correlation between the scales was .94. We therefore added the facilitators' scores on the two scales together to produce a broad, final measure of leadership effectiveness. This measure had a potential range of 2-12 and an actual range of 4.38-9.63 ( $M = 7.1$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ). For each participant, the standard deviation on this measure ranged from 0.2 to 1.12<sup>1</sup>.

Note that the only criterion of leadership in this study was an individual's leadership effectiveness as judged by other group members. It was not possible to gather an objective performance measure because of the unstructured nature of the setting. The term *leadership* as used here refers only to an individual's perceived leadership as measured by sociometric selection.

Even task groups made up of individuals who are originally strangers to each other soon take on a social structure. This certainly was the case in LEAD. Initially, most of the students were unacquainted with each other. Thus, status for a given student did not depend on that person's past accomplishments. Moreover, because the task to be accomplished did not require exceptional skills or specialized knowledge, status did not depend primarily on intellectual ability or training. In these conditions, an individual's leadership, as viewed by other group members, must be determined by the person's behavior in that group. In turn, we assumed that individual behavior in that particular group must be a function of the individual's personality, particularly his or her coping style and motivational orientation.

### ***Procedures***

The purpose of the study was explained to the entire group of facilitators in the first spring meeting. It was described as examining the relation between personality and leadership. Students were asked to complete a set of psychological assessment instruments the first two weeks of the program and to evaluate each other on leadership at the beginning of the fall. Participation was voluntary in return for individual feedback on the personality measures after the

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<sup>1</sup> To assess the validity of combining the two scales, we normalized the scales using a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1 before summing the scores. The correlation between the new composite measure and the original composite was .99. Thus, combining the two scales did not affect validity in this sample. (However, in other samples, the standard deviations might be different and the scales might not be proportional.)

data were collected. During the first session, students were given 40 minutes to complete the APM following standard group-administration procedures. They returned another day to complete the PRF-E and the SSCT. There was no time limit on the latter measures. The serious nature of the study and the importance of being careful in completing the tests were impressed on the students. Three students did not satisfactorily complete the PRF-E and the SSCT, thus reducing the sample size on those measures.

The measures of leadership were obtained the last week of the program but before grades were distributed. The 48 facilitators evaluated every other facilitator on his or her performance during the program. Raters were told that their ratings would be used to examine the relationship between perceptions of leader behavior and measures of personality. Students were assured confidentiality.

The data were analyzed for the significance of the correlations between the measures of personality and leadership. An analysis of variance was used to compare the male and female facilitators on the measures of coping and motivation.

## RESULTS

Table 1 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations with leadership effectiveness for intelligence, motivation, and coping by gender. Table 2 shows the means, standard deviations, and correlations with leadership for each of these personality measures for men and women combined. There were no differences greater than .01 in the variances between the male and female groups. Therefore, Table 1 shows the significance level of the F ratios for the male-female comparison on each variable. The power of each of the measures to detect medium effect sizes with an alpha of .05 was less than .30 because of the small sample size. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical tests (all one-tailed).

### *Evaluation of Male and Female Leadership Effectiveness*

To ascertain whether male and female leaders were evaluated differently, the men's and women's average ratings on leadership were compared. As reported in Table 1, female leaders ( $M = 7.20$ ,  $SD = 1.32$ ) were perceived as being slightly more effective on average than their male counterparts ( $M = 7.05$ ,  $SD = 0.95$ ), but the difference was not statistically significant. The same effect occurred when the ratings of leadership as perceived separately by the gender of the perceivers were examined. Thus, female leaders were evaluated only marginally more favorably than male leaders, and men did not tend to perceive female leaders less favorably than men perceived female leaders.

### *Intelligence, Gender, and Leadership*

A similar pattern was found on the APM, with women ( $M = 27.41$ ,  $SD = 3.86$ ) obtaining slightly but not significantly higher scores than men ( $M = 26.6$ ,  $SD = 4.68$ ). The means and standard deviations of the men's and women's scores, reported in Table 1, suggest that if the scores were divided into low, medium, and high ranges, a greater proportion of men would fall in the low range and a greater proportion of women would fall in the high range. However, a 3 x 3 chi-square analysis did not reveal significant differences in the distribution. There was no relationship between the APM and leadership.

### *Gender, Motivational Orientation, and the Evaluation of Leadership*

An examination of Table 1 shows significant gender differences in the facilitators' motives and values. Men scored significantly higher on the agentic variable than did women,  $t(43) = -3.54$ ,  $p = .001$ , whereas women scored significantly higher on the communal variable than did men,  $t(43) = 2.94$ ,  $p = .005$ . Thus, men tended to describe

themselves as having more agentic qualities (i.e., stereotypically masculine attributes) than women, whereas women tended to describe themselves as having more communal tendencies (i.e., stereotypically feminine attributes) than men.

**TABLE 1**  
**MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND CORRELATIONS WITH LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS (LE) IN MEASURES OF INTELLIGENCE, MOTIVATION, AND ACTIVE COPING BY GENDER**

<i>Measures and Variables</i>	<i>Women</i>				<i>Men</i>				<i>p</i> <sup>a</sup>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i> <sub>X,LE</sub>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i> <sub>X,LE</sub>	
Leadership effectiveness	7.2	1.32	17	1	7.05	0.95	31	1	ns
Raven APM	27.41	3.86	17	0.17	26.60	4.68	31	-0.19	ns
PRF-E									
Agentic orientation	9.32	1.71	17	-0.49*	11.04	1.51	28	0.17	***
Communal orientation	10.36	1.72	17	0.32	8.93	1.61	28	0.14	***
SSCT									
Investment in people	5.53	2.37	17	0.25	5.46	2.33	28	0.09	ns
Investment in things	4.59	2.27	17	0.45†	5.00	2.47	28	-0.01	ns
Category									
1	5.47	1.62	17	0.17	5.29	1.51	28	0.05	ns
2	4.76	1.64	17	0.72**	5.25	1.94	28	0.23	ns
3	6.24	2.54	17	0.24	6.36	1.99	28	-0.17	ns
4	5.41	3.41	17	0.53**	6.46	2.06	28	-0.12	ns
Rejection									
1	0.12	0.33	17	-0.06	0.39	1.2	28	-0.22	ns
2	0.71	0.85	17	-0.04	1.12	1.17	28	-0.31	ns
3	2.41	2.27	17	-0.61**	3.04	1.89	28	-0.23	ns
Final score	3.59	1.33	17	0.55*	3.32	1.31	28	0.38*	ns

*Note:* LE = Leadership Effectiveness; APM = Advanced Progressive Matrices; PRF-E = Personality Research Form E; SSCT = Shanin Sentence Completion Technique

<sup>a</sup> *F* statistics are for mean difference between men and women, not between the correlations from the two subsamples

†  $p < .10$ .

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

To examine the relationships among communal and agentic orientations, the evaluation of leadership, and gender, we conducted three analyses. First, we studied the correlations between the measure of leadership and motivation for the entire sample and separately by gender. As shown in Table 2, there were no significant correlations between leadership and motivation for the entire sample. When examined by gender, however, a differential pattern of correlations emerged. Table 1 shows a negative and significant correlation between leadership and the agentic variable for women ( $r = -.49, p < .05$ ). The correlation between leadership and the communal variable was not significant for women. Neither the agentic nor the communal variable was correlated with leadership for men.

**TABLE 2**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND CORRELATIONS WITH LEADERSHIP EFFECTIVENESS (LE) ON MEASURES OF INTELLIGENCE, MOTIVATION, AND ACTIVE COPING FOR ALL LEAD PARTICIPANTS**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>R</i>
Leadership Effectiveness	7.11	1.08	48	1
Raven APM	26.89	4.38	48	0.04
PRF-E				
Agentic orientation	10.39	1.78	45	0.16
Communal orientation	9.51	1.79	45	0.22
SSCT				
Investment in people	5.28	7.99	45	0.19
Investment in objects	5.78	1.83	45	0.21
Category				
1	5.36	1.54	45	0.11
2	5.07	1.83	45	0.40
3	6.31	2.18	45	0.04
4	6.07	2.67	45	0.23
Rejection				
1	0.29	0.97	45	0.17
2	5.41	8.71	45	0.12
3	2.80	2.03	45	-0.42
Final Score	3.42	1.31	45	0.48**

\*\* $p < .01$

### ***Coping, Gender, and the Evaluation of Leadership Effectiveness***

Inspection of Tables 1 and 2 reveals that the key variables for explaining the evaluation of leadership are the dimensions of coping measured with the SSCT. The Final Score, which reflects adjustments for defensive behaviors and signs of psychopathology, was significantly correlated with leadership for the entire sample ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ) and for men and women separately (women,  $r = .55, p < .05$ ; men,  $r = .38, p < .05$ ). A high Final Score indicates the individual's overall ability to respond adaptively to stress and to grow. Thus, the individuals identified as the most effective leaders also were the most active copers.

Table 1 shows a differential pattern of correlations among gender, some coping tendencies, and leadership. Category 2, a measure of the readiness to articulate clearly sources of frustration and difficulties in terms of people, things, and events in the external environment was positively and significantly correlated with leadership effectiveness for women but not men ( $r = .72, p < .01$ ). Rejection 3, a measure of defensive vagueness and ambiguity, was negatively and significantly correlated with leadership effectiveness for women but not men ( $r = -.61, p < .01$ ). Category 4, a measure of self-confidence and self-esteem, was significantly correlated with leadership for women but not men ( $r = .53, p < .05$ ). Finally, O+, for investment in events and things outside the self, was marginally correlated with leadership for women but not men ( $r = .45, p < .1$ ).

In summary, active coping, as reflected in the Final Score, was correlated with leadership effectiveness for both men and women. There were differences, however, in the specific components of coping and leadership effectiveness for men and women. For men, only the Final Score was related to leadership effectiveness. For women, the ability to identify and face difficulties openly (Category 2 and Rejection 3) in a confident manner (Category 4) was related to leadership effectiveness. Moreover, women exhibited a greater ability than men to be open to the perception of frustrations and difficulties and to articulate clearly both positive and negative motivations rather than deny or defensively avoid coping with demanding or conflict-arousing circumstances.

## DISCUSSION

### *Overall Evaluation of Leadership*

Consistent with the findings of most organizational studies, the difference in the evaluation of male and female leaders was negligible. Indeed, women tended to be judged as being slightly more effective leaders overall by both genders. Thus, in a naturalistic setting in which social class and level of education were controlled, female leadership was considered as effective overall as male leadership. Despite controlling for social class and education, men and women still showed significant differences in stereotypically gender-linked motives and values. This finding is important because reviewers frequently dismiss positive findings as being attributable to the failure of researchers to control for social class and education.

### *Motivational Orientation and Leader Evaluation*

Despite their similarity on the measures of intelligence and leadership effectiveness, the men and women in this study still showed significant differences in their motivational orientation that resembled stereotypically gender-linked characteristics. One might have expected stereotypical gender differences to be less pronounced in this group of MBA students because the criteria used to select such students and the forces for socializing them into their roles might level tendencies for gender-differentiated behavior. Presumably, male and female MBA students are selected for managerial roles (and select themselves for these roles) according to the same set of role-relevant criteria. Within that population, the facilitators constituted an even more limited pool of University of Chicago students, selected for their perceived leadership characteristics. Moreover, business schools tend to train men and women to accept the values and standards of a historically male-dominated corporate culture. The male and female facilitators might have met a threshold level of traditionally masculine motives and values.

Added to these selection and socialization factors is the fact that the facilitators were graded for their contribution to the program. Men and women alike therefore were probably more concerned about their performance effectiveness than fulfilling gender-differentiated features of societal gender roles. These assumptions about socialization in business school and selection for the facilitator role suggest that the men and women in this study should have differed little in their motives and values.

Despite these forces for minimizing personality differences, we still found traditional gender differences in motivation. This led us to consider the perspectives implying that men and women could reasonably be expected to have differed to some extent in their motives and values. One such perspective recognizes the possibility of men's and women's distinctive, biologically wired-in patterns of maturation. Eagly and Johnson (1990) argued that organizational selection and socialization may not entirely eliminate ingrained gender differences in personality characteristics or behavioral tendencies. Biological sex differences and sex-differentiated life experiences may cause male and female managers to be different kinds of people even if they occupy the same role. Research on children's play groups indicates that even at an early age, boys and girls show markedly different styles in social interactions (for a review, see Maccoby, 1985). This research provides evidence supporting an agentic-communal distinction such as the one proposed by Bakan (1966), but at a pre-adult phase of development. These differences appear early in childhood and are persistent. Men and women may enter business school with different sets of skills. To the extent that these differences reflect gender differences that are not eradicated by selection or socialization for management, it is not surprising that men and women would exhibit different patterns of motivation even if they were selected for the same role.

Whatever their source, these gender differences appear to play a crucial mediating role in shaping the evaluation of particular male and female leaders. Women who expressed strong agentic orientations (i.e., those who led in a masculine manner) were negatively perceived as leaders. Exhibiting a communal orientation (i.e., leading in a feminine manner) did not create a disadvantage for men relative to women. These findings are consistent with the assumptions that whereas feminine styles ameliorate role conflict for female leaders, adopting feminine styles does not compromise male leaders' success. It appears that, all other factors being equal, men may have more latitude than women to lead in a

variety of masculine and feminine styles without consequence for how they are evaluated. The similarity of men and women on leadership, intelligence, social class, and education makes the gender difference in motivation and the differential evaluation of male and female leaders possessing agentic orientations particularly compelling.

When applied to leadership, the communal and agentic orientations suggest that female leaders were more interpersonally-oriented and collaborative in their leadership styles, whereas male leaders were more task-oriented and dominating. These gender-linked aspects of leadership style mirror Bales' (1950) classic distinction between socioemotional leaders and task leaders as well as the distinction between task-oriented and interpersonally-oriented aspects of leadership that were emphasized in the Ohio State studies (e.g., Hemphill & Coons, 1957; Stogdill, 1963; Stogdill & Shartle, 1955). In the research, task orientation, labeled *initiation of structure*, included leader behaviors such as having subordinates follow rules and procedures, maintaining high standards for performance, and making leader and follower roles explicit. Interpersonal orientation, labeled *consideration*, included leader behaviors such as helping and doing favors for subordinates, looking out for their welfare, explaining procedures, and being friendly and available. Task and interpersonal styles of leadership are not incompatible, and most researchers treat them as separate, relatively orthogonal dimensions.

Our findings suggest that women tend to be negatively evaluated when they exhibit more autocratic, directive leadership styles. Research indicates that women, if they are to be regarded as effective leaders, are expected to disprove or overcome a negative bias rooted in the belief that the attributes associated with the female gender role are discordant with those associated with being a leader. Eagly et al. (1992) proposed a social psychological explanation that might account for both the manifest gender differences and the devaluation of agentic women. They suggested that an attitudinal bias might manifest as disapproval directed at women who lead in an autocratic and directive manner. Disapproval would discourage the tendency to behave *autocratically* and discourage subordinates from participating in decision making and reinforce the tendency to behave *democratically* and allow subordinates to participate in decision making. By proceeding in a participative and collaborative mode in accomplishing managerial tasks, female managers may foster acceptance from initially skeptical subordinates, thereby removing one barrier to effectiveness.

An additional factor that might have influenced the devaluation of agentic women is the unstructured nature of the setting. In contrast to the majority of leadership studies, which have been performed in organizations, the current study was carried out in a setting in which the constraints of organizational roles were generally minimal or absent. Because the faculty did not provide clear guidelines about the conduct of behavior, there was considerable ambiguity about how students should behave, and facilitators might have reacted in terms of global and readily observable attributes of themselves and other facilitators (e.g., sex, age, race, and general physical appearance). In situations of this type, gender roles, which are rules about how one should behave as male or female, may provide more guidance than they otherwise would and thus produce a bias against gender-discrepant behavior.

This asymmetry in reactions to women's and men's motivational orientations resembles Ridgeway's (1982) findings on conformity and status attainment in small groups. Ridgeway found that friendly, cooperative, interpersonally oriented behavior enhanced women's status and their influence over other group members but had little or no impact on men's status and influence. According to Ridgeway, this stereotypically feminine behavior served to demonstrate women's group-oriented motivation and their lack of self-oriented motivation in a potential leadership situation. This proof of acceptable motivation was evidently a prerequisite for effective leadership by women. Men, by contrast, were not suspected of having self-aggrandizing motives and were not required to prove their group-oriented motivation because group members perceived them as having an inherent right to lead. From Ridgeway's perspective, the ability of feminine leadership styles to ameliorate female leaders' potential role conflict may stem from the specific meaning these styles convey. This meaning could be that a leader is concerned about the success of the group, not about enhancing personal power and status.

### ***Task Orientation Associated With Effective Leadership for Women***

The assumption that leaders from whatever gender would have to demonstrate task competency to be perceived as effective leaders was supported by our findings. For men and women alike, an active coping style was significantly correlated with leadership. Nevertheless, certain gender differences in coping style and leadership were

found. For one, evaluations of leadership were positively and significantly correlated with the SSCT Category 2 scores, identifying sources of difficulty, for women but not men. Moreover, the correlation between leadership effectiveness and the tendency to be invested in impersonal objects and activities was marginally significant for women but not men.

It appears that female leaders might have been evaluated according to criteria that were not used to judge male leaders' behaviors. The most effective female leaders appeared to be focused on technical problems and difficulties in the external world. This finding is consistent with previous research reporting that female leaders' behaviors are viewed as being more task oriented than men's equivalent behaviors (Eagly et al., 1992). Whereas the finding that women showed more communal qualities may reflect gender role stereotypes in general, the finding that effective female leaders were especially concerned with technical tasks may reflect a more complex theory about women having to perform extremely well to succeed as managers. In support of this idea, past studies have indicated that effective female leaders are expected to exhibit higher levels of both the interpersonally oriented and the task-oriented aspects of leadership (i.e., greater consideration and initiation of structure; e.g., Russell et al., 1988; Statham, 1987).

The constraints on women's leadership style raise an important issue: Are women evaluated less favorably than men when performing leadership or managerial behaviors even though women's and men's behaviors are objectively equivalent? If individuals are biased to evaluate female leaders' efforts less favorably than male leaders' equivalent efforts, women who aspire to leadership roles would encounter serious barriers to entering these roles and advancing to higher levels within an organization. To the extent that our findings can be generalized to organizational settings, they suggest that female managers may be victims of unfair evaluations. As women enter male-dominated leadership roles, in organizations in which autocratic styles are common, they may encounter significant bias given the evidence of selective devaluation in our study and others.

Eagly et al. (1992) suggested that women wishing to advance in organizations and be treated fairly may try to avoid the behaviors and situations that elicit prejudicial evaluations. They argued that avoidance of autocratic, directive styles, which elicit the devaluation of female leaders, requires that women in leadership roles adopt more democratic, participative styles than men in these roles. To the extent that women avoid male-dominated leadership roles or favor an autocratic and directive style, the selective devaluation phenomena demonstrated in our study would serve to preserve the traditional division of labor and discourage women from seeking or attaining positions of leadership. Our findings indicate that female leaders capable of overcoming the limitations on leadership style must be more self-confident, task-focused and open to the perception of frustration and difficulty than their male counterparts.

### ***Toward a General Model of Leadership***

We have proposed that active coping (Pratch & Jacobowitz, 1997) is a necessary but not sufficient determinant of effective leadership; other characteristics, such as the leader's motivational orientation and specific knowledge, skills, and abilities, also are required. We argue that the utility of the latter set of characteristics will depend on the situation but that the underlying stability and openness to change linked to active coping is always necessary for a leader to be effective.

Our findings support the validity of this set of ideas. The strength of the findings cannot be explained by different levels of intelligence. This observation is important because high correlations between managerial performance and general intelligence have been reported across all levels of managerial functioning (reviewed by Bass, 1990). The fact that active coping predicted leadership in an elite sample, selected for intelligence as well as other personality attributes associated with leadership potential, demonstrates the value added by examining the active coping tendencies of individuals in line for leadership jobs.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Using a task group working over a considerable period of time on a meaningful task that determined important consequences, we demonstrated that active coping is associated with the emergence and evaluation of an individual as a

leader regardless of gender. We also found a differential pattern of relationships among gender, motivation, and the evaluation of leadership. In contrast to many other studies examining gender effects in leadership, in this study we did not use paper-and-pencil stimulus subjects in artificial situations. The naturalistic setting, the uncontrived nature of the group and its task, the importance of performance for the grade, the extensive contact among the group members, and the measure of leadership in terms of peer ratings all provided a realistic context for the study.

Because of the deliberately fluid and unstructured nature of the program, we could not consider the extent to which features of the group or environment might have influenced students' perceptions of the effectiveness of leaders or the behaviors or styles that would be more effective. In addition, because there was no way to ensure that male and female leaders having strong agentic orientations would display equivalent behaviors in this setting, differences in the evaluation of male and female leaders could have been due to genuine differences in their behavior as well as to perceivers' gender bias. Furthermore, whether leaders are more effective as a result of their differing motivations or styles, and the ways in which gender interacts with these factors, are questions that can be addressed only by taking measures of group outcomes into account along with measures of perceived leadership effectiveness.

Replication of this study using groups with different demographic characteristics, in different geographical regions, or in different cultures might reveal differences in leadership emergence. Future research on emergent leadership in small task groups in organizations and including measures of other potential explanatory variables is warranted by the strength of the findings.

To be an effective leader, it is important to be able to strike an appropriate balance between assertiveness and cooperation. Ideally, both male and female leaders will choose their actions sensibly and flexibly depending on the situations they confront. Expressive, relationship-oriented behaviors such as consideration of others, playfulness, and emotional expressiveness are traditionally feminine characteristics that contribute to high morale and cohesiveness in small task groups. Our findings suggest that men and women alike expect women to serve these functions in the workplace. Independence, decisiveness, and ambition also are requisites of effective leadership. Yet, it appears that women are not allowed to display these qualities if they are to succeed as leaders. Given the conflicts, impediments, and disadvantageous stereotypes imposed on female leadership style, it is not surprising that women have to be stronger copers than men to establish legitimacy and credibility as leaders within a small group.

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