

# International Leadership Journal

Summer 2019  
VOLUME 11, ISSUE 2

*A refereed, online journal  
published thrice yearly by TST, Inc.*

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# ***International Leadership Journal***

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## **From the Editor**

June 2019

Welcome to the 33<sup>rd</sup> issue of the *International Leadership Journal*, an online, peer-reviewed journal. With this issue, we have taken *ILJ* to the next level with a new publisher and a re-invigorated editorial advisory board. However, I am still the editor, and Tara M. Strickland remains as technical editor and advisor. Kara L. Santora joins us as managing editor. *ILJ* is listed in Cabell's Whitelist under the new publisher and is also working to be listed in Scopus. I hope you'll be pleased with our new dedicated website (a work in progress!) at <http://internationalleadershipjournal.com> and look forward to your submissions as we move forward.

This issue contains five articles. In the first article, Sims, Carter, Gong, and Hughes explore the authentic leadership (AL) framework within small businesses to determine whether owners were authentic leaders who elicited enhanced job satisfaction and performance in their associates. Using three leader models—all genders, women only, and men only—their findings revealed that for the all genders and women-only leader models, AL led to greater job satisfaction; job satisfaction did not mediate AL and performance; and leader gender moderated AL.

Andert, Alexakis, and Preziosi present a multi-generation leadership model that uses a systems theory lens to view the evolving leadership models from the traditionalists to the millennials in North America. It offers a broad temporal view and discusses the extent to which significant contemporary national and global events acted as variables that gained or lost critical mass in each respective generation. Based on the generational differences, the authors offer recommendations with regard to leadership development, talent management, and human resource practices in the new era and future foci for generational leadership research.

Howard and Halkias's integrative literature review offers insight into the leadership practices of women entrepreneurs and the implications of these practices for enterprise longevity five years after startup. It provides a targeted knowledge base that can be used to support further research and help advance the potential of women leaders.

In the fourth article, Moore and Snider explore the idea that one's learning style may affect his or her emotional intelligence (EI), the importance of which continues to increase in academia and business organizations alike. Their exploratory research reveals that a significant difference exists in the total EI scores of certain categories of learning styles.

Finally, Averin presents quantitative research that addresses whether followers' commitment to leaders differs between the American and Chinese cultures—two groups that can be characterized by collectivist or individualist norms. While his tested hypothesis was supported, the findings were somewhat surprising, opening a door for further research.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our previous and newly appointed editorial advisory board members for their dedication and service, and we ask that you get the word out about *ILJ* to interested academics and practitioners, who can write directly to me at [jcsantora1@gmail.com](mailto:jcsantora1@gmail.com).

Joseph C. Santora, EdD  
Editor

## ARTICLES

### Gender, Identity, and the Authentic Leadership of Small Businesses\*

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Claretha Hughes  
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The authentic leadership (AL) framework was explored within small businesses to determine whether owners were authentic leaders who elicited enhanced job satisfaction and performance in their associates. Gender identity and work-role identity were mediators between AL and job satisfaction, and owner gender was a moderator of the AL framework. A total of 155 owners and associates from 63 small businesses in three U.S. states were studied. Using structural equation modeling, three leader models were developed—all genders, women only, and men only, and included the owner(s) and their associate(s). The findings revealed that for the all genders and women-only models, AL led to greater job satisfaction; job satisfaction did not mediate AL and performance; and leader gender moderated AL. For the men-only model, gender identity and work role identity mediated AL and job satisfaction. The results are discussed relative to gender, identity, and AL.

**Key words:** authentic leadership, gender, identity, small business owners, work role

Entrepreneurship and small firm creation in the United States are vital to the American economy, largely seen as signs of innovation and a dynamic economy (Orhan & Scott, 2001). Continually evolving are the owners themselves, as about 40 percent of small firms are owned by women (American Express OPEN, 2018). Women continued to establish U.S. businesses at unprecedented rates (American Express OPEN, 2018) between 2007 and 2018, women-owned businesses increased at almost five times the national average, or 58%. Yet, little is known about leadership by women at the helm of small businesses. Even less is known about the authentic leadership practice of women entrepreneurs. *Authentic leaders* perceive themselves and are perceived by others as being

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\*Sims, C. M., Carter, A. D., Gong, T., & Hughes, C. (2019). Gender, identity, and the authentic leadership of small businesses. *International Leadership Journal*, 11(2), 3–31.

deeply self-aware of their capabilities, values, and environment; moreover, such leaders are positive, trusting, hopeful, optimistic and strong of moral character (Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, & May, 2004). Researchers have argued that starting a new venture in itself may be considered an act of authenticity (Hmieleski, Cole, & Baron, 2012; McMullen, Bagby, & Palich, 2008). Business enactment is a means by which the owner individual can align their values and beliefs (Cooper & Artz, 1995). Available theory and research propose that female leaders, in particular, may be challenged to define leadership on their own terms for themselves and their businesses (Eagly, 2005; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Koenig, Mitchell, Eagly, & Ristikar, 2011).

Business ownership and entrepreneurship are how society develops services and products from information and produces innovation that changes goods and services (Vecchio, 2003). Small businesses are created to further the personal goals of the owners (de Oliveira, Escrivao, Bagabi, Ferraudo, & Rosim, 2015). These businesses are the owners' primary sources of income and dominate their time and resources (Carland, Hoy, Boulton, & Carland, 1984). As female business ownership expands and female employees increase in number, there is a need to explore how female owners lead their businesses and, subsequently, how employees of female business owners respond to such leadership (Harrison, Leitch, & McAdam, 2015; Lewis, 2015). Authentic leadership (AL) is one approach female business owners may be able to use to stay true to themselves and align their values, goals, talents, and family needs (Jensen & Luthans, 2006b; Liu, Cutcher, & Grant, 2015; Sims, Gong, & Hughes, 2017; Sims & Morris, 2018).

In response to modern leadership crises came a call for authentic leaders who could serve and improve the lives of others (George, 2003). AL ensures that organizations have leaders who are true to themselves, act with personal integrity, support positive personal growth, and foster ethical business climates (Walumbwa, Avolio, Gardner, Wernsing, & Peterson, 2008). In addition to being self-aware, an authentic leader regulates his or her behavior through *balanced processing*, wherein a leader strives to collect a balanced set of perspectives and

information; *relational transparency*, in which a leader is transparent in his or her interactions and intents; and *internalized moral perspective*, wherein a leader behaves in a manner that is consistent with his or her moral beliefs (Walumbwa et al., 2008).

AL is not just a self-managed process, but also a dynamic process between leader and followers. Authentic leaders influence followers' attitudes and behaviors through key psychological processes such as identification (Avolio et al., 2004). Followers' beliefs about a leader become so self-defining that followers come to identify with the leader and their organization. Identification is theorized as one of the mediating mechanisms that enables AL to produce attitudinal and behavioral follower outcomes (Avolio et al., 2004).

Research has shown that AL behaviors may produce different outcomes in female and male followers (Jensen & Luthans, 2006a; Woolley, Caza, & Levy, 2010). One explanation for these gender differences is relational authenticity, which is a boundary condition of AL (Eagly, 2005; Kernis, 2003). Eagly (2005) and Kernis (2003) propose that organizations' members must be willing to support a leader's values and that if followers do not find that a leader occupies a role congruent with his or her gender, they may perceive that leader as less authentic. Jensen and Luthans (2006a) ask that future studies further the understanding of the mechanisms behind the gender differences in the AL framework.

As such, this study extends Jensen and Luthans (2006a) research, which advocated the use of AL theory to study female small business owners' leadership processes; examined whether business owner gender moderated the AL framework; and determined if business owners were able to reap the organizational benefits from AL as theorized by Avolio et al. (2004). This study adds to the extant literature by examining aspects of Avolio et al.'s (2004) framework including moderators, outcomes, and mediators, and provides insight into the development of AL in theory and practice. Finally, this article explores a single research question, which asks: Is the AL framework enacted differently by female and male business owners? Thus, the aim is to expand our knowledge of

the applicability of AL to small businesses led by women and men as we advance several hypotheses.

### **Authenticity and Authentic Leadership**

When one is authentic, one owns her or his personal experiences through knowing oneself and in acting and expressing oneself consistent with the true self (Avolio et al., 2004). As one grows and develops over time, each individual's level of authenticity increases along the continuum from inauthenticity to authenticity (Gardner, Avolio, Luthans, May, & Walumbwa, 2005). The extent to which a small business owner is less or more true to their personal values and beliefs in the enactment of their business may be a manifestation of their relative levels of authenticity (Gardner et al., 2005). Authenticity is at the core of AL and emerges from the framework of positive organizational behavior and psychology (May, Hodges, Chan, & Avolio, 2003). The positive organizational behaviors of confidence, hope, optimism, and resilience are useful for improving performance of leaders and associates in the workplace (Luthans, 2002).

A limited number of empirical studies have examined AL and business ownership (Hmieleski et al., 2012; Jensen & Luthans, 2006a, 2006b; Jones & Crompton, 2009; Sims et al., 2017). These studies sought to determine the relationship of AL relative to the psychological capital of leaders and positive emotional states (Jensen & Luthans, 2006a, 2006b). Other studies (Abid, Altaf, Yousaf, & Bagram, 2012; Hmieleski et al., 2012, Jones & Crompton, 2009) focused on the resulting attitudes and behaviors that followers of authentic leaders would demonstrate.

### **Linking AL to Followers' Attitudes and Behaviors**

Authentic leaders influence followers' attitudes and behaviors through the key psychological processes of identification, hope, trust, positive emotions, and optimism (Avolio et al., 2004). Followers take their cues from authentic leaders who lead by example, demonstrate transparent decision making, and show work commitment (Avolio & Gardner, 2005), and are provided guidance on how to behave, remain emotionally and physically connected, and remain cognitively

vigilant during work performance (Wang, Sui, Luthans, Wang, & Wu, 2012). Furthermore, authentic leadership is suggested to result in followers' positive outcomes because it is able to foster followers' positive psychological capacities along with commitment, job satisfaction, meaningfulness, and task engagement.

Follower work attitudes affect follower behaviors (Avolio et al., 2004; Gardner & Schermerhorn, 2004), including job performance, extra effort, and withdrawal behaviors (e.g., turnover, tardiness, and absenteeism). Ultimately, AL provides a foundation for sustaining and enhancing organizational performance (Avolio et al., 2004). Relative to AL and job behavior, the consensus view is that AL leads to greater job satisfaction and performance (Abid et al., 2012; Giallonardo, Wong, Iwasiw, 2010; Rahimnia & Sharifirad, 2015; Sims, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2008; Wong & Laschinger, 2013) and group job performance (Leroy, Palanski, Simons, 2012). Hence, based upon the AL framework, it is reasonable to propose that the higher the owners' level of AL is, the greater their associates' job satisfaction will be (Hypothesis 1).

### **Identification Within the AL Framework**

Within the AL framework, identification mediates the relationship between AL and job outcomes (Avolio et al., 2004). Part of the mechanism is that a leader stimulates identification within his or her followers and over time, followers come to adopt the leader's values within their self-concepts (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio et al., 2004). Relatedly, followers come to personally identify with a leader and socially identify with the organization (Avolio et al., 2004). Once identification is complete, a leader needs to sustain this relationship to achieve positive outcomes (Avolio et al., 2004). Ilies, Morgeson, and Craig (2005) propose that AL and identification is a function of the relative level of similarity between leader and associate values; the more congruent or similar the values, the stronger the amount of identification.

Leaders influence followers by serving as role models of self-awareness and regulatory behavior; the positive emotions a leader espouses become contagious to their associates and thus increase associates' identification with the leader and the associates' development, and the positive social exchanges that occur



among leaders and followers (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Over time, followers become self-aware and regulate their personal goals, behaviors, and achievements to reflect those of their leader (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). In brief, AL is a dynamic process of mutual authentic exchanges and development between leader and followers that stimulates the identification processes (Avolio & Gardner, 2005; Avolio et al., 2004).

A complementary model of AL, eudaemonic well-being, also focuses on personal and organization identification, positive emotions contagion, positive behavioral modeling, support of self-determination, and positive social exchanges (Ilies et al., 2005). The *eudaemonic well-being theory* provides additional theoretical support on the role of identification in influencing associates and how identification is a function of the strength of value congruence—the more similar the leader's and associates' values, the stronger the identification (Ilies et al., 2005).

AL is a process that emanates dynamically from the leader to his or her followers (Avolio et al., 2004; George, 2003, Walumbwa et al., 2008). Eagly (2005) and Kernis (2003) discuss AL from a relational perspective, wherein the behaviors of both the leader and the associates need to be considered in the AL process. Relational authenticity begins when a leader's values are determined to be supportive and consistent, and thus authentically representative of the broader organization (Eagly, 2005). The process of relational authenticity is enacted when a leader is able to convey transparently his or her values within the organization, the willingness of the organization's members to support the leader's values, and the ability of these members to personally identify and adopt the leader's values as their own (Eagly, 2005).

Self-identities include both personal—identities based upon characteristics and traits unique to the individual, such as gender—and social identities derived from the social group or role to which an individual attaches value and emotional significance, such as work role (Gardner et al., 2005; Rothbard & Ramarajan, 2009). A role identity is the self-meaning one creates from the characteristics, hopes, and positive

emotions derived from her or his specific roles (Avolio et al., 2004; Caza & Wilson, 2009). Moreover, identities can drive one's attitudes and behaviors.

It is through the process of self-identification and active interactions with others that self-identities and an individual's self-concepts are formed and modified (Ladkin & Taylor, 2010, Schlenker, 1986). Within the AL framework (Avolio et al., 2004), followers' self-concepts are activated as they personally identify with the authentic leader and socially identify with the group through the followers' recognition of the values they share with the leader and the group. Research found that AL was positively associated with social identity (Fox, Gong, & Attoh, 2015; Kapasi, Sang, & Sitko, 2015; Sims, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2008), including personal identification with a supervisor/leader (Fox et al., 2015; Liu, Liao, & Wei, 2015), moral identity (Franklin, 2010), and gender and professional technical role (Sims, 2012). Social identity was also found to act as a mediator between AL and related outcome variables for associates and leaders. These studies conclude by pinpointing the need for future research to explore the identification mechanisms on AL in relationship to associate outcomes.

### **Gender Identity as a Mediator of AL**

The study of gender identity as a mediator of AL and job satisfaction has its basis in theory and research. Relative to theory, more authentic individuals are characterized by high self-esteem (Ilies et al., 2005; Kernis & Goldman, 2006). *Self-esteem* is the manifestation of positive self-regard (Schlenker, 1986) and is derived from an individual's *self-concept* (Avolio et al., 2004), which is based upon core identities, including gender (Avolio et al., 2004; Karellaia & Guillén, 2012). Thus, having a stronger gender identity is associated with authenticity (Kernis & Goldman, 2006).

More authentic leaders are likely to set a personal example of stronger gender identity (Karellaia & Guillén, 2012; Kernis & Goldman, 2006). These leaders may evoke, within their associates, deeper identification and emulation of the leader's strong embrace of their gender identity, while heightening associates' own gender self-awareness (Avolio et al., 2004). Thus, the extent to which an

associate is able to identify with his or her gender may be influenced by the AL process (Avolio et al., 2004).

Research has found that having a stronger gender identity is associated with a stronger scientist identity (Settles, 2004; Settles, Jellison, & Pratt-Hyatt, 2009), leader identity (Karelaia & Guillén, 2012), role satisfaction (Settles, 2004; Settles et al., 2009), work performance (Settles, 2004; Settles et al., 2009), and life satisfaction (Karelaia & Guillén, 2012; Settles, 2004; Settles et al., 2009). Thus, the strength of an identity will vary by person based upon the value individuals place on that identity. We propose that for associates, the relationship between their leader's AL and job satisfaction will be mediated by gender identity (Hypothesis 2).

### **Work Role Identity as a Mediator of AL**

As theorized, *social identification* within the AL framework is the process whereby an individual comes to view themselves as a member of a group, derives pride from membership, and recognizes that group membership as an important part of his or her identity (Avolio et al., 2004). Authentic leaders increase social identification by strengthening their values in their interactions with associates and engaging with their associates to benefit the collective. Leaders activate intrinsic values in their associates as the leaders instill the need in their associates to follow their lead (Avolio et al., 2004).

As women have transitioned in the last century to dominant roles in the workplace, there has been an increased need for women to define themselves based upon their identity and value to society (Goldin, 2014). Work-related identities are often positive and provide value and meaning to an individual (Dutton, Roberts, & Bednar, 2010). Individuals are tasked with sorting out the relationships among their important identities (Dutton et al., 2010). Identifying with a role may provide an individual with self-esteem and an opportunity to transcend his or her self-interest by contributing to others (Mael & Ashforth, 2001).

*Job involvement* is defined as the extent to which an individual psychologically identifies with his or her work and the extent to which his or her work role is central to the individual and their identity (Brown, 1996). As conceptualized, job

involvement is the state of identification an individual has with his or her specific work role and is based on saliency of intrinsic and extrinsic needs and perceptions of the ability of the role's potential to meet his or her needs and identity measured by job involvement (Brown, 1996; Kanungo, 1982).

Brown's (1996) meta-analysis found that leader and supervisory behaviors were positively associated with job involvement and characterized by a positive relationship with supervisor, receipt of ample supervisor feedback, participatory decision making, and leader consideration (creation of a supportive environment). Employees with lower job involvement were found to be more influenced by leader behaviors than employees with high job involvement (Brown, 1996). Work identity was found to be significantly related to supervisor support and job satisfaction and varied by gender (Aryee & Luk, 1996). Too much job involvement was associated with role conflict, whereas job satisfaction was an outcome of job involvement (Brown, 1996).

In summary, leader behavior can positively influence associates' level of identification with their work role, and strength of work role identity is associated with positive job satisfaction (Brown, 1996). Therefore by extension, AL should also result in positive job involvement as expressed in work role identity (Avolio, et al., 2004; Gardner et al, 2005). As a result, it is likely to expect that for associates, the relationship between their leader's AL and job satisfaction is mediated by associates' work role identity (Hypothesis 3).

### **Authentic Leadership and Job Satisfaction and Job Performance**

AL leads to follower outcomes that are both attitudinal and behavioral (Avolio et al., 2004). The attitudes elicited from AL include job satisfaction, which may result in greater job performance (Avolio et al., 2004). Followers are more willing to put forth extra effort in exchange for the value they receive from their enhanced authentic relationship with their leader, and that leader authenticity enhances follower performance (Walumbwa et al., 2008). AL was examined and found to positively influence follower job satisfaction (Giallonardo et al., 2010; Sims, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

Several studies have examined associates' performance within the AL framework, including associates' job performance (Giallonardo et al., 2010; Sims, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2008), group job performance (Leroy et al., 2012), supervisor-rated associates' job performance (Peterson, Walumbwa, Avolio, & Hannah, 2012), and coworker satisfaction (Pope, 2018). Collectively, the researchers determined that job performance was positively related to AL, thus we propose that associates' job satisfaction will mediate the relationship between AL behaviors and job performance (Hypothesis 4).

### **Moderators of AL–Gender**

Relational authenticity (Eagly, 2005) and role incongruity (Eagly & Karau, 2002) suggest that how a leader is perceived is a function of how a leader's characteristics, values, and beliefs align with those of his or her organization and its members. A leader is able to expand and thus decrease the level of role incongruity that might be present in an organization by expanding the roles deemed appropriate and acceptable for a leader (Eagly, 2005). Relational authenticity also asserts that associates may embrace the owners' expanded characterization of leadership, and this acceptance may differ based upon the associates' beliefs, values, and characteristics, including gender (Eagly, 2005).

Researchers of AL have found that associates' behaviors, beliefs, and/or values differed by gender (Caza, Bagozzi, Woolley, Levy, & Caza, 2010; Ezzedeen & Zikic, 2012; Woolley et al., 2010). Female associates were more likely to identify with female leaders and view the leader as more relationally authentic (Jensen & Luthans, 2006a; Leroy et al., 2012; Woolley et al., 2010). Conversely, male associates may be less likely to identify with a female leader and view the leader as less authentic (Caza et al., 2010; Ezzedeen & Zikic, 2012; Woolley et al., 2010).

The present research findings lead one to conclude that the gender of the business owner may have an impact on the effects of AL within organizations—on both the leader and their associates. Therefore, it is proposed that the relationship between leader's AL behavior and associates' job satisfaction will be moderated by leader gender (Hypothesis 5).

**Method**

A quantitative, cross-sectional design using survey methodology to test a causal model was employed. Derived from a larger research project, the study herein includes only those instruments, analyses, findings, and discussions associated with the variables (AL, leader gender, job satisfaction, job performance, gender identity, and work identity), and the five hypotheses presented earlier are addressed.

**Participants**

From the U.S. federal registry consisting of more than 26,145 certified small businesses, data were collected from 155 individuals at 63 businesses from three U.S. states. The states of Ohio, Maryland, and California were selected because they are in the top 10 states with the largest numbers of female-owned businesses (American Express OPEN, 2014). Both the business owners and their associates (paid employees or independent contractors issued 1099 tax forms) completed surveys. The businesses consisted of 34 female-owned businesses, for which there were 34 owners and 41 associates; 25 male-owned businesses, for which there were 27 owners and 38 associates; and 4 male- and female-owned businesses, for which there were 8 owners and 7 associates. Where two or more leaders were identified, the businesses were partnerships. Of the 155 total individuals, 45% were presidents, founders, or owners, 27% were categorized as executives, managers, or supervisors, and 28% selected the categories of individual contributors, contractors, or other. Overwhelmingly, these were small, privately owned (90%) businesses in the industry of consulting (28%) or other services (13%). The most frequent characterizations of the businesses was a number of associates and leaders between two and seven (43%) and a gross revenue less than one-quarter million dollars (32%) in the last calendar year.

All registered businesses were e-mailed an initial survey link and sent reminders, and a subset received telephone calls. Once the survey link was opened, participants accessed a Question Pro (QP) website, which presented the survey and collected responses over three months. Participants who reached the end-of-survey responses were considered complete. To be included in this study, the

business owner(s) and one or more of their associates needed to have completed the survey. Data were generated from the QP website in an SPSS format.

### **Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

A census conducted of the U.S. federal registry of certified small businesses included 19,241 in California, 5,812 in Maryland, and 1,092 in Ohio. Of these businesses, 1,823 (69%) accessed the survey, 1,189 (65%) started the survey, and 665 (56%) completed the survey. After eliminating surveys with incomplete responses or responses meant for the other gender, there were 541 usable responses. Of this group, there were 155 individuals from 63 businesses where either one or more of the business's owners and one or more of their associates completed the survey.

### **Measures**

Business owners completed the self version, and their associates completed the rater version of the Authentic Leadership Questionnaire (ALQ) as follows: 16 items rated on a five-point Likert-type scale from 0 = not at all to 4 = frequently, if not always, with four subscales: self-awareness, relational transparency, internalized moral perspective, and balanced processing ( $\alpha$  ranged from .76 to .92, Walumbwa et al., 2008). Associates completed (a) job satisfaction using three items from the Michigan Organizational Assessment Questionnaire (Bowling & Hammond, 2008) on a seven-point Likert-type scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree ( $\alpha = .82$ ); (b) job performance using three items that assessed task proficiency on a five-point Likert-type scale from 1 = very little to 5 = great deal ( $\alpha = .87$ , Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007); (c) gender identity using eight items on a seven-point Likert-type scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree ( $\alpha = .69$ , Karellaia & Guillén, 2012); and (d) work role identity using 10 items on a six-point Likert-type scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree ( $\alpha = .81$ , Kanungo, 1982).

## Results

Correlational analysis was used to determine the relationships among the variables. Structural equation modeling (SEM) using the maximum likelihood (ML) procedure was employed using AMOS 22 software (Ullman, 2006). Non-significant  $\chi^2$  with degrees of freedom are considered a good model fit. Goodness of fit indices were used to assess how well the resulting  $\chi^2$  test fit the data. Indices values are considered a good fit if they are .95 for the normed fit index (NFI), .97 for the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and .97 for the comparative fit index (CFI). The indices of TLI and CFI are less affected by sample size. Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) with values < .05 are a good fit. The Akaike information criterion (AIC) value should be smaller than the comparison default model (Akaike, 1987; Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger, & Muller, 2003). To assess whether ML and standard errors are violated, post hoc boot strap analyses were conducted.

After computing ML, goodness of fit indices were generated and modifications were made to improve the fit. Individual business owners and their associates were the units of analysis. To enable analyses at the individual level, aggregated means for each business were calculated for each instrument so all respondents would have a common set of variables, thus the unit of analysis was at the group level. To enable modification indices, a total of nine businesses or 22 individual leaders and associates had mean data added to the scales of items that were missing. To determine whether gender was a moderator, three gender models were developed and compared for these groups of owners and their associates: (a) all owners, (b) all female owners, and (c) all male owners.

### All Owners Model

The all owners group included all 63 businesses, for which there were 69 owners and 86 associates for a total population of 155 individuals. The initial all leaders model was generated; the modified model was found to be a good fit: CMIN (2.594), 4 *df*, and  $p = .628$ ; NFI = .978; TLI = 1.03; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .000; and AIC = 34.594. The default model's AIC was 80.66. A



bootstrap analysis of 500 samples found a mean of 5.28, an *SE* of .174, and a Bollen-Sine of  $p = .74$  determined that the data fit the model. The confidence interval (CFA) was set at 95%, and the resulting analysis determined that all variables were significant with  $p$  values of .002 to .029.

The leaders' ALQ self score was related to the associates' ALQ rater score, with  $SCOVA = .334$ ,  $USCOVA = .568$ ,  $SE = .129$ ,  $CR = 4.397$ , and  $p < .000$ . The ALQ rater score was related to satisfaction with  $SCOVA = .515$ ,  $USCOVA = .187$ ,  $SE = .025$ ,  $CR = 7.615$ , and  $p < .000$ . The ALQ rater score was also related to performance, with  $SCOVA = .469$ ,  $USCOVA = .063$ ,  $SE = .469$ ,  $CR = 6.177$ , and  $p < .001$ . However, there was no mediated relationship found between satisfaction and performance. Support was found for Hypothesis 1, but not for Hypotheses 2, 3, or 4.

### **All Female Owners Model**

The female owners group included 34 businesses, for which there were 34 owners and 41 associates for a total of 75 individuals. The initial model was run, then trimmed, resulting in a model with a  $CMIN = 5.344$ , 5 *df*, and  $p = .375$ ;  $NFI = .949$ ;  $TLI = .99$ ;  $CFI = .996$ ;  $RMSEA = .030$ ; and  $AIC = 35.344$ . The default model's  $AIC$  was 86.26. A bootstrap analysis of 500 samples found a mean of 6.05, an *SE* of .193, and a Bollen-Sine of  $p = .47$  determined that the data fit the model. The confidence interval was set at 95%, and the resulting analysis determined that all variables were significant with  $p$  values of .001 to .009.

The female owners' ALQ self score was related to their associates' ALQ rater score (standard estimate = .365, un-standard estimate = .59,  $SE = .175$ ,  $CR = 3.375$ , and  $p < .001$ ). The ALQ rater score was significantly related to satisfaction (standard estimate = .435, un-standard estimate = .166,  $SE = .040$ ,  $CR = 4.157$ , and  $p < .001$ ) and performance (standard estimate = .793, un-standard estimate = .126,  $SE = .013$ ,  $CR = 9.750$ , and  $p < .001$ ). There was no mediated relationship found between satisfaction and performance. Support was found for Hypothesis 1; no support was found for Hypotheses 2, 3, or 4.

### Male Owners Model

The male owners group included 25 businesses for which there were 27 owners and 38 associates for a total of 65 individuals. The initial model was run, then trimmed, and had these values: CMIN = 2.408, 6 *df*, and  $p = .879$ ; NFI = .975; TLI = 1.11; CFI = 1.00; RMSEA = .000; and AIC = 44.408. The default model's AIC was 76.89. A bootstrap analysis of 500 samples found a mean of 6.65, an *SE* of .207, and a Bollen-Sine of  $p = .86$  determined that the data fit the model. The confidence interval was set at 95%, and the resulting analysis determined that two variables were not significant—gender identity to satisfaction ( $p = .08$ ) and ALQ rater score to work identity ( $p = .50$ ). All other variables were significant with  $p$  values of .004 to .028.

The male owners' ALQ self score was related to the ALQ rater score (standard estimate = .428, un-standard estimate = .782, *SE* = .206, CR = 3.794, and  $p < .001$ ). The trimmed model revealed mixed support for work and gender identity as mediators between ALQ rater score and satisfaction. The ALQ rater score was related to satisfaction (standard estimate = .692, un-standard estimate = .244, *SE* = .030, CR = 8.235, and  $p < .001$ ) but not work identity (standard estimate = .079, un-standard estimate = .076, *SE* = .121), CR = .632, and  $p = .527$ ). Yet work identity was related to satisfaction (standard estimate = .253, un-standard estimate = .092, *SE* = .026, CR = 3.511, and  $p < .00$ ). The ALQ rater score was related to gender identity (standard estimate = .344, un-standard estimate = .243, *SE* = .083, CR = 2.934, and  $p = .003$ ). However, gender identity was not related to satisfaction (standard estimate = .191, un-standard estimate = .095, *SE* = .095, CR = .095, and  $p = .095$ ). The ALQ rater score and satisfaction had a mediated standard effect of .083, and an un-standard effect of .030. ALQ was not found to be related to performance. Support was found for Hypothesis 1; partial support was found for Hypotheses 2 and 3; and no support was found for Hypothesis 4.

### Gender as a Moderator

The ALQ rater score was significant and showed increased satisfaction of 0.515 for the all owners model, 0.435 for the female owners model, and 0.692 for the

male owners model. For every unit of AL, there was an associated increase in performance of 0.47 for all owners and .79 for female owners. No relationship was revealed for the male owners group. These findings support Hypothesis 5.

## **Discussion**

This study determined that leader gender matters; when AL models were generated for three owner groups—all genders, women only, and men only—major differences were found among the models. Therefore, leader gender functioned as a moderator of the AL framework. AL predicted the follower attitude of job satisfaction in all leader models and the follower behavior of job performance in two owner models—all genders and women. Partial support was found that identity functioned as a mediator within the AL framework; work role identity and gender identity were found to mediate AL and follower attitudes in one owner model (men).

## **Theoretical Implications**

This study provides support for Jensen and Luthans' (2006a, 2006b) supposition that small business owners will benefit from AL, some of the elements theorized within Avolio et al.'s (2004) AL framework, and Eagly's (2005) boundary condition of relational authenticity. AL was found to be a useful framework by which to study small business owners and their associates. When AL models were generated for three owner groups—all genders, women only, and men only, all owners were determined to be authentic leaders. Consistent with prior studies, AL was found to result in job satisfaction (Giallonardo et al., 2010; Jensen & Luthans, 2006a; Sims, 2012; Walumbwa et al., 2008).

However, female small business owners do not enjoy the same benefit of the doubt that they are authentic leaders, thus they have to demonstrate much more AL than their male and all genders counterparts to reap the same amount of satisfaction in their associates. From these results, we can construe that relational authenticity operates in these small businesses. It appears the male business owners profit from the prevailing androcentric characterizations of leadership and reap the benefits of role congruity theory (Eagly & Karau, 2002);

as the men enjoy the same amount of associate satisfaction while needing to demonstrate the least amount of AL when compared to the female owners and all genders groups.

The AL framework theorizes follower' attitudes, such as satisfaction, lead to follower behaviors such as performance (Avolio et al., 2004). This study did not find support for follower satisfaction being a mediator of follower performance. However, the effort of demonstrating AL, in the female and all owners groups, was rewarded with enhanced performance. These findings complement other studies' results, which found performance to be a behavioral outcome of AL (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Wong & Cummings, 2009). AL was found to drive associate performance in two owner models, but what explains why performance was not an outcome of AL in the male owners model? Perhaps associate performance was driven by something other than AL. There is support in the literature that men are more likely to use both transactional and transformational leadership than women (Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, & van Engen, 2003). As AL is considered to be a root construct of transformational leadership, it may be extrapolated that men might also use a mix of transactional and authentic leadership in their endeavors (Avolio et al., 2004; Ilies et al., 2005). When focusing on performance, men might switch to a transactional leadership to drive performance (Eagly et al., 2003). More research is needed to test this supposition.

There is mixed empirical support of the findings herein for Avolio et al.'s (2004) theory that identity mediates the relationship between AL and outcomes. Moreover, there is extant research that has investigated gender identity as a mediator. In the AL literature, personal identity and identification with supervisor functioned as a mediator but not social identity (Walumbwa et al., 2008; Wong & Cummings, 2009). Neither Walumbwa et al. (2008) nor Wong and Cummings (2009) explored the impact of leader gender on identity mediator relationships. Thus, we explored alternative explanations to better understand why identity functioned as a mediator between AL and satisfaction within the male owners' model.

Specific to work identity and gender, past research reveals that men demonstrate a stronger work identity than women (Aryee & Luk, 1996). Perhaps

the owners from the male owners' group were perceived to have demonstrated a stronger work role identity on average than owners from the female owners and all owners' groups, thus the male owners elicited a stronger work identity response from their associates. This rationale is consistent with research from Sims et al. (2017), which found that business owners experienced different levels of interference between their gender and leader roles based upon their gender. Male owners' gender and leader roles were more congruent than those of female business owners. Moreover, Sims et al. (2017) found that leader identity interference between gender and leader role was negatively related to associate satisfaction for the all owners' model. Thus, we explain the findings herein by suggesting work role identity may need to be strongly salient in the leader if identity is to function as a mediator between AL and satisfaction in followers.

Partial support was found for gender identity functioning as a mediator within the male owners model. Gender identity is derived from self-esteem and reflects the relative value an individual attributes gender as to their core identity (Avolio et al., 2004, Karelaia & Guillén, 2012). Avey, Palanski, and Walumbwa's (2011) study revealed a dynamic relationship between leadership and self-esteem; followers with lower self-esteem were more influenced by individuals rated higher in leadership. The male owners received the highest ALQ ratings and the average associated gender identity was moderate (70%) on the scale. Perhaps one explanation for this study is that there was also an interaction between gender identity and AL.

One possible explanation for gender identity functioning as a mediator for the male owners model may be based in a relational authenticity perspective. Most of the associates in this study were women. The authors' theory that female associates' gender identity would be stimulated by female owners was not supported; female associates' gender identity was activated by the male owners group. There is limited research that addresses the effect of leader gender on followers (Avey et al., 2011; Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, & Reichard, 2008; McColl-Kennedy & Anderson, 2005); however, based on leadership prototypicality, we suggest that male owners' interactions with their followers may

activate the associates' gender identity in ways that female only and mixed gender leaders do not (Johnson et al., 2008). Because a female CEO may or may not be considered a leader by her associates, these followers are more likely to devalue the female leaders with whom they work (Eagly, 2005). Conversely, the male CEOs are more likely to be considered a leader, and their associates may perceive working with male leaders to be more prestigious, authentic, valuable, and positive (Eagly, 2005; Eagly & Karau, 2002). Thus, we argue the female associates who work with male owners may imbue greater self-esteem working with more highly valued male CEOs, thus enhancing their gender identity. More research is needed to confirm these interpretations.

### **Practical Implications, Limitation, and Suggestions for Future Research**

AL benefits all small business owners, but how it is perceived and enacted by their associates varies based upon the owners' gender. Small business owners should strive to be authentic leaders, as they will benefit from increased associate satisfaction and, for many, greater performance. Female owners should consider demonstrating much stronger AL behaviors and work role identity in the workplace to reap increased satisfaction and performance from their associates. Male owners may want to be more self-aware of whether and how they use transactional behaviors and seek to reduce transactional interactions with their employees. Moreover, male business owners should consider increasing their AL by including the balanced processing behavior of active listening and demonstrating greater transparency in their interaction; thus, they will more likely activate their associates' performance. Male owners might also consider making the performance standards of their associates explicit and specify how their associates will not be harmed but benefit by complying. Thus, we encourage the male owners to demonstrate greater self-awareness, balanced processing, transparency, and moral integrity so their associates can achieve greater performance (Toor & Ofori, 2009).

Limitations of this study include the sample size of 63 businesses, with 69 owners, 86 associates, and a total population of 155, which is considered reasonable for ML estimation for some and low for others (Schermelleh-Engel et

al., 2003). The female and male owners' data sets were each small. Using the goodness of fit indices of TLI and CFI and post hoc boot strap analysis provided additional support for the veracity of the findings despite the small sample size and use of ML procedures in this research (Olsson, Foss, Troye, & Howell, 2000; Schermelleh-Engel et al., 2003). This study's use of survey methodology to test the hypotheses, which is associated with common method bias and cross-sectional design and advanced a proposed structural model, may be just one of other possible equivalent causal models (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Therefore, drawing definitive causation is limited (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996). Participants were business owners, and their associates differed in number and in the scales completed. Moreover, because mean data was added to each individual's data set, the resulting values could be non-independent outcomes (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). A few of the instruments in this study had borderline reliability (Kline, 1999). This research may not be generalizable to businesses that do not have access to computers, small businesses that do not seek state certification, or countries beyond the United States.

More research is needed to help confirm the usefulness of the AL framework in small venture firms and to explain why identity did not function as a mediator for the all owners and female owners' model, but was operational in the male owners' model. In addition, greater clarity and more research is needed to determine why job performance was an outcome of AL in the all owners and female owners' models, but was not present in the male owners' model.

## **Conclusion**

This study provides insights into the unique leadership benefits and challenges of operating a small business venture in the United States and provides credence for using the AL framework to study small businesses. The associates in all of the business ventures, regardless of leader gender, rated the owners who employed them as authentic leaders. However, a "one size fits all" approach is unwise because the business owners' genders activated different elements of the

AL framework. Three models were developed herein—all owners, female owners, and male owners models, and owner gender was found to moderate the AL framework. Relational authenticity (Eagly, 2005) was evident and activated different elements of the AL framework based upon owner(s) gender, thus owner gender functioned as a moderator. Common and present for all models was AL and the follower attitudinal outcome of satisfaction. Relative to identity functioning as a mediator within the AL framework, owner gender was associated with and elicited the presence or absence of work role and gender identities and the behavioral outcome of performance.

In summary, gender matters in leadership. Leadership scholars should make certain leadership models work for all leaders, regardless of gender. Theorists of authentic and other leadership models should explore and make explicit how their models might be enacted differently due to leader gender differences. In the case of AL, such efforts would help ensure that female and male leaders are able to equitably employ and reap the veritable performance promised.

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## **The Millennial Effect: A Multi-Generational Leadership Model\***

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Each generation develops internal frameworks to understand the nature of effective leadership against a backdrop of significant contemporary national and global events—in effect, people are who they are based on the time in which they were raised. The civil rights movement, military behavioral models adopted by management, technological innovation, and mainstream media proliferation prompted the analysis of generational-based leadership perspectives in North America. Diverse trends and events also shaped the evolution of generational leadership mindsets in other countries. Arguably, there has been some development toward global paradigms of business leadership with the multiplying of business schools. The multi-generation leadership model presented in this article uses a systems theory lens to view the evolving leadership models from the traditionalists to the millennials in North America. It offers a broad temporal view and discusses the extent to which each the above events acted as variables that gained or lost critical mass in each respective generation. Based on the generational differences, this article offers some recommendations with regard to leadership development, talent management, and human resource practices in the new era and future foci for generational leadership research.

**Key words:** generational leadership, millennials, multi-generational leadership model, systems thinking, workplace

In modern society, traditional management principles can lose their efficiency (Binham et al., 2018). Leadership is one of the most popular topics for executive development programs, and the widely researched traditional approaches no longer significantly meet the needs of organizations or individuals (Moldoveanu & Narayandas, 2019). Karakas, Manisaligil, and Sarigollu (2015) spent seven years exploring the “benefits of reflective, creative, and collaborative spaces for millennials using practices from leadership and personal development courses”

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\*Andert, D., Alexakis, G., & Preziosi, R. C. (2019). The millennial effect: A multi-generational leadership model. *International Leadership Journal*, 11(2), 32–63.

(237) to understand and adjust for the differing needs of the next generation. In 1950, Stogdill's seminal work acknowledged that leadership exists among people in social situations, and that those who lead in one situation may not necessarily lead in another. Diversified leadership theories followed. Understanding good leadership's composition, the factors contributing to future leader development and the consistent replication of leadership models still challenge scholars and practitioners nonetheless. In spite of an overabundance of scientific and anecdotal work, a myriad of leadership-related questions have remained unanswered (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018). Augmenting Stogdill's groundbreaking original work, Michel and LeBreton (2010) introduced the concept of *leadership coherence*, which connotes that a leader's behavior fluctuates in a consistent, reliable, and predictable idiographic manner across situations. Haeger and Lingham (2013) indicate that "leadership patterns are changing, not in theory, but through intergenerational collisions between leaders' behaviors and interpretations from direct reports of what it means to lead" (1) Nonetheless, a challenge for practitioners is that contemporary theories for understanding the ways in which leaders can and should act in different situations typically depend on context and may introduce numerous generational contingencies. Massey (1979) posited early on that we are who we are based on the time in which we were raised. Barbuto and Gottfredson (2016) explored three generational cohorts, with particular emphasis on the millennial generation, estimated to be 50% of the workforce by 2020. They stressed the necessary progression of general management and leadership practices needed to create an organization rich in human capital. They suggest that servant leadership is the optimal leadership style for the millennial generation and call for leadership process adjustments that are in agreement with the current generational realities.

Conger and Kanungo's (1998) landmark work demonstrates the complexity of the issues and explains that even a well-researched theory like transformational leadership, which depends on follower characteristics and emotions because leadership is a process of attribution, implies the need for a theory of followership. The authors conclude that people follow transformational leaders

because they attribute to those leaders the capacity to impose order, security, and direction in an otherwise chaotic and threatening world. Naseer, Raja, Syed, Donia, and Darr (2015) indicate that people will follow even bad leaders when the leader–member exchange (LMX) is high and the perceived organizational politics (POP) is also high, thus discovering the dark side of leadership and the social impact and complexity of leadership.

### **Defining the Generations and Their Differences**

Leadership research in the United States has spanned multi-generational realities, commencing with the veteran generation, who grew up during the war years, and culminating with the millennial generation, who were raised during the digital age. The significant events that occurred during their formative adolescent years greatly affect each generation (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010). Expanded media news content and opinions, the codification of human rights legislation, and the timing of major military actions and the impact of returning veterans re-entering the workplace in critical mass substantively shaped each respective generation's understanding of leadership and followership. The current leadership model of the millennial generation has progressed from that of the previous generation. The apparent shift from the time-of-war traditionalist view of leadership to a more dynamic and flexible leader/follower perspective is evident when viewed through the lens of the multi-generational leadership model.

Howe and Strauss (2007) describe the word *generation* as a cohort group whose estimated span of life boundaries is fixed and thus develops a peer personality. While research on the topic of generational differences has dramatically increased in recent decades since multi-generational marketing is very important to advertisers and marketers (Williams & Page, 2011), employers and human resources professionals are equally concerned with how these differences play out in workplace leadership. While the workplace composition continues to shift, examining the interrelationships of workers of different generations who have different skills, attitudes, expectations, and learning styles increasingly makes sense (Helyer & Lee, 2012). This article uses the four

existing generational cohorts that appear extensively in the literature as a framework for analyzing the evolution of leadership using a systems approach, acknowledging that significant societal events and the social learning experience (Bandura, 1971) frame normative understandings and redefine leadership both domestically and globally. The U.S. Census (Colby & Ortman, 2014) defines the generations as

- traditionalists (also called the veteran generation; 1922–1943);
- baby boomers (1943–1960, or traditionally defined as 1946–1964);
- Generation X (also called Gen X; 1960–1980); and
- millennials (also called Generation Y or Gen Y; 1980–2000).

In 2018, after a decade of research, the Pew Research Center sought to “to keep the Millennial generation analytically meaningful” in order to “begin looking at what might be unique about the next cohort” and deconstructed the previous generational frameworks (Dimock, 2019, para. 5).

[The] Pew Research Center decided a year ago to use 1996 as the last birth year for Millennials for our future work. Anyone born between 1981 and 1996 (ages 23 to 38 in 2019) is considered a Millennial, and anyone born from 1997 onward is part of a new generation (Dimock, 2019, para, 5).

The newest delineation of the generations by the Pew Research Center is offered in Figure 1 below.

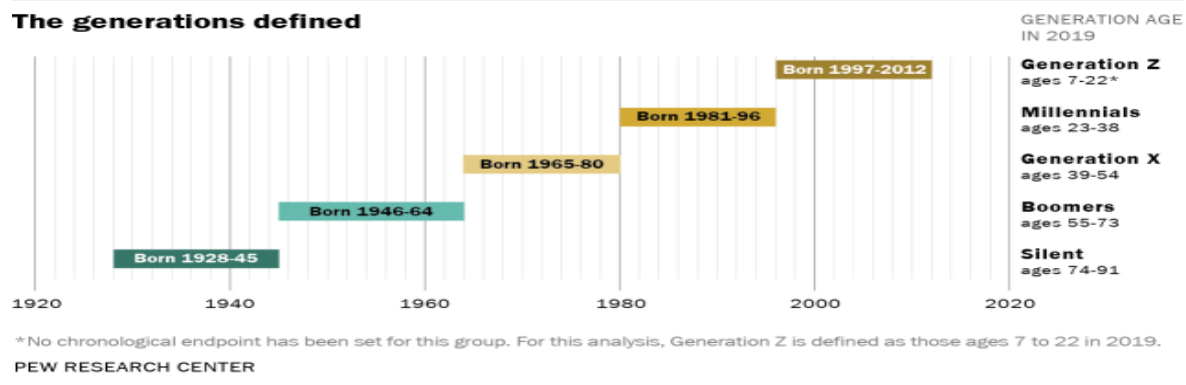


Figure 1. Pew Center generational definitions

Source: From “Defining Generations: Where Millennials End and Generation Z Begins,” by M. Dimock, January 17, 2019, Pew Research Center ([https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/ft\\_19-01-17\\_generations\\_2019/](https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/01/17/where-millennials-end-and-generation-z-begins/ft_19-01-17_generations_2019/)).

**Millennial Characteristics**

The multi-generational leadership model serves as a framework for understanding the dynamic perspective of current leadership thinking to inform American and international businesses. From viewing leadership during the global financial crisis to the MTV icons who provided a distracting, fragmented, rap-video culture (Kaufman, 1993), the millennial experience during their formative years has considerably nullified the authority traditionally associated with leaders. The Pew Research Center altered the millennial generation boundaries in 2018 to encompass persons from 23 to 38 years of age who represent “more than one in three (35%) American labor force participants . . . making them the largest generation in the U.S. labor force (Fry, 2018, para. 1). Current thinking, especially among millennials, prioritizes a balancing of personal and professional life (Ng & Gossett, 2013). They seek time to pursue personal interests and personal goals as a life priority (Alexander & Sysko, 2012). Campione (2015) states that

factors affecting Millennials’ job satisfaction are those that negatively impact satisfaction, those that push Millennials out rather than positive factors that lure them in. And, although employers have become quite creative in some of their offerings to recruit Millennials, they have often failed to retain them. (69)

They are technically adept and engaged in their communities using their expertise to fight for social justice (Gass & Bezold, 2013). Previous generations have not possessed “anything close to their upbeat, high-achieving, team-playing, and civic-minded reputation” (Howe & Strauss, 2003, 1). This assertive orientation challenges traditional leader-centric, hierarchical leader/follower theories. Katy Perry’s (2010) song “Firework,” with such lyrics as “Baby you’re a firework—come on show them what you’re worth,” is a popular theme song for much of today’s young generation. It represents an anthem of sorts and is consistent with the civic-mindedness attributed to the current generational focus. Pop singer Brandi Carlile’s lyrics for “The Joke: (2018) further cement this generation’s perspective “Let ‘em laugh while they can/Let ‘em spin, let ‘em scatter in the wind/I have been to the movies, I’ve seen how it ends/And the joke’s on them.” Millennials have strongly stated in corporate surveys and

academic studies that freedom to do their work, how they want to do it, is very highly valued (Campione, 2015). Perhaps the preference represents the belief that the previous generation did not get it right. The current millennial focus is ostensibly a global generation, representing the most racially and ethnically diverse cohort in U.S. history (Howe & Strauss, 2003).

With a keystroke or touch of a mobile telephone button, the current cohort can summon their networks and swiftly amass people to any location or event. In popular culture, this has led to the phenomenon of “flash mobs.” In political arenas, the consequences can be more eventful. For example, as far back as 2011, the Egyptian revolution against the government served as an example of this generation’s civic will and leadership–followership dynamic. Youthful pro-democracy protesters used Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitpic to topple an authoritarian regime that previous generations were unable to alter (Ungerleider, 2011). The phenomenon compelled the mass news media to more accurately report relevant stories. Distrusting of mainstream media and established authorities, millennials not only supported the political revolution of the Bernie Sanders’ U.S. presidential campaign but literally used technology to gauge the accuracy of political claims (Uygur, 2016). PBS News Hour (2019) notes that by Election Day 2020, millennials will be a larger share of America’s adult population than baby boomers and destined to be politically wooed as an important factor in the upcoming elections. Most recently, the control of the media has radically changed with the origination of the Internet, mobile phones, and online social networking (Alexander & Sysko, 2012). The current generations have access to a highly expanded mainstream and independent media. Millennials now teach others to use the media to create awareness of important civic causes. Examples include the “flash mob to end violence against women” (European Parliament, 2013) that occurred the week before a vote by the European Parliament aimed at combating violence against women and girls. In Aventura, Florida, millennial-aged local police officers advanced toward a holiday celebration flash mob dance and joined in, rather than dispersing the crowd (Wells, 2018), an expression of millennial egalitarianism.

Millennials are the first “native” generation to technology while members of all other generations are described as “immigrants,” regardless of their technological proficiencies (Hershatter & Epstein, 2010, as cited in Alexander & Sysko, 2012). The historically unique circumstances (i.e., a younger generation possessing superior skills and knowledge) affect the flow of information. The situation equalizes opportunities and can lead to a more equitable redistribution of power among leaders and followers.

With their highly collaborative nature, millennials seek constant interaction and feedback to assess progress. They seek consistent and constant interpersonal contact to move in partnership with others, fostered by an open access media. In 2016, IBM joined many other large firms in eliminating annual appraisals for more frequent, real-time feedback for millennials and their entire workforce (Peck, 2016). Their external locus of identity prompts a need for immediate feedback and almost continuous recognition and approval (Crumpacker & Crumpacker, 2007, as cited in Gass & Bezold, 2013). Although most millennials are committed to their work and careers, they are reluctant to become general managers, largely because they see that new managers are often given lots of additional responsibility with very little additional support—and support is essential to them (Tulgan, 2011). Today, it is a hi-tech, constant-contact world in which action does not exist in isolation (Silverman, 2011). This is quite different from the first half of the century, when Stogdill’s (Bass, 1990) summative work framed the leadership assumptions and beliefs that considered:

- leadership to occur when leaders do things to followers;
- leadership to be hierarchy based and linked to an office;
- leadership to make the crucial difference to organizational performance;
- leadership to reside in an individual rather than the system, as the source or central to organizational accomplishment;
- leaders to be different from other people; and
- leaders to be the ones who shape the behavior of others in a desired direction and theorized to set the moral climate and culture of the organization or collective.

By contrast, today's workforce does not identify with being a corporate citizen destined to retire with the gold watch but would rather be a world citizen destined to retire after making a difference (Rhodes, 1983). Millennials' expectations of government and their own career goals are different from those of other generations. The expectancies were cited as the main finding in a recent research report on Brexit (Weinbaum, Girven, & Oberholtzer, 2016). This workforce is fluid and mobile. *POLITICO Magazine* (Robertson & Henderson, 2018) began a series of articles around the working title "The United States of Millennials," which explored how "the nation's largest generation is transforming cities large and small" (para. 1) and remaking each to fit their own image and beliefs.

Followers are indeed inspired by leaders who advocate for their moral freedom (Lemoine, Hartnell, & Leroy, 2019). The financial industry downfall was blamed on the traditionalist or greedy corporate senior executives, and the Egyptian revolution of the millennials represented grassroots, emergent, and alternating leadership (Andert, 2011). This brand of egalitarian and civic-minded leadership is becoming ubiquitous, as the multidisciplinary nature of the management field increasingly causes it to expand its sectors. Tesone (2003) best sums up the growing intricacy of the contemporary manager's leadership responsibilities and challenges within an ever-widening group of products and service units with his aptly titled book, *The Leadership Cat with the Management Hat*.

The purpose of this article is to compare and contrast generational influences on the research and definition of leadership. We use a systems thinking lens to view the various components of mainstream media, the codification of civil rights and human relations legislation, and military behavioral modeling on the perspectives of leadership from the traditionalist through millennial generations. It offers a cross-functional view of the future foci for generational leadership research, its applications, and implications on evolving organizational cultures.

## **A Systems Look at Leadership**

Despite the frequent use of the term *systems* by academicians and management practitioners, there is little agreement as to what the term really means (Kefalas,



2011). A system is “the name of an abstract concept, that of a complex whole entity of a particular kind,” according to Stacey, Griffin, and Shaw (2000, 46). Systems theory, or the systems approach, originated in the physical sciences, where it challenged the prevailing Cartesian orthodoxy by methodically testing instability, nonlinearity, and other complex variables of the natural world (Mingers & White, 2010). Kefalas (2011) describes this way of thinking (i.e., systems thinking) in the human organizational context:

The systems approach sees organizations as organic systems that are in a continuous interaction with their external environment. This process of interaction is essentially a process of acquiring information about the changes in the external environment, evaluating the impact of these changes, and adapting the organization's strategy, structure, and evolution. (370)

Palaima and Skaržauskienė (2010) established a link between systems thinking and leadership performance. They empirically confirmed the theoretical insight that a systems thinking approach is most important when dealing with the salient conceptual strategic issues of an organization. This article uses systems thinking as a theoretical insight to examine the dynamic nature of leadership, based on the external changes affecting the human condition. It evaluates the evolution of those changes on the generations, implementing a renewing definition of leadership.

Systems theory posits that a basic system consists of elements that function interdependently and of inputs, throughputs, and outputs (Katz & Kahn, 1978; St. Clair, Hunter, Cola, & Boland, 2018). Applied to generational cohorts, each generation receives new inputs (i.e., social realities and norms) or raw materials perpetuating the metaphorical systems cycle of life. The common inputs generally affect a generation's perspectives on life and specifically affect the meaning and corresponding actions of the generation's leadership. Coomes and DeBard (2004) suggest that history and popular culture could be a useful frame through which one can better understand various generations. Simply stated, the concept of generational differences is that the time that one went through secondary school generally affects one's views regarding workplace matters (Raines, 2013). Teece (2018) suggests that the application of systems theory in management ran its course by the 1980s, yet today, its greater potential is for it to provide a holistic

view of the business enterprise. This article supports the notion that systems theory applies as a holistic view of the workforce within business.

Millennials have experienced major influencers since the time they could begin to conceptualize (i.e., preteen). They were affected by computers; mobile phones; school violence (e.g., Columbine); domestic terrorism (e.g., Oklahoma bombings and 9/11); celebrity scandals (e.g., O. J. Simpson and Bill Clinton); parental layoffs; and an ever-increasing diversity of languages, dual ethnicities, sexual alignment, and nontraditional families (Dwyer, 2009; Rhodes, 1983; Salahuddin, 2010). The millennial generation experienced the idea that the child is a central family focus, which substantially changes the input portion of the systems leadership equation. This generation's influence on society is noticeable. So influenced by social media, today, millennials are "influencers" using Instagram, Twitter, and other forms of social media to make their mark on society (Izea, 2019). However, millennials' leadership style is embryonic and yet to be fully discovered (Foot & Stoffman, 1998; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002; Sahadi, 2007; Zemke, Raines, & Filipczak, 1999) as this generation gains workplace status. Teamwork plays a main role as an input (Nicholas & Lewis, 2008). The Egyptian government overthrow represents an influential outcome of a generation that can change situations with the touch of technology—summoning thousands of previously unknown participants to a cause (Malik, 2014). The instant mass movement approach represents a leader–follower paradigm disintegration of sorts, as leaders and followers become less distinguishable. The roles can change within a person as well as among people.

This current reality has been a deliberate evolution, quietly occurring through the maturation from the traditionalist through the baby boomer generation to the current generations of Gen X and Gen Y. Daft (2013) provides a review of the four eras of leadership theory development. Era 1 focuses on the greatness of the individual person. Era 2 emerged with Taylorism and classical management. It represents the formalization of rational thinking and organizational structuring. Era 3 emerged during the time of the quality management and organizational team structuring movements. Era 4 coincided with the increased societal

consciousness of stewardship and servant leadership frameworks. The contemporary era, which we label Era 5, is the emergence of the dynamic interplay in the leader–follower relationship, characterized by distributive utilization of these roles. The primary role of the individual acting as a leader must be to develop a culture that enables individuals to coalesce around the shared purpose of the enterprise (Allio, 2012). There is some caution raised. The development of “I” among millennials needs to slow down, and maybe even reverse itself, so that leaders will be able to see issues and pending events from a total community perspective (Kets de Vries, 2019).

All the eras described above are the result of systemic generational experiences. First, and most pronounced, are the changes that occurred in the early 1960s and beyond (see Figure 2 on the next page). Second, millennials are the first generation in quite some time to experience their formative years without a global war and the reinforcement of the military model as returning soldiers re-entered the workplace. In contrast, veterans returning from Vietnam underplayed their military backgrounds because the populace found disfavor with a war perceived to have been lost and unjust. For the first time, the military model was less influential in the workplace. In addition, the baby boomers began to be exposed from the mid-1960s on to the codification of the civil rights strife of the 1950s, including the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967, Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978, Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986, and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Millennials benefited from the existence of all these enactments, but experienced none of the struggles associated with inducing the passing of these laws.

The final element displayed in the multi-generational leadership model depicts the timing and expansion of the media messages that greatly influenced each generation. The media’s effects commenced in the late 1960s with the introduction of *The Phil Donahue Show/Donahue* (1967–1996); in the 1980s with the introduction of *The Sally Jesse Raphael Show/Sally* (1983–2002); and in the

1990s with *Ricki Lake* (1993–2004) and *The Jerry Springer Show* (1991–2019). This expansion of media brought about the expansion of content well beyond traditional dialogue. Millennials were fully exposed, and remain exposed, to the media’s timing, complexity, and sophistication.

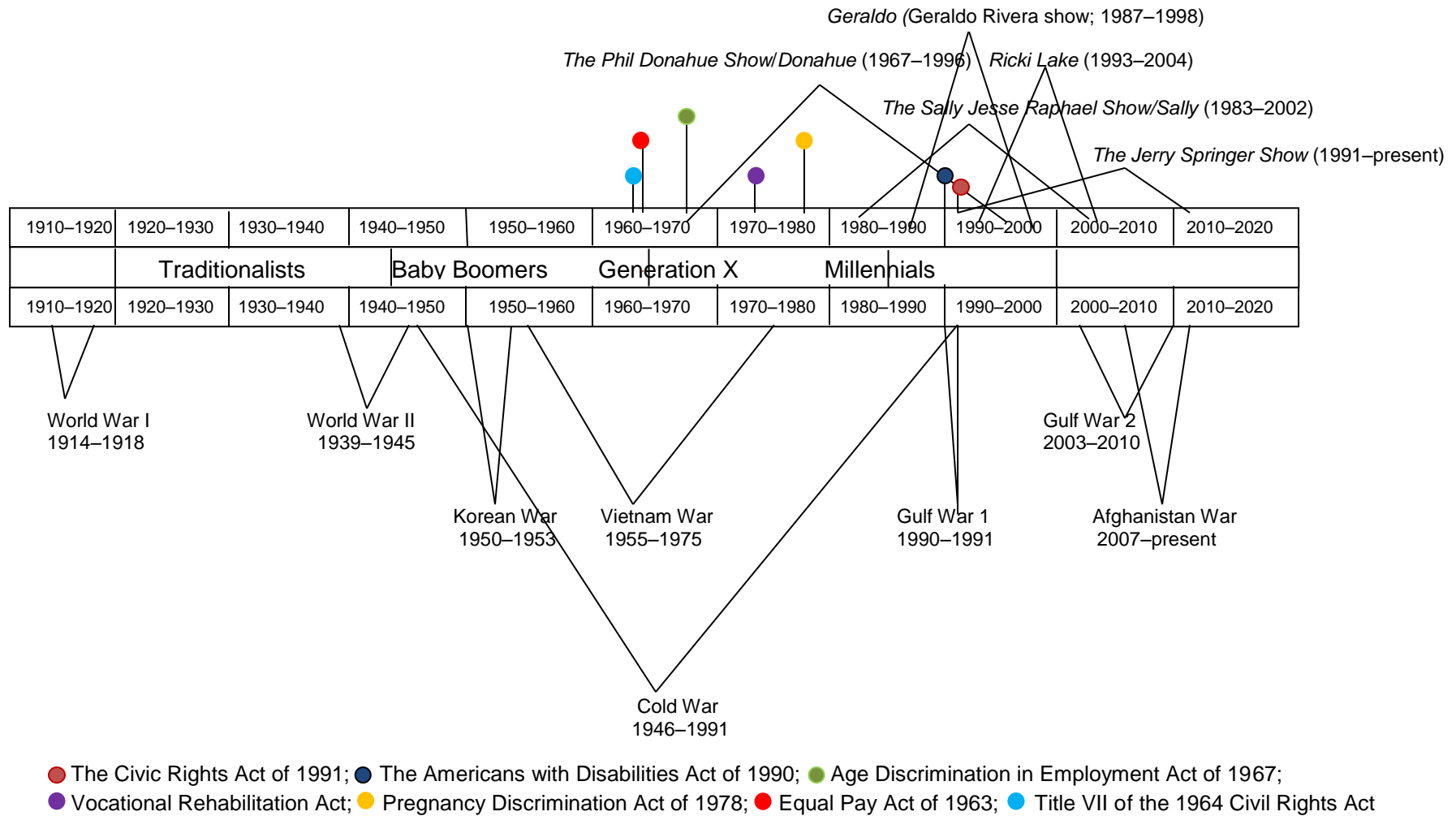


Figure 2. Multi-generational leadership model

The maturing baby boomers, Gen Xers, and millennials were fully exposed to the changes associated with talk television, with no subject being too outrageous. The full spectrum and velocity of information increased, and so too did the predatory behavior of criminals. The 1981 abduction and slaying of Adam Walsh brought national attention to a generation that needs to challenge those in authority (Thomas, 2008). The 2009 financial collapse and the 2011 Occupy Wall Street protest movement solidified the reaction against the establishment and authority. Each life event added to the generational cohort's discernment of authority and leadership roles (Deal, 2007; Williams, 2007; Zemke et al., 1999).

The above inputs shaped the respective generations. It made Gen Xers "not as a separate generation, but rather the concluding stages of the baby boom generation" (Foot & Stoffman, as cited in Dwyer, 2009, 103). The cohort sought a new work environment, as Gen X's leadership style reflected fairness and competence (Houlihan, 2007; Salahuddin, 2010). It also created a generation that reportedly lacks the people skills of the previous generations, with a straightforwardness that may negatively affect others (Sahadi, 2007). Gen Xers are more concerned about productivity than the number of hours spent on the job (Houlihan, 2007). They view the idea of "face time" as inefficient, wasteful, and unnecessary. Generation X is characterized as the *latchkey kids*, independent (yet dependent on their parents), selfish or cynical, questioning authority, resilient, adaptable, culturally progressive, and technologically well informed, expecting immediate results and committing their attention to the team and the boss (Frandsen, 2009). Collectively, these are neither submissive followers nor traditional coercive leaders (Bass, 1990).

The baby boomers, Gen Xers, and millennials seek a different understanding of leaders and leading that is based in a temporal systems lens. Salahuddin (2010) characterizes the summative differences among the generational understandings of leadership (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Most Admired Leader Characteristics by Generation**

Characteristic	Veteran	Baby Boomer	Generation X	Millennial
Ambitious	2	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>
Caring	4	4	3	<b>10</b>
Competent	1	1	4	1
Determined	<b>9</b>	<b>9</b>	5	2
Forward-looking	<b>10</b>	2	5	5
Honest	3	5	1	4
Imaginative	6	6	<b>7</b>	<b>9</b>
Inspiring	<b>8</b>	3	<b>9</b>	<b>7</b>
Loyal	7	7	2	6
Self-controlled	5	<b>8</b>	6	3

Note: Bolding added for emphasis by authors. Source: Adapted from "Generational Differences Impact on Leadership Style and Organizational Success" by M. M. Salahuddin, 2010, *Journal of Diversity Management*, 5(2), p. 5. Copyright 2010 by the Clute Institute.

Table 1 offers some patterns that help compare and contrast the view of leadership among the generations.

- Baby boomers, Gen Xers, and millennials place greater value on ambitiousness than traditionalists.
- Being determined and forward-looking are no longer considered valuable leadership characteristics by Gen Xers and millennials.
- Being loyal and inspiring are reemerging as valued characteristics of leadership.
- Being caring is a highly valued characteristic of millennials.

Historically, the traditionalists valued quality, respect, and authority (Houlihan, 2007). In its simplest form, traditional leadership research adopted the perspective of leadership as:

- the *nucleus* of all social movements,
- preeminent within a group of a few people,
- a centralization of effort as an expression of the power of all,
- influenced by the needs and wishes of the group,
- the central focus of activity,
- a position of high potential,
- a primary agent, and
- a person one pace ahead of the group (Stogdill & Bass, 1981).

By contrast, the current generation values individualism. Ironically, millennials embody core values that are similar to traditionalists in that they believe in collective action, are optimistic about the future, and trust in centralized authority of the organization, but only if it is caring (Houlihan, 2007; Howe & Strauss, 2003; Hughes & Fiehl, 2013). Coworker trust is a significant predictor of lowered turnover intention, while a trust-based environment encourages high levels of management having trust in employees and vice versa, which undoubtedly boosts organizational competitiveness (Semerciöz, Hassan, & Aldemir, 2011). The root of trust lies in strong relationships.

### **Leadership and the Millennials**

Hewlett, Sherbin, and Sumberg (2009) describe how the oldest and youngest cohorts in the workplace demand many of the same things. They contend that millennials are powerfully reshaping work agendas. Harris (2011) asserts that the baby boomer leadership has failed, and millennials are displaying divergent leadership behaviors.

The Millennials are entering and leaving college largely dedicated to issues that exceed self-interest. Millennials are the new service generation, and like a true Millennial, my first job out of college was working for the nonprofit I helped start. I want the world to be a better place, and I think dedicating at least part of your life to service is how we can make lasting change. This spirit runs at odds with the dominating zeitgeist of the Baby Boom Generation. (Harris, 2011, para. 7)

Loehr (2013, as cited in Sullivan, 2013) warns that massive changes are coming to workplace demographics, and if leaders do not begin preparing now, they may find themselves outdone by a competitor whom they originally trained, or be left with employees who are ill-equipped to perform their duties. One example of such massive change is the #MeToo movement. It is fairly common knowledge that the election of a record number of women in the November 2018 U.S. congressional elections will cause many changes. Sessa, Kabacoff, Deal, and Brown (2007) examined leisure time and electronic personal connections outside the workplace as the preferred friendship building arenas of what the authors call GenMe (i.e., millennials). Leadership may be less personal to them. This generation has lived through a series of Enron-like leadership debaucheries.

Sessa et al. (2007) provide some of the first empirical evidence of a generational shift in work values. Understanding the work values of these young individuals helps organizations appreciate leadership evolution and how to support the popular notion that leisure is a particularly salient work value for millennials compared to baby boomers. Leaders should accept that the shift toward leisure reflects the realities of the current work environment. Loehr (as interviewed in Sullivan, 2013) says that today's leaders should overhaul their leaders in training, create an initiative and contribution culture, and fill the talent pipeline now.

Therefore, which leadership theory is most likely to accommodate this new generation? Reviewing the leadership theories currently in use can be instructive. Stewardship (Block, 1993) and servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977) are earlier models consistent with the millennial mindset, but rarely practiced in the workplace. With the flattening of organizational pyramids and the loss of management positions, most millennials are experiencing job enlargement and increased committee responsibilities. This group work will alter the focus of the zeitgeist leadership models and empowering leadership may be a form of leadership that is acceptable in multiple cultures (Thomas & Rahschulte, 2018).

The multi-generational leadership model proposes that an egalitarian, fluid, and dynamic leadership paradigm must emerge along with increased awareness to address the changing generational expectations and shifting role of today's leaders. Emergent leadership (Chaturvedi, Zyphur, Arvey, Avolio, & Larsson, 2012), alternating leadership (Andert, 2011), grassroots leadership (Kezar, 2011), and transcendental leadership (Alexakis, 2011) are leadership styles that fit the caring, democratic, and imaginative frameworks of millennials. These developing theories reflect a move away from a predominantly top-down management focus and toward a more egalitarian orientation with practical applications and global inclusiveness (i.e., not strictly U.S. based). Organizations today are flattening their pyramids and assigning workers as "team leaders," replacing the traditional entry-level supervisor's role. Millennials' team-based, lackluster desire for organizational commitment complements a dynamic leader-follower role exchange. *Emergent leadership* allows for natural self-selection of



role diversity and permits millennials to select and re-select roles, as warranted. The notion is analogous to self-leadership, which is “apparently not only beneficial for individual performance, but fosters team members’ teamwork (proficiency), leads to better adaptation to changes in the team environment (adaptivity) and, especially, encourages participation in the improvement of the team’s procedures (proactivity)” (Hauschildt & Konradt, 2012, 164).

*Grassroots leadership*, as demonstrated during the Egyptian revolution, allows civic-minded millennials to circumvent the weaknesses of traditional authoritarian leadership and act in a manner that aligns more with inclusive beliefs. *Alternating leadership* aligns with the team-oriented nature of millennials versus the autocratic-oriented inclinations of previous generations that color millennials’ reality. Finally, *transcendental leadership* focuses on personal development, beginning with leader self-motivation toward peak performance, causing workers to do the same as employee behavior is often indicative of superiors, and organizational goals to be met or exceeded (Ling, Lin, & Wu, 2016). Similarly, the *transcendent follower* expresses competence in terms of their management of relations with self, others, and the organization (e Cunha, Rego, Clegg, & Neves, 2013). The effect of each generation’s experience redefines the leadership paradigm. Though the generational realities are still developing for millennials, researchers and business professionals would be wise to consider the lens through which this generation views the workplace as unique and unlike previous leadership perspectives.

### **Facilitating the Millennial Leadership Paradigm**

Tulgan (2011) indicates that the following aids offer millennials the support and guidance needed to effectively learn and practice general management and leadership principles:

- Explain that a new role carries with it real authority. A huge new responsibility should not be accepted lightly.
- Describe for new leaders exactly what their new leadership responsibilities look like beyond extra paperwork. Explain the “people work” in detail and

create standard operating procedures for managing that focuses on the basics (e.g., articulating employee expectations, following up regularly, tracking performance closely in writing, and holding people accountable).

- Formally deputize any new leader, no matter how small the project or how short the duration of the leadership role. Announce the new leadership to the whole team, articulate the nature of this person's new authority, and explain the standard operating procedures for management that the new leader has been tasked to follow.
- Check in regularly (preferably daily) with new leaders and review the standard operating procedures for managing people. Ask about the management challenges that new leaders are facing. Reinforce their new authority with the team and every individual on the team.
- Pay close attention every step of the way, and evaluate new leaders in their new roles. With the right amount of guidance and support, most people who are very good at their jobs and committed to their work and career have the ability to grow into strong, competent leaders.

The transcendental leadership model holds that the leader's role is that of a facilitator in the motivation process without using punishments and rewards to manipulate or coerce (Alexakis, 2011). Transcendental leaders invariably provide corporate social responsibility beyond their organizations' domains; an appealing orientation that decidedly attracts and sustains millennial workers and managers. As in servant leadership, the leader can be most effective when fostering, aiding, supporting, collaborating, abetting, easing, promoting, cultivating, nurturing, sponsoring, and otherwise advancing the motivational level that is intrinsically present within every person (Alexakis, 2011). Both the baby boomer and Gen Xer mentor and the millennial mentee can benefit as leadership skills are developed and advanced. Harris (2011) reports that "the Millennial Generation will be the most educated, and is the most service-minded generation, in American History. [They] are also the most diverse" (para. 5).

Some empirical studies challenge the popular media concerning the vast generational differences (Deal, 2007) and have determined that a true tipping

point of change has been reached (Levenson, 2010). Contrary to many popular press articles, the results of Zabel, Biermeier-Hanson, Baltes, Early, and Shepard (2017) indicate that there are no generational differences in work ethic between millennials and other generations. Their research supports Costanza and Finkelstein's (2015) broader contention that little actual empirical evidence exists of generational differences in work attitudes. Others (e.g., Macky, Gardner, & Forsyth, 2008) call for more research that controls for age and time period. Deal, Altman, and Rogelberg (2010) sought a new direction that helps the research and practitioner communities alike understand the realities of generational similarities and differences so that there may be less reliance on urban myths and stereotyping. Yet, the generation gap "endures as a staple American political and social analysis" (Samuelson, 2010, para. 1). In 2000, Howe and Strauss's seminal work (as cited in Kowske, Rasch, & Wiley, 2010) described millennials as having seven distinguishable traits, including being:

- special, vital, and full of promise for themselves and for the future of the society and the world;
- sheltered from being smothered in their formative years with safety rules and devices;
- confident, because of their trust and optimism;
- team-oriented, due to being raised in sports teams and group learning;
- achievement-oriented, which is the result of higher school standards and an instilled sense of accountability;
- pressured by the desire to excel and do well; and
- conventional, rather than rebellious.

Meister and Willyerd (2010) list the "top five things millennials want to learn" from their employers. Leadership is the third item below "technical skills in my area of expertise" and "self-management and personal productivity" (Meister & Willyerd, 2010, in graphic).

According to Reinhardt, 2010, millennials recognize that they are the youngest generation of current employees, say they understand the latest technological devices, have the ability to multi-task, [and] have plenty of

energy. They also recognize that their positive outlook on life, need for social interaction and immediate results in their work advancement might be seen as weaknesses by older colleagues. (para. 11)

The millennial generation can develop its leadership lens by executing the following guidelines:

- Balance caring with authority when modeling sound leadership.
- Be imaginative and inclusive.
- Provide structure within an informal workplace atmosphere.
- Apply media and technology to everyday activities whenever appropriate.
- Be attentive and sensitive to use of face time only when it makes sense.
- Add teamwork and collaboration to the schedule whenever prudent.
- Provide for social opportunities and connections.

Companies such as Virgin, Google, Facebook, and SAS have gained notoriety for moving well beyond the workforce commoditization paradigms that endorsed command over human beings (Heilbroner, 1986) toward enacting an evolved or enlightened systemic perspective—managing human resource synergy. The approach points to an expression of a positive systems approach (i.e., holistic perspective) to understand how to maximize the unique qualities of all current workplace generations. Such interactive, generationally inclusive human resource dimensions positively influence the modern organizational culture, in contrast to the cost-oriented staffing practices of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Leadership development cannot be separated from the context and culture of organizational design (Swensen, Gorringer, Caviness, & Peters, 2016). The paradigm shift toward human resource synergy is illustrated clearly by SAS CEO, Dr. James Goodnight, who noted that “when 95 percent of a company’s assets drive out the front gate every night, the CEO must see to it that they return the following day” (Semerciöz et al., 2011).

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

Researchers and practitioners can be certain that the definition and application of leadership is changing temporally and reactive to significant systemic

generational events and experiences. What is obtainable for the current workplace is to help mirror and model the emerging leadership changes understood by millennials. Dwyer (2009) offers that “understanding the differences may enable management to structure strategies and transformation techniques to motivate employees to the full extent of their skills and abilities to support the realization of organizational goals and objectives” (101). These workers will be the next generation of leaders. Where, then, does the future leadership style of the up-and-coming generation stand? According to Gass and Bezold (2013):

leadership must also create a workplace culture that is collaborative and empowers employees. Leaders must also show that they respect their employees as individuals, openly communicating with them including listening respectfully to what they have to say. Finally, [sic] leaders need to be open, trusting and ethical. (691)

Each generation enters the workplace with an understanding and expectation of leadership roles and processes based on the summative experiences and major events occurring during their respective formative years. Millennials, as generations before, arrive in the workplace with a set of predetermined realities that have shaped their beliefs and values related to what constitutes leader, leading, and leadership. As millennials learn to lead, Ancona and Bresman (2018) note that they begin to build knowledge, skills, and applications around a set of capabilities: sense-making, relating, visioning, inventing, and building credibility. The authors go on to say that building credibility is central to the other four. Others (e.g., Groysberg, Lee, Price & Cheng, 2018) suggest that strategy and culture are the most important focal points for an organization’s success. The media, human rights legislation, and military experience have played a major role on each generation’s perceived reality. Millennials’ experiences, media shrewdness, civic-mindedness, and collaborative nature will continue to mature, transform, and refine. Leaders, researchers, and practitioners can frame the future and the resultant redefinition of leadership for this next generation through a systems thinking approach, working through conceptualizing strategic issues of the organization as offered by the multi-generational leadership model. This

model seeks to abandon the commoditization of employees offered by early economic and human relations theorists. It further seeks to abandon the constructivist cost approach that mechanistically can result in organizational cultures focused on managing procedure, paperwork, and processes versus creating synergy through people. The synergy caused by generational intermingling cannot help but affect employers, sectors, and higher education institutions (Helyer & Lee, 2012). Ultimately, the root of trust lies in individual relationships, which create an institutional phenomenon beyond interpersonal relationships (Semerciöz et al., 2011).

Temporal context represents the lens through which millennials view leadership. An old lens empties the current reality. Millennials are clearly rebuffing the norm established by earlier generations (Campione, 2015). Consequently, researchers and practitioners alike need to reevaluate and frame (Daft, 2013) an Era 5 of leadership, as millennials dynamically role-switch between being leaders and followers in pursuit of an egalitarian expression of leadership discrete from the role of management. Participatory decision making in the Era 5 sharing economy (e.g., Airbnb and Uber) necessitates interdependent decisions coupled with highly collaborative interactions pointing to a robust leader–follower team dynamic.

Likewise, it is time to expand stewardship and servant leadership to include emergent, grassroots, distributed, and alternating leadership styles as the potentialities of the millennial generation's redefinition of leadership unfolds. Researchers must continue to identify and analyze the new generation's predominant leadership paradigm. They must consider an inclusive lens that allows for a lessening of hierarchical-based, hero-worshipping leadership expressions. The new focus should increase the fluidity of the role exchange between the leader and follower. Current generations seek more flexibility when selecting the leader role—and equally seek the follower role, as needed, when needed.

### **Limitations of the Research and Future Directions**

The above analysis has been limited to North American examples in the descriptions of the factors influencing generational cohorts. As Nayar (2013)

notes, the challenges of millennial leadership are of more than passing interest to economically emerging nations, such as India. The authors propose that similar principles may apply in other nations. The specifics of how these will result in and influence leadership development requires further examination. China is now becoming more powerful, and its new leaders are often media subjects. The events and trends that have influenced their mindsets undeniably merit investigation. As noted by Wang and Chee (2011), these include the earlier Western influences, the Soviet legacy, the Cultural Revolution, the resurgence of classic models, and the rise of new entrepreneurs such as Jack Ma of Alibaba. In Western Europe (e.g., Germany and the United Kingdom), leadership models and the generational influences include the austerities of the 1950s, economic revitalization, reunification, Thatcherism, and so forth. The authors hope and trust that the research described in this article contributes to the debate as to how to view and approach the complex study of leadership development globally.

Generation Z (also known as iGeneration) includes those born between approximately 2000 and 2020. They were not included in this article because they have not yet entered the workforce in large numbers. In addition, little peer-edited research currently exists on Generation Z. Future research on generational differences pertaining to workplace leadership should include the most recent generational cohort.

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## **Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership Practices and Enterprise Longevity: An Integrated Literature Review\***

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**Women entrepreneurs are emerging as important players in the national economy, yet gender bias and stereotypes that still exist in organizations prevent firms from taking advantage of their leadership potential. At the same time, traditional leadership models are lacking in diversity, and unanswered questions remain regarding the role of gender in entrepreneurial leadership and enterprise sustainability. This integrative literature review comprises part of a broader qualitative study offering insight into the leadership practices of women entrepreneurial leaders and the implications of these practices for enterprise longevity five years after startup. This overview of the extant research offers a targeted knowledge base that can be used to support further research and help advance the potential of women leaders. Addressing inequities in professional settings and formal work structures, along with promoting more diversity in the workplace, promises socioeconomic benefits for individual workers, small businesses, and large organizations.**

**Key words: enterprise longevity, gender bias, leadership, women entrepreneurs**

Women entrepreneurs are emerging as important players in the national American economy, yet there are still stereotypes and gender bias in professional settings that prevent firms from taking advantage of their potential as leaders in entrepreneurial ventures (Eagly & Heilman, 2016; McGowan, Cooper, Durkin, & O'Kane, 2015). The potential impact of gender bias and the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs serve as barriers to developing successful startup enterprises. In terms of research, both the leadership and entrepreneurship literature have been grounded in a masculine orientation (Lewis, 2015), and traditional leadership models are lacking in diversity (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Yousafzai, Saeed, & Muffatto, 2015). Given the changing face of leadership (Harrison, Leitch, & McAdam, 2015), continuing to rely on the

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\*Howard, D. L., & Halkias, D.. (2019). Women's entrepreneurial leadership practices and enterprise longevity: An integrated literature review. *International Leadership Journal*, 11(2), 64–104.

masculinized understanding of the successful entrepreneur limits knowledge of the identity of the true entrepreneurial leader (Galloway, Kapasi, & Sang, 2015).

As such, there remain questions on the role of gender in entrepreneurial leadership and enterprise sustainability (Dean & Ford, 2017; Foss, Henry, Ahl, & Mikalsen, 2018). Researchers are beginning to respond to calls for research to fill these gaps in the scholarly literature (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013b; Pejić Bach, Merkač Skok, & Suša, 2016) and to explore leadership and entrepreneurship through a gendered lens (Harrison et al., 2015). Examining women's entrepreneurship through a gendered lens will afford greater understanding of the unique capabilities of the woman entrepreneur (Yadav & Unni, 2016) and the value she can bring to professional settings (Henry & Foss, 2015).

Women entrepreneurial leaders who do not conform to traditional gender leadership practices risk negative evaluations and gender bias that may result in firms sacrificing these women's valuable entrepreneurial contribution to enterprise longevity (Eagly & Heilman, 2016; Mylonas, Kyrgidou, & Petridou, 2017). Conducting further research in gendered models and practices of entrepreneurial leadership and recognizing the effectiveness of women's entrepreneurial leadership practices in enterprise longevity is important, as women entrepreneurs are emerging as important players in the American economy (Chasserio, Poroli, & Redien-Collot, 2016; McGowan et al., 2015). The five-year benchmark is a critical element of defining entrepreneurial longevity; the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) reports that 21% of startup businesses operate for less than one year, and 77% have a lifespan of only three years. The remaining 23% must overcome multiple challenges for survival, including competition, product and service development, and customer acquisition (Stuetzer, Obschonka, & Schmitt-Rodermund, 2012). The fifth year of operation is therefore used as a benchmark for long-term sustainability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) (Fairlie, Morelix, Tareque, Russell, & Reedy, 2016).

Scholars continue to acknowledge unanswered questions in research regarding the role of gender in entrepreneurial leadership practices and its effect on enterprise longevity (see, for example, Foss et al., 2018; Mitchelmore & Rowley,

2013b; Pejić Bach et al., 2016; Stead, 2017). Yet, a gendered approach to entrepreneurial leadership has not developed, due to a dearth of research on the entrepreneurial leadership practices of women, that would enable a deeper understanding of gender's role in enterprise longevity (Dean & Ford, 2017; Galloway et al., 2015; Henry, Foss, Fayolie, Walker, & Duffy, 2015). The problem is that the leadership practices of women entrepreneurial leaders and the implications of these practices for enterprise longevity remains unknown (Dean, Larson, Ford, & Akram, 2019; Harrison et al., 2015).

### **Theoretical/Conceptual Framework**

The framework of this study is centered on two concepts that focus on the challenges women entrepreneurs must contend with in developing their careers: McGrath and MacMillan's (2000) concept of the need for a new type of leader, coined by the seminal authors as *entrepreneurial leadership*, and Brush's (1992) concept of the intersectionality of gender and entrepreneurial leadership. Entrepreneurial leadership, a critical concept to the foundation of this study, has predominately been explored based on leadership traits and behaviors (Leitch, McMullan, & Harrison, 2013). While in the past researchers have explored leadership from various leadership styles, including authentic, transformational, and shared leadership, a new paradigm has emerged—that of entrepreneurial leadership (McGowan et al., 2015). Research on this emerging field indicates parallels between entrepreneurship and leadership, yet there is no agreed-upon definition (Galloway et al., 2015; Harrison et al., 2015; McGowan et al., 2015). This study may be an important contribution in presenting previously unexamined gendered perspectives between previous leadership styles and the entrepreneurial leader.

In current leadership theory, the use of a flexible leadership style is encouraged, and most styles fall somewhere on a continuum from transactional to transformational, in which leaders are focused on the environment, tasks, and followers (Galloway et al., 2015). Per Galloway et al. (2015), the entrepreneurial leader functions as a visionary who can engage followers and stakeholders to

perform in such a way as to achieve the growth outcomes of the business. Leadership practices are crucial for enterprise longevity, and studies have suggested that leaders in SMEs are even more important, as there is a blurred line between leaders and managers (Bamiatzi, Jones, Mitchelmore, & Nikolopoloulos, 2015). Understanding the leadership practices needed for success in SMEs becomes even more important when examining the role of gender, as much of the entrepreneurial leadership has been described as gender blind, gender neutral, and gender defensive (Harrison et al., 2015; Leitch et al., 2013).

Researchers studying entrepreneurial leadership and gender have focused on the gender-as-variable approach, drawing comparisons between men and women leaders and promoting the masculine characteristics of leadership currently promoted in the leadership literature (Harrison et al., 2015; Henry et al., 2015; Leitch et al., 2013; McGowan et al., 2015). In some studies, this comparison between men and women has been used without theory to explain how gender impacts leadership practices, while in other studies, theories such as androgyny theory, social role theory, expectation states theory, and status theory have been used to interpret the results (Ayman & Korabik, 2010).

It has been suggested that to understand gender in entrepreneurship, a post-structuralist feminist stance is needed to move away from the masculinization of the entrepreneurial leader (Dean et al., 2019; Hamilton, 2014; Henry et al., 2015). Current entrepreneurship theory explaining venture creation is generally organized around three basic constructs: market, money, and management. An entrepreneur needs to have access to markets (Clough, Fang, Vissa, & Wu, 2019; Kirzner, 1985;), money (Aldrich, 1999; Balachandra, Briggs, Eddleston, & Brush, 2019) and management skills (in the form of human, social and organizational capital; Aldrich, 1989; Gupta, Weiland, & Turban, 2019) to launch a business. These encompass what Bates, Jackson, and Johnson (2007) describe as the three fundamental building blocks of business sustainability derived from a mainstream economics and management-driven view of entrepreneurship. Bates et al. argue that while these three constructs are central to the foundation of any business, minority (including women-owned) business

enterprises face barriers when attempting to access markets, money, and management skills (Welsh, Kaciak, & Shamah, 2018).

Drawing on the insights of Bates et al. (2007) for an initial platform, Brush (1992) and Brush, de Bruin, and Welter (2009) argue that to holistically study women's entrepreneurship, one must also consider norms, values, and external expectations (Elam, 2008). Market, money, and management skills must be defined to include the uniqueness of women's entrepreneurship, and the conceptual framework must be extended to include these additional facets: gender and the "meso" and "macro" environment. *Gender* can also be extended to represent family and household factors influencing one's entrepreneurial practices (Jennings & McDougald, 2007). The macro/meso environment captures considerations beyond the market, including factors such as expectations of social and cultural norms for women entrepreneurs. The *macro environment* typically includes national policies, strategies, and cultural and economic influences, while the *meso environment* reflects support policies, services, and initiatives (Dopfer, Foster, & Potts, 2004; Pitelis, 2005). Welter, Brush, and de Bruin (2014) support these five constructs of gendered entrepreneurial behavior and the agency of women entrepreneurs in influencing their spatial-institutional contexts by building on the conclusions of Ahl (2006) and Welter (2011) that place itself is gendered, reflecting local institutions.

While research has been conducted to examine the gender differences that exist between men and women business owners, there is still much that is unknown regarding the experiences of women entrepreneurial leaders, their career development, and the factors that contribute to or hinder their success (Henry et al., 2015). This highlights the need for a new perspective, one that integrates the human and social relationships that take place when women start their own businesses (Brush, 1992). In existing research, there is a lack of integration of gender and leadership from the entrepreneurial perspective of the woman. Redressing this failure will allow the integration of human and social capital to provide a more complete perspective of the complex nature in which society and business operate (Brush, 1992; Cole, 2009). Researchers have

studied the importance of social and human capital for the success of the woman business owner, finding that early development of this capital is imperative to success of their enterprises (Leitch et al., 2013; McGowan et al., 2015).

For a woman who wants a chance to be part of the leadership and decision-making in a company, entrepreneurship becomes an attractive option to have more control over the direction and culture of an enterprise (Tolbert & Castilla, 2017). Women-owned businesses can not only make significant contributions to the economy, but they provide an alternative route for women to move into leadership positions past the glass ceiling that continues to exist in organizations (Harrison et al., 2015). Utilizing the concepts of entrepreneurial leader and the intersectionality of gender and entrepreneurial leadership as a lens to view entrepreneurship as a gendered phenomenon offers a more meaningful impact on the career development of women entrepreneurs (Brush, 1992; Harrison et al., 2015; McGrath & MacMillan, 2000). Brush et al. (2009) suggest the use of a constructivist/interpretive stance to study women's entrepreneurship and the contextual embeddedness on which it is built. The challenge for future scholars is to answer critics by examining the woman entrepreneur through a feminist lens for a better understanding of the complexity of their leadership and career experiences (Dean et al., 2019; Henry et al., 2015).

## **Method**

The purpose of this integrative literature review is to propose suggestions for further study on the leadership practices of women entrepreneurs in the United States and the implications of these practices for enterprise longevity five years after their businesses' startup phases. Most gendered entrepreneurship leadership data derives from U.S. studies in which quantitative, survey-based approaches were utilized, thus lacking in exploratory methods needed to offer a deeper understanding of gendered entrepreneurial leadership practices (Henry et al., 2015; Kirkwood, 2016). To comprehensively examine the variables within the purpose of this article, an integrated literature review approach (Torraco, 2016) was utilized. An integrative review is a method used to summarize

knowledge, combining both theoretical writings and empirical studies, in order to develop a better understanding of a particular phenomenon or theme and offer recommendations for further research on a specific (Torraco, 2016).

### **Literature Search Strategy**

The literature review was researched using the Walden University Library databases, including Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Emerald Insight, ProQuest Central, and Sage Research Methods Online. Journals retrieved from other experts in the field of women's entrepreneurship for current research were used and verified on Google Scholar and Google search. Some of the search terms used were (a) entrepreneurship, (b) woman entrepreneur, (c) woman leadership practices, (d) gender bias, (e) glass ceiling, (f) intersectionality theory, (g) social role theory, (h) firm performance, and (i) entrepreneurial competencies. Some of these search terms were combined to see if more relevant results could be generated. These combined terms included (a) woman entrepreneur and leadership practices, (b) woman entrepreneur and gender, (c) woman entrepreneur and glass ceiling, (d) woman entrepreneur and entrepreneurial competencies, (e) firm performance and woman entrepreneur, (f) woman entrepreneur and social role theory, and (g) woman entrepreneur and intersectionality theory.

The primary objective of the literature search strategy was to provide evidence that the need exists to understand the leadership practices of women entrepreneurs five years past the startup of their businesses. Research based on the role of gender in entrepreneurial leadership was used to further justify that inequities in the workplace are a real social change problem that needs to be addressed through a feminist lens, thereby promoting diversity in the workplace. The secondary objective was to search for literature on the effects of gender on entrepreneurial leadership to provide evidence of masculinized leadership frameworks that exist in enterprises. The last objective was to find literature on the competencies women entrepreneurs use in leading organizations. Most of the articles used in the literature review were published between 2012 and 2017, and less than 10% were published between 2006 and 2012.

## **Integrative Literature Review**

While researchers have examined the gender differences that exist between men and women business owners, there is a need for a new perspective that integrates the human and social relationships that take place when women start their own businesses (Brush, 1992). Through the concept of intersectionality of gender and entrepreneurship, it is possible to integrate human and social capital to provide a more complete perspective of the complex nature in which society and business operate (Brush, 1992; Cole, 2009). Researchers have studied the importance of social and human capital for the success of women business owners, finding that early development of this capital is imperative to the success of their enterprises (Leitch et al., 2013; McGowan et al., 2015). Yet, the contributions of women entrepreneurs to enterprise longevity remain largely unrecognized by organizations. The management and leadership practices used by successful women entrepreneurs are critical to understanding how organizations can overcome the challenges they face in building progressive enterprises.

### **Entrepreneurship in the United States: A Brief Overview**

In 2016, there were more than 25 million entrepreneurs running or launching a new business in the United States (Kelley et al., 2017). U.S. small businesses (defined by the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) as under 500 employees for most manufacturing and mining industries and \$7.5 million in average annual receipts for many nonmanufacturing industries) employed about 56 million of the nation's private workforce (SBA, 2016). In 2015, 12.5% of men were among the ranks of the unincorporated self-employed, compared to 7.5% of women (Hipple & Hammond, 2016).

Entrepreneurs may share particular psychological characteristics (Frese & Gielnik, 2014). In a seminal study by Zhao, Seibert, and Hills (2005) comparing entrepreneurs and managers on the five-factor model of personality, entrepreneurs scored higher on conscientiousness and openness to experience. They scored lower on neuroticism and agreeableness, but showed no difference on extraversion (interpersonal assertiveness, enthusiasm, and energy; Zhao,



Seibert, & Lumpkin, 2010). In meta-analysis studies of entrepreneurial intentions, researchers concluded that entrepreneurs displayed traits of hard work and persistence, openness to new experiences, stress tolerance, emotional stability, the need for autonomy, less trusting and less agreeable in interpersonal relationships, ready to take greater risk, and strong internal locus of control (Brandstätter, 2011; Jin et al., 2017). Additionally, willingness to start a career that requires skill acquisition in various areas beyond one's defined skills area is a trait for entrepreneurs that is unique in comparison to the general population in the labor market (Halkias, Thurman, Smith, & Nason, 2016).

The decision to become an entrepreneur is influenced by early family life experiences and associated with social skills and entrepreneurial intentions expressed in adolescence. For women, becoming an entrepreneur is predicted by their families' socioeconomic status, which researchers theorize is due to structural disadvantages in society that make it more difficult for women to access startup capital than men and necessitates family financial support (Halkias et al., 2016). For men, becoming an entrepreneur is predicted by a business-owner father (Overbeke, Bilimoria, & Perelli, 2013). Family support, even when the business will not become a family-style business, is critical in a novice entrepreneur's decision to start a business and increases how prepared entrepreneurs are to launch a business in advance of its startup phase (Halkias & Denton, 2015; Shen, Osorio, & Settles, 2017).

Personal motivations such as the need for autonomy, challenges, and self-actualization; desire for personal growth or control; and a need for financial gains are some of the reasons a person may decide to become an entrepreneur (Fayolle, Liñán, & Moriano, 2014). Motivations of the entrepreneur shape the growth of the business, and those who express the desire for financial gains are more likely to have greater growth than those who express independence as the main motivation for starting a business (Shepherd & Patzelt, 2017). Those possessing a high orientation for innovation may be more motivated to leave the formal work structure and start their own business as they become frustrated with

business structures that do not favor innovation as a business strategy (Attiq, Wahid, Javaid, Kanwal, & Shah, 2017; Lee, Wong, Foo, & Leung, 2011).

A study by the SBA (2016) points to an increasing number of spouses/partners starting businesses together. Liang and Dunn (2011) found that entrepreneurs, men or women, who started a new company (either with or without a spouse's involvement) were better off financially, and their marital satisfaction improved or stayed the same. However, entrepreneurs have reported marital stress due to the challenges of work-life balance, lack of quality time, and incompatible expectations (Bhatnagar, Bhardwaj, & Mittal, 2017).

**Women's Entrepreneurship.** In 1953, the SBA was formed to recognize the impact of small businesses on the U.S. economy and to promote their growth through policies (SBA, 2015). In the years following, lawmakers enacted several policies to increase the focus on women and minority-owned businesses (National Women's Business Council [NWBC], 2004). In the 1960s, several policies were ushered in, aimed at nondiscrimination of women and minorities. The Commission on the Status of Women, along with Executive Order 10925, set nondiscrimination standards for federal contracts, followed by the Civil Rights Act and Title VII, barring employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The Consumer Credit Protection Act prohibits lenders from discriminating on the basis of sex or marital status when extending credit and requires disclosure of important terms and all costs associated with loans in the Truth in Lending Act (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation [FDIC], 2014). Title IX requires equal treatment of women by educational institutions that receive federal funding (U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commissions [EEOC], 2015).

Many of the policies supporting women business owners that were enacted in the 1980s were advocated by the National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO, 2014), most notably the Women's Business Ownership Act (HR 5050), to bring attention to the importance of women-owned businesses for the economy (Library of Congress, 2015). In 2009, President Obama enacted the

Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009 to restore protection against pay discrimination (National Women's Law Center [NWLC], 2014).

The numerous acts, policies, and programs introduced since the 1950s provide evidence of the work that has and continues to be done by changing the perspective of society, narrowing the gap between men and women leaders, and increasing opportunities for women. However, gender bias and oppression continue to impact women in many areas of life, including formal work structures and entrepreneurship (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Galloway et al., 2015). Entrepreneurship is associated with a masculine identity (Hamilton, 2014; Lewis, 2013), and as such, women have been encouraged to adopt relevant masculine traits so as to be viewed as legitimate business owners (Lewis, 2015).

The number of women-owned businesses has more than doubled in the last 20 years, according to the annual State of Women-Owned Businesses Report (American Express OPEN, 2017). The report notes that, as of January 2017, the approximately 11.6 million women-owned businesses in the United States employ some 9 million people and inject more than USD \$1.7 billion into the economy as revenue. These findings align with studies indicating the fast growth of the number of women entrepreneurs and their contributions to the economy (de Vita, Mari, & Poggesi, 2014; Salloum, Azzi, Mercier-Suissa, & Khalil, 2016). Within the last two decades, the employment rate for women-owned businesses was 27% versus 13% for all businesses (American Express OPEN, 2017). Three industries were noted in the report to encompass half of all women-owned businesses: other services (2.8 million or 23%); health care and social assistance (1.8 million or 15%); and professional, scientific, and technical services (1.5 million or 12%; American Express OPEN, 2017). Just 10 to 20% of important industries such as information technology, construction, and finance are owned by women (Hechavarria & Ingram, 2016; Pisoni & Bielli, 2015). The findings in the report point to progress for the woman entrepreneur but also the need to promote women-owned businesses, as they have the potential to make an even greater contribution to the economy (American Express OPEN, 2017).

**Push and Pull Factors.** Negative or “push” factors, such as the need for additional income, dissatisfaction with current employment, the need for a more flexible work schedule, and the glass ceiling, are impetuses for women to start their own businesses (Bianchi, Parisi, & Salvatore, 2016; Fairlie, 2013). Other examples are issues such as gender discrimination or a lack of promotion opportunities to upper management, driving women to move from the formal work structures found in organizations (Mishra & Mishra, 2016; Moore, Moore, & Moore, 2011). Researchers have shown that women, ethnic minorities, and younger age groups (Carter, Mwaura, Ram, Trehan, & Jones, 2015; Harrison et al., 2015; McGowan et al., 2015) are affected by these push factors, driving them to start their own businesses as a last resort to find satisfaction in the work environment.

Difficult work environments are not the only reason women pursue their own businesses, as they are also lured by the freedom to conduct business on their terms, autonomy, and personal satisfaction. Pull factors that draw them to entrepreneurship and that are most cited by researchers are independence and the challenge of ownership (Bianchi et al., 2016; Patrick, Stephens, & Weinstein, 2016), although they may also be motivated by autonomy or personal growth (McGowan et al., 2015). The opportunity to contribute to society through ethical, customer-focused business practices seemingly motivates women more than men (Brush, 1992; Leitch et al., 2013). Women entrepreneurs have also cited social motivations such as the desire to build a community spirit or the desire to help other women by addressing economic gender inequalities or providing opportunities for stay-at-home mothers (Fayolle et al., 2014; Minarcine & Shaw, 2016).

**Entrepreneurial Leadership Models and Multiple Identities.** Literature relating to entrepreneurship, small business studies, strategic management, and economic theory is notably biased in descriptions of entrepreneurial identity, commonly rooting them in traditionally masculine traits and norms (Conroy & Weiler, 2016). Recently, this has prompted a small, yet steadily advancing critique of gendered concepts of entrepreneur identity, highlighting a need for a feminist approach that will challenge long-established notions and introduce new perspectives (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Stead, 2015, 2017). Researchers are being

encouraged to consider the leadership–entrepreneurship interface through a gendered analytic lens (Harrison et al., 2015). In their article, Harrison et al. (2015) draw attention to a wealth of new meanings linked to the concept of entrepreneurial leadership and suggest the fluidity of this concept. Through these numerous, fluid meanings, the authors shed light on how entrepreneurs' sensing of their everyday subjectivities break the boundaries of the dominant entrepreneurial discourse and embrace the many and varied social—and perhaps even conflicting—identities (Lewis, 2015).

Women have had to deal with conflicts in leadership identity due to the higher-ranking value ascribed to men in leadership (Díaz-García & Welter, 2011). Masculine approaches to leadership in current research follow notions related to what constitutes successful entrepreneurial leadership, introducing additional conflict for women entrepreneurs (Marlow & McAdam, 2013). Dean and Ford (2017) adopted a critical and feminist post-structural lens in their qualitative study of 12 individuals from the United Kingdom on women entrepreneurs and their working lives as leaders. The authors posit that their study has implications for theory, as it contributes to a new ontological domain in the literature on entrepreneurial leadership, and that their findings and analysis challenge the normative accounts of entrepreneurial practices that continue to privilege a hegemonic masculine discourse while marginalizing both women and men who do not fit within the narrow constraints of that dominant discourse. The primary limitations of this study were that the narratives collected through this research were inevitably shaped by the current social, material, and ideological context of the United Kingdom. Dean and Ford recommend further reflective and qualitative research studies of women entrepreneurs that add further insight and diversity from studies contextualized by location.

The concept of the entrepreneur has traditionally been described by scholars as a male-gendered concept, and this has created a standard against which the successful woman entrepreneur is measured (Ahl, 2006). For the most part, the focus of leadership research has been on traits and behaviors (Leitch et al., 2013), although a new concept of the entrepreneurial leader has emerged

(McGowan et al., 2015). Gendered interpretations limit understanding of the concepts of entrepreneurship and leadership, and alternative perspectives need to be examined (Galloway et al., 2015). Critical leadership studies provide approaches to studying leadership using diverse views and challenge the existing perspectives on leadership (Dean & Ford, 2017). Expanding the existing theoretical frameworks for woman's entrepreneurship could help to explain the unique capabilities of the woman entrepreneur (Yadav & Unni, 2016). One such framework identified by Galloway et al. (2015) involves the use of performativity to understand entrepreneurship. Further, a shift in the perspective of entrepreneurship through a lens of narrative identity and gender would help to lift the constraints of the current masculine models that have been imposed (Eagly & Heilman, 2016; Foss et al., 2018; Hamilton, 2014).

***Women's Entrepreneurial Identity and Other Social Identities.*** Women entrepreneurs construct their identities in multiple ways (Díaz-García & Welter, 2011; Stead, 2017), and as such, there is a need to examine how these identities shape the leadership of the woman entrepreneur. While many empirical studies have shown the woman entrepreneur attempting to conform to the masculine identity of the entrepreneur, Lewis (2013) found that the desire for authenticity was a motivating factor related to identity development for the woman entrepreneur.

While scholars have acknowledged that entrepreneurial social identity is framed according to male-dominated social norms, women entrepreneurs are conflicted in that role, as they also possess the feminine social identities of wives and mothers (Chasserio, Pailot, & Poroli, 2014). The findings of a study conducted by Lewis, Ho, Harris, and Morrison (2016) offer evidence that women experience role conflict as they transition from motherhood to entrepreneur, creating a shift in their identities and priorities. Allowing the woman entrepreneur's voice to be heard through narrative identity will enhance researchers' understanding of how entrepreneurial identity is socially constructed (Hamilton, 2014). This is further supported by other studies that have shown that entrepreneurship and womanhood are conflicted identities, yet women construct

identities differently, accomplishing business practices through gendered practices (Díaz-García & Welter, 2011; Stead, 2017).

In the same vein, research indicates that women entrepreneurs are able to develop strategies that interact with their personal and socially constructed identities, showing their ability to either accept or challenge the conventional expectations in a manner that diverges from the generally accepted masculine approach (Chasserio et al., 2014). Such findings underpin the shortcomings of entrepreneurship research regarding gender. A more nuanced approach is needed to consider the constantly changing and evolving nature of entrepreneurial identity, which intersects with other social identities that, in turn, also change and evolve (Chasserio et al., 2014).

***Gender-Based Leadership Barriers.*** Barriers that exist or present at the societal and personal levels have a profound impact on women's ability to advance into executive leadership (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). Critical human resource development theories seek to draw attention to the hidden nature of sexism in the workplace. The starting point of these theories is the idea that organizations, built in patriarchal societies, represent and promote patriarchal values (Swan, Stead, & Elliott, 2009). According to this line of thinking, organizations not only reflect patriarchal society, they also actively participate in creating and reproducing gender in conformity with patriarchal images (Acker, 1990). These images conform to stereotyped ideas of masculinity and femininity, which place men in roles of power and women in support roles. The exclusion of women in the upper echelons of organizational life is not out of the ordinary, promoted by the fact that men have historically founded and dominated various organizational domains (e.g., law, religion, politics).

Researchers are developing the concept of second-generation forms of gender bias involving barriers "from cultural beliefs about gender as well as workplace structures, practices, and patterns of interaction that inadvertently favor men" (Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011, 475). These barriers are often indirect and unintentional acts of bias and are supported by the gendered norms that are embedded in organizations. The perception of women as leaders is clouded by

women themselves when these barriers accumulate (Ibarra, Ely, & Kolb, 2013). The role of gender stereotypes and their effect on women's leadership have drawn considerable attention by researchers (Carli & Eagly, 2011; Glass & Cook, 2016; Harrison et al., 2015). Additionally, scholars continue to document a lack of mentoring in organizations for women (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016; Hurley & Choudhary, 2016; Renko, El Tarabishy, Casrud, & Brännback, 2015), challenges for women seeking maternity leave and flex time that will not remove them from the corporate ladder climb (Hurley & Choudhary, 2016), and women struggling to break that ever-present glass ceiling in leadership positions, reinforcing women's scarcity in organizational leadership (Choi, 2018).

The limitation of current theoretical approaches is their singular focus in researching one organizational issue after the other while ignoring how gendered structures are produced and reproduced in the personal lives and developmental experiences of professional women (Diehl & Dzubinski, 2016). For example, when the division of parental roles includes a career-minded working mother, children are more likely to develop an attitude of gender equality (Wetlesen, 2013). Researchers have also documented the lack of self-confidence in women seeking promotion opportunities in the workplace and the issues that surround lower levels of self-confidence (Sturm, Taylor, Atwater, & Braddy, 2014), whereas men tend to overestimate their ability to fill unfamiliar roles in the workplace (Akinola, Martin, & Phillips, 2018).

**Challenges to Women's Leadership in SMEs.** A large percentage of businesses are started by women, yet they are typically smaller and less profitable than enterprises owned by men (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013b; Salloum et al., 2016), with the vast majority having no more than six employees (Global Entrepreneurship Monitor [GEM], 2016). The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015) reports that 77% of women-owned startups remain open after six years, which may be due to barriers and challenges business women face, including those not faced by men business owners, yet researchers continue to disagree over the root causes of the barriers and disparities in size and profit. According to researchers, women are more likely to start lower-growth



companies that require fewer investments in time and money (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013b). Work and family balance, including time for child care, has been cited by researchers as the primary constraint for women in growing their enterprises and is negatively related to the success of their businesses (Cilliers & Strydom, 2016; Mohamad & Bakar, 2017). When women are the primary financial support, they state the financial growth of their business is as important to them as to men business owners (Cantú Cavada, Bobek, & Maček, 2017; Dean et al., 2019; Mohamad & Bakar, 2017; Patrick et al., 2016).

The current economic climate also requires an understanding of the barriers that exist for women who are seeking venture funding and the angel investors who are seeking to fund these startups. Only 9% of venture capital funds go to women-owned businesses in New York City (Leitch, Welter, & Henry, 2018). Women venture capitalists are 34% more likely to invest in companies that have a woman on their executive team and three times more likely to invest in those with a woman CEO (Brush, Greene, Balachandra, & Davis, 2017). Men entrepreneurs may have a broader network than women, which allows them to have greater access to private equity funding (Aaltio & Wang, 2015). Women tend to have a network built with more family and close friends, which can be a disadvantage to not only women but men as well (Eddleston, Kadgem, Mitteness & Balachandra, 2016).

The lack of attention to women's entrepreneurship in both the media and academia has been noted by scholars as a possible limitation to business startups by women entrepreneurs (Eikhof, Summers, & Carter, 2013). However, there has been an increase in research on women entrepreneurs over the last 15 years due to repeated calls for such research by scholars (Jennings & Brush, 2013). Entrepreneurship may act as a catalyst for empowerment and freedom for women who have faced barriers and discrimination in the formal workplace and provide more opportunities to showcase their talents and capabilities, free from gender bias.

***Women's Entrepreneurial Leadership: Implications for Enterprise Longevity.*** Women-owned businesses are growing at a fast pace in the United States (Brush & Cooper, 2012; de Vita et al., 2014) and making important

economic contributions (Ettl & Welter, 2012; Salloum et al., 2016). According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2015), 21% of startup businesses operate for less than one year and 77% have a lifespan of only three years. The five-year benchmark is critical in defining entrepreneurial longevity (Fairlie et al., 2016) as the percentage of small business failures reached 55% by the fifth year, and although women own more than 30% of SMEs, they have also contributed to that failure rate (SBA, 2014a).

Studies have shown women-owned businesses to be less successful than businesses owned by men (Dean et al., 2019; Ettl & Welter, 2012; Marlow & McAdam, 2013). Scholars accept success as a construct that depends on both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Weber, 2014). Further, Weber (2014) posits there are significant gender differences in the value of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Extrinsic factors are indicators of business performance and include economic, financial, and operational results (Robb & Watson, 2012; Weber, 2014; Zolin, Stuetzer, & Watson, 2013). Intrinsic motivators are qualitative aspects (Weber, 2014), related to the entrepreneur's satisfaction (Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017). While men and women both tend to value profit (external motivator), women also value the internal rewards of owning a business, such as developing and maintaining relationships (Kirkwood, 2016).

Dej (2010) suggests that the qualitative indicators be measured by the perceptions of the entrepreneur's personal success and financial success. The entrepreneur's personal success includes social recognition, loyal relationships with customers, and fulfillment of personal goals and development (Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017; Lewis, 2013). Dijkhuizen, Gorgievski, van Veldhoven, and Shalk (2014) established an association between demand factors (working hours, uncertainty and risk, and responsibility) and resources (autonomy, work variety, feedback, learning opportunities, organization, and independence) and the perception of success.

Entrepreneurial success needs to be examined from several aspects, including economic, individual, and societal perspectives, and studies have shown these perspectives of success differ for women and men entrepreneurs (Cabrera &

Mauricio, 2017; Ettl & Welter, 2012; Kirkwood, 2016; Poggesi, Mari, & De Vita, 2016). For example, women entrepreneurs have closer family connections and benefit from those, as they lack the same access to financial capital and social resources as men entrepreneurs (Kirkwood, 2016; Powell & Eddleston, 2013). Survival, stability, job creation, recognition, and personal development have been cited as defining success for the woman entrepreneur (Dalborg, 2012). Therefore, success must be examined from both a quantitative and qualitative dimension (Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017; Weber, 2014; Zolin et al., 2013).

Even though women entrepreneurs prepare to compete for success, they may not measure success by profit gains but by their ability to prioritize the balance between their personal and business lives (Ahl & Marlow, 2012; Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017). Some researchers suggest that gender may affect the competitive nature of the small business enterprise and may explain why women are less likely to start a new business (Bönte & Piegeler, 2013). Women-owned businesses are often described as less successful due to the gendered nature of the parameters used to measure success (Kirkwood, 2016; Marlow & McAdam, 2013).

Researchers have attempted to explain how women's entrepreneurship is affected by factors that contribute to the success or failure of the business (Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017). Some of the factors that have emerged from the studies include organizational environment, gender stereotypes, and access to resources (Elam & Terjesen, 2010; Gupta, 2014; Wu, 2012). Other researchers have examined gender-based comparisons of the effects of factors such as motivations (Díaz-García & Brush, 2012), growth strategies (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013b), and competencies and family-business relationships (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013a; Powell & Eddleston, 2013).

Through a literature review, Cabrera and Mauricio (2017) uncovered elements related to the success of the woman entrepreneur, such as the skills and knowledge gained through work experience and competencies embedded in the entrepreneur's background. Scholars acknowledge that the success of the SME relies on the competencies of the entrepreneur (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013a). Mitchelmore and Rowley (2013b) developed a competency model for women

entrepreneurs. Those competencies include personal and relationship-based, business and management, business venturing, and human resource management. Scholars also note the positive effect that human and social capital has on the success of the woman entrepreneur (Barnir, 2014; McGowan et al., 2015). Other researchers note the positive relationship between human and social capital and access to financing and investment capital (Aterido, Beck, & Iacovone, 2013; Tinkler, Whittington, Ku, & Davies, 2015).

Access to capital has been examined extensively as it relates to the success of women entrepreneurs. The success of new businesses depends on access to capital (Manolova, Manev, & Gyoshev, 2014; SBA, 2014b), yet women face more obstacles in obtaining financing (SBA, 2014a). Women typically start their businesses with personal capital in small amounts, reducing the amount of debt or equity capital needed (Coleman, Cotei, & Farhat, 2016; Jennings & Brush, 2013). Risk to the business increases with external capital due to the repayment needed and eliminates the entrepreneur as the sole decision-maker in the business (Abdulsaleh & Worthington, 2013). Findings from other studies indicate that women entrepreneurs have less access to capital funding because of how they are perceived by financing organizations (Kariv & Coleman, 2015; Radhakrishnan, 2015).

Enterprise longevity depends on access to capital for startup, and scholars have not agreed on discrimination in financing entrepreneurial ventures (Cheng, 2015; Henderson, Herring, Horton, & Thomas, 2015; Mijid, 2015). Although overt discrimination no longer exists in the United States since the passage of the Equal Credit Opportunity Act in 1974, covert discrimination practices do exist in the form of higher interest rates, lower lines of credit, and collateral requirements (Agier & Szafarz, 2013; Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017). In one study, researchers found that men were treated more fairly when evaluated for credit (Henderson et al., 2015), while Cheng (2015) found no evidence of lender bias for minority entrepreneurs. Through a systematic literature review, Jennings and Brush (2013) determined that women began and operated their firms with low levels of financing, used less-formal debt financing, and less angel and venture financing

than their male counterparts, and were found to underperform compared to men-owned businesses in sales, profits, asset base, and number of employees.

Business growth has been tied to entrepreneurial attitude and self-efficacy. Research has shown that men and women share the same high-growth entrepreneurial (HGE) intention, positively viewing growth, technological change, sufficient capitalization, strategic planning, and growth (Dean et al., 2019; Sweida & Reichard, 2013). Sweida and Reichard (2013) observed that women with HGE intention had a positive self-image and viewed barriers as challenges. Orser, Elliott, and Leck (2013) agree, citing the need for perseverance as a necessary attribute for overcoming bias. Other researchers found that entrepreneurial growth directly related to self-efficacy and attitude, and self-efficacy related not only to the individual, but to the environment, which included the stakeholders and their access to capital (Bulanova, Isaksen, & Kolvereid, 2016; Mas-Tur, Soriano, & Roig-Tierno, 2015).

The success of each stage of the entrepreneurial process is affected by many factors and has the ability to put the business at risk. Recognition of the factors involved in each stage allows those to be confronted by the woman business owner to produce a positive impact on economic growth and success (Cabrera & Mauricio, 2017). Further, Cabrera and Mauricio (2017) suggest that changes in the national education system would allow women to overcome stereotypes to access the resources they need for enterprise longevity.

***Educating Women to Grow into Entrepreneurial Leadership.*** For more women to grow as leaders, there is a need for more emphasis on entrepreneurship education and training programs. McKeever, Jack, and Anderson (2015) found that education ranked high as a reason for entrepreneurial success and suggest that those involved in entrepreneurship, including academia, use their knowledge and resources collaboratively to help reduce the number of unsuccessful SME owners. In another study, Huarng, Mas-Tur, and Yu (2012) examined skills required for successful ownership, finding that lack of education and management competencies were factors in the challenges of being a successful small business owner. A study by Pérez and

Morales (2014) determined that gender as well as the type of education, public or private, heavily influenced both entrepreneurial motivation and the desire to lead.

Research has shown that through effective entrepreneurial education and training, women may succeed in entrepreneurial businesses as leaders in their communities (Bullough, de Luque, Abdelzaher, & Heim, 2015; Foss et al., 2018). Bullough et al. (2015) propose a model for entrepreneurship education and training to help women with family support, to become autonomous, and to be an example to other women who may aspire to become entrepreneurs. McGowan et al. (2015) found that education failed to prepare young women for entrepreneurship. Business success depends on skills and competencies developed. The need exists for the leadership and entrepreneurship fields to exchange ideas, learning from each other from a more gendered perspective (Patterson, Mavin, & Turner, 2012).

Scholars have found a positive relationship between business success and human capital assets related to entrepreneurship competencies—i.e., the knowledge and skills needed to become successful entrepreneurs (Martin, McNally, & Kay, 2013; Unger, Rauch, Frese, & Rosenbusch, 2011). Warnecke (2016) suggests that while there are a number of programs supporting women's entrepreneurship, the lack of and understanding of diversity among women entrepreneurs and the lack of a connection to these programs leads to bias in the programs. These skills and competencies have been shown to be developed through education and training, and the greater the number of resources young women have to draw upon greatly increases their chance of success (McGowan et al., 2015).

Mitchelmore and Rowley (2013a) examined four competencies to determine their impact on growth and performance of women-owned businesses. The results showed that four clusters of competencies—personal and relationship, business and management, entrepreneurial, and human relations—were valued more by women than men entrepreneurs, and that personal relationships, human relations, and education contribute to the overall success of women-owned businesses. Bamiatzi et al. (2015) suggest that the lack of management skills

and experience are a major constraint for the woman entrepreneur. The researchers focused on the role competencies play in developing women leaders. Two important findings emerged: (a) transformational leadership style is linked to the participant's perceived human, personal, and entrepreneurial competencies; and (b) the participants were highly confident in their entrepreneurial competencies but not in their managerial competencies.

The lack of education and managerial skills have been shown as major challenges for women entrepreneurs (Huang et al., 2012; World Bank, 2013). Education systems and support networks have failed to provide support for young women who are seeking entrepreneurship opportunities (McGowan et al., 2015). If women are to develop successful businesses, scholars need to recognize the influence of the role of finance, management, leadership skills, marketplace, and family as well as institutional and cultural environment (Brush et al., 2009). As women entrepreneurs are influential in their communities and have the capability to affect public policy, entrepreneurship education and training can assist them in their leadership goals (Bullough et al., 2015). Women and men entrepreneurs are more different than similar in their business acumen and personal demographics, and as such, training programs must address these differences (GEM, 2016).

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

In a meta-analysis, Henry and Foss (2015) present literature demonstrating the diversity and complexity of women's entrepreneurial leadership, providing evidence that it is economically and contextually embedded and a more thorough understanding is needed of women's entrepreneurial leadership and the value it would bring to the scholarly community. McGowan et al. (2015) examined the constructs of human and social capital and their influence on prospective women entrepreneurs, and by using intersectionality theory, examined how the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs affect the development of their businesses and leadership potential. A need exists to understand the potential barriers that prevent entrepreneurs in developing successful startup enterprises (Chasserio et al., 2016;

Harrison et al., 2015). To respond to this research gap, scholars also indicate the need for an exploration of entrepreneurial leadership from a woman's perspective, suggesting qualitative studies as the choice method to close the gap (Markussen & Røed, 2017). Further research is needed to gain a deeper understanding of the daily work lives and leadership practices of women business owners (Dean & Ford, 2017; Harrison et al., 2015) and the implications of these practices for enterprise longevity (Bianchi et al., 2016; Eagly & Heilman, 2016).

The lack of exploratory research on women's entrepreneurial leadership practices and their implications for enterprise longevity highlights a critical knowledge gap, resulting in leadership theoretical frameworks lacking diversity, generalizability of findings, and gender inclusivity (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Henry et al., 2015; Yousafzai et al., 2015). Scholars concur on an existing research gap regarding the role of gender in entrepreneurial leadership practices and its effect on enterprise longevity (Mitchelmore & Rowley, 2013b; Pejić Bach et al., 2016). Yet, a gendered approach to entrepreneurial leadership has yet to be developed regarding the entrepreneurial leadership practices of women (Dean & Ford, 2017; Galloway et al., 2015; Henry et al., 2015). Empirical investigation into women's entrepreneurial leadership is needed to fill the gap in knowledge and to advance theoretical foundations that may prove useful in future related research.

Workplace discrimination must be addressed at the micro level, as the impact is felt across communities (Harrison et al., 2015; McGowan et al., 2015). Gender is one aspect of this discrimination and remains significant in determining inequity in the United States (Henry et al., 2015). More research conducted through a gendered lens will potentially bear social change implications in understanding if the creation of alternate work settings, such as women leading successful SMEs, will impact the culture at large. Further, women entrepreneurs have a voice that is shaped by their distinct experiences with workplace discrimination (Ayman & Korabik, 2010; Harrison et al., 2015). Further qualitative research will offer women entrepreneurs the opportunity to voice their experiences regarding both gender and entrepreneurial leadership, an area that



remains largely unexplored and undocumented (Bamiatzi et al., 2015; Brush, 1992; Harrison et al., 2015).

Capturing the differences made by women entrepreneurs also contributes to social change by opening new avenues for business growth and building new bridges of communication between the business world and society (Chasserio et al., 2016). Documenting the leadership practices of women entrepreneurs may serve as a catalyst for social change by challenging the status quo in existing formal work structures and promoting more diversity in the workplace.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

Research continues to provide examples of the lack of women in leadership positions within privately owned firms and the pervasive gender discrimination in group and organizational contexts that exists in organizations today, preventing firms from taking advantage of women's potential as leaders in entrepreneurial ventures (Eagly & Heilman, 2016; Galloway et al., 2015; McGowan et al., 2015). Given that the career development and management literature is largely comprised of studies constructed from a masculine perspective (Leitch et al., 2013; Patterson et al., 2012), this literature review offers evidence of the need to address myriad issues that women face in new business endeavors.

More studies on gender in leadership are needed, and scholars propose a shift in the view of gender in entrepreneurship, discussing the concepts of narrative identity and gender. This paradigm shift would assist in freeing the constraints that existing male-dominated models impose on entrepreneurship (Mylonas et al., 2017). By examining this epistemological shift, a new platform on theory and methodology in entrepreneurship can emerge, challenging the traditional masculine perspective that currently exists (Hamilton, 2014). A gendered analysis of entrepreneurial leadership will contribute to the emerging field and will encourage further development of women entrepreneurs (Salloum et al., 2016).

The entrepreneurial leader can be a catalyst for the change that is needed for women to advance in their careers and provide socioeconomic development among women business owners (Chasserio et al., 2014). By understanding the

barriers faced by women entrepreneurial leaders, as well as the successes that contribute to enterprise longevity, the national economy will benefit. As women become educated and trained in the competencies needed to become successful, they, in turn, become role models for other women seeking to become leaders.

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## **Your Learning Style May Explain Your Emotional Intelligence or Your Emotional Ineptitude\***

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**Although the interest in emotional intelligence (EI) continues to increase in academia and business organizations alike, few individuals have received formal EI training. Much of the previous research on EI focuses on behaviors, training outcomes, and cultural or environmental factors. Many researchers claim that EI is a learnable skill, however, with most kinds of training, individuals respond differently and have varying beginning skill levels. One possible explanation for these differences may be how individuals learn. As a result, the individual learning styles and EI levels of 228 respondents were examined in our exploratory research. Independent sample *t*-tests were performed, revealing that a significant difference exists in the total EI scores of certain categories of learning styles.**

**Key words: emotional intelligence, high potentials, individual differences, individual learning style, leadership development**

For close to two decades, management scholars and businesspeople have shared an affinity for the concept of emotional intelligence (EI). One reason for this affinity may be some of the ideas purported about EI in the popular press. For example, according to Bradberry and Greaves (2009), for every one-point increase in an individual's EI, there is an increase in annual income of approximately USD\$1,600. Belsten (2016) notes that EI is estimated to account for more than 90% of an individual's performance, while Bradberry and Greaves purport that 90% of high performers have high EI (90 or above). Most EI researchers agree the overwhelming majority of individuals have much lower EI skills than the high performers discussed in most studies. Therefore, it would appear that the vast majority of those individuals have a lot of room for improvement in their EI skills. So, given that the average person's EI is lackluster at best, how we learn may account for part of the significant differences in untrained EI levels found in many high performers in comparison with lower

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\*Moore, T. W., Snider, J. B. (2019). Your learning style may explain your emotional intelligence or your emotional ineptitude. *International Leadership Journal*, 11(2), 105–115.

performers. Bradberry and Greaves found that top management teams had the lowest average EI of those they surveyed, while men scored slightly lower than women, and older participants scored a little higher than younger participants. Some scholarly studies (Jena, Bhattacharya, Hati, Ghosh, & PandaJorfi, 2014; Fauzy Bin Yacco, & Md Shah, 2012; Khalili, 2011; Nagar, 2017) have reported different findings with regard to EI and gender, age, and other individual differences as many of the popular press articles report; however, they, too, offer no further explanation as to why high performers may have higher untrained EI.

With the growing emphasis by industry to hire workers with advanced leadership and professional skills, understanding how individuals learn EI, which may account for individual differences in untrained EI levels, is of paramount importance. While speaking to a junior-level business class, the manager of organizational development and talent management at a major chemical company discussed how their organization uses a variety of assessments to try to hire and develop people with leadership and professional skills. The manager stated that they were also beginning to investigate EI as a way to identify high-potential candidates and further screen for them (L. Davis, personal communication, November 11, 2016). In 2018, Percy reported in *Forbes* that EI will be the sixth most important skill required of employees and that “60% of businesses say that [EI] is a very important skill for their employees to have” (para. 3). Therefore, if organizations are using EI as a litmus test for good employees, it is incumbent on business schools to begin teaching EI to prepare students for the job market. To further emphasize the importance of teaching EI, Dubey and Bakhshi (2018), who studied Indian business students, state that “it is imperative that management students who possess good social skills be considered for recruitment [over] those students who lack these skills” (33). Varis, Majaniemi, and Wilderom (2018) studied job ads by Finnish recruiters and found the most wanted skills focused on aspects of EI. In their study of South African students, Kanonuhwa, Rungani, and Chimucheka (2018) discuss the importance of EI on entrepreneurial intention of students. Therefore, it is clear

that EI is an important skill, both domestically and internationally, giving a further understanding of learning EI skills a global context.

This timely study can immediately impact industry as well as business schools and their students. It focuses on how individual differences in learning style might affect pre-training levels of EI. If there is a significant relationship between a learning style and higher levels of EI, then our understanding of why some people have much higher pre-training levels of EI compared with others will be better understood. Also, insight into identifying high potentials is bolstered and teaching pedagogy can be illuminated. Therefore, if business schools can begin to train individuals in EI and help them increase their skills, they might find that their graduating students are much more sought after than ever before. Thus, two research questions were developed:

Question 1: Is there a difference in total EI based on learning style?

Question 2: Are some learning styles better suited for learning EI than others?

## **Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

Emotional intelligence has received a great deal of attention in academic research. It has been found to be related to such work outcomes as performance (Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008), organizational climate (Momeni, 2009), and job satisfaction (Mahal, 2016). EI is also purported to have a direct relationship with positive work behaviors and an indirect relationship with negative work behaviors (Kaur, 2014). Stress in the workplace has also been shown to be negatively related to EI (Nikolaou & Tsaousis, 2002) and it has been linked to Six Sigma and workplace spirituality (Marques, Allevato, & Holt, 2008). Student outcomes and their major areas of study have been shown to be related to EI levels (Rozell, Pettijohn, & Parker, 2002). Previous studies have indicated that EI is related to the Big Five personality traits (Perez-González & Sanchez-Ruiz, 2014; Petrides et al., 2010; Van der Zee, Thijs, & Schakel, 2002) and a multitude of other individual differences and organizational aspects.

No previous research, however, examining how differences in learning style might affect EI could be found. Exploratory research was then begun to answer

the questions around why some individuals seem to naturally have a higher EI than others. Moore, Snider, and Luchini (2012) examined this question and found a possible link to this phenomenon through their empirical research into personalities. They found a correlation between right-brained thinkers and higher EI and suggested that whole-brained thinkers may have an even higher EI. The premise of this study was to ascertain the role that certain parts of an individual's Myers-Briggs type—focusing on information processing and decision making—might play in learning EI.

Therefore, a natural extension to this research is to examine how individuals learn EI and if differences in how individuals learn play a role in higher EI scores. A literature review was performed, and previous research by Felder and Silverman (1988) seemed to show promise. Felder and Silverman parsed together previous research and their own theory on individual learning styles to delineate those styles into five categories of two learning styles, although they later reduced this to four categories. As an extension of this research, Felder and Soloman (1994) ultimately created an assessment, the Index of Learning Styles, that measures each of the four categories of learning styles. The use of their assessment may provide some insight into how EI is learned. Their assessment translates five key learning questions into four major learning preference categories. The questions are as follows:

1. What type of information do you preferentially perceive?
2. Through which sensory channel is external information most effectively perceived?
3. With which organization of information are you most comfortable?
4. How do you prefer to process information?
5. How do you progress toward understanding? (Felder & Silverman, 1988, 675)

The learning style categories in the Index of Learning Styles include active/reflective (ACT/REF), sensing/intuitive (SNS/INT), sequential/global (SEQ/GLO), and visual/verbal (VIS/VRB). The 16 possible learning styles have previous theoretical and psychometric roots in personality theory, decision making, and social learning research.

Based on Felder and Soloman's (1994) four learning categories, the following hypotheses were developed to test the relationship between each category of learning and total EI.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant difference in total EI between active learners and reflective learners.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant difference in total EI between intuitive learners and sensing learners.

Hypothesis 3: There is a significant difference in total EI between visual learners and verbal learners.

Hypothesis 4: There is a significant difference in total EI between global learners and sequential learners.

## Method

An electronic survey was distributed through the local chamber of commerce to generate data from several local companies and nonprofit organizations. In addition, students in two graduate (MBA) leadership courses (one traditional and one executive) were also surveyed. The survey was comprised of a EI scale first developed by Schutte et al. (1998), the Index of Learning Styles developed by Felder and Soloman (1994), and some additional attitudinal data not included in this analysis.

Upon cleaning the data and preparing it for analysis, a total of 228 useable responses were available. The sample consisted of 45% women and 55% men with an average age ( $m$ ) of 41.5 years. Just over 88% of respondents indicated that they had completed a minimum of a bachelor's degree, and 27% had completed at least a master's degree. Respondents reported that they currently supervised an average of seven employees for an average of eight years. In addition, 26% of respondents categorized their job as being highly "technical" in nature. Although the focus of this study is on total EI, factor analysis was performed on the EI scale to ensure the integrity of the underlying structure. The factor analysis resulted in four factors (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management), which were as expected and very

similar to previous findings in the extant literature (Moore et al., 2012; Schutte et al., 1998). Total EI was then checked by performing a reliability analysis, where the result was deemed acceptable ( $\alpha = .86$ ). Reliability analysis was also performed on the Index of Learning Styles scale and was found to be acceptable ( $\alpha = .73$ ). To test each hypothesis, an independent sample *t*-test was performed.

## Results and Implications

The findings from the statistical analysis indicate there is a significant difference in the total EI scores of certain categories of learning styles. These results are illustrated in Table 1.

**Table 1: Independent Sample T-Tests**

	ACT	REF	INT	SNS	VIS	VRB	GLO	SEQ
Mean	83.56	79.22	83.87	80.56	81.94	81.31	83.12	80.66
<i>t</i> Stat	4.17		3.09		0.48		2.34	
<i>P</i> ( <i>T</i> ≤ <i>t</i> ) two-tail	0.00		0.00		0.63		0.02	
<i>t</i> Critical two-tail	1.97		1.97		1.97		1.97	

Based on mean level differences, active learners had a higher total EI than reflective learners, intuitive learners had a higher total EI than sensing learners, and global learners had a higher total EI than sequential learners. There was no significant difference in the total EI scores between visual and verbal learners. As a result, research Hypotheses 1, 2, and 4 were supported while research Hypothesis 3 was not supported.

There are 16 ( $2^4$ ) learning combinations possible with Felder and Soloman's (1994) Index of Learning Styles (four categories with two types of learning each). In the current study, each category was tested to see if there was a difference in the two types of learning and total EI. Three of the four categories showed a statistical difference in the total EI of learners (active, intuitive, and global). Therefore, two of the sixteen learning styles appear to be the overall strongest in relation to untrained total EI scores; those that show a preference toward active, intuitive, and global learning.

After identifying the types of learning that are significant indicators of higher total EI, the next question is what makes these types especially good at learning EI. For instance, active learners put information they have learned into practice in the external world, as opposed to reflective learners who practice mental contemplation of new knowledge. Active learners may mimic others with high EI, ultimately displaying the behavior of high EI individuals while learning.

According to Felder and Silverman (1988), an important distinction between intuitive learners and sensing learners is that “intuitors are more comfortable with symbols than are sensors. Since words are symbols, translating them into what they represent comes naturally to intuitors and is a struggle for sensors” (676). It is clear that intuitive learners would naturally be better at choosing the best words to represent their feelings and the feelings of others during a dialogue compared with sensors. This ability is a main tenant of EI.

After testing global and sequential learners, global learners showed a statistically higher EI than sequential learners. If these two types are examined closely in relation to EI, it is clear that global learners may come by higher EI naturally due to their ability to learn things that are not presented in a logical or linear fashion. Accordingly, a main characteristic of high EI is that each interaction with others is a unique one that calls for customized communication and behavior. In other words, human interaction is not a linear process that can be followed in a logical step-by-step process since each individual is different and brings diverse characteristics to each interaction.

## **Conclusion**

Understanding how learning styles are related to higher untrained EI scores have important implications for business and industry alike. As the relationship between EI and learning styles is better understood, for instance, business schools could perhaps help identify students with higher EIs; by knowing the learning styles that are not related to higher EI scores, faculty could then begin to tailor their teaching to help those students who naturally struggle with EI to learn it. Industry leaders could also use the Index of Learning Styles to quickly identify



high EI potentials and those who might struggle to learn EI. Thus, businesses now have an easy way of screening for leadership potential and positions that can be empirically supported.

Another important implication of this research is the added support that it provides the notion of EI as a diversity characteristic. Moore et al. (2012) also found support for EI as a characteristic of diversity found in one's personality traits. Other diversity characteristics such as gender and age have also been shown to be related to EI (Belsten, 2016; Bradberry & Greaves, 2009; Schutte et al., 1998). Since current U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) law and guidelines focus on not only traditional characteristics of diversity but also now include nontraditional characteristics of diversity such as religion, gender identification, and sexual orientation (EEOC, 2019), EI may be a needed additional category. This is in part because employees are given specific rights concerning their diversity characteristics and employers are mandated certain accommodations for those diversity characteristics. Thus, further research into the validity of EI as a diversity characteristic might be warranted.

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## **Followers' Commitment to Leadership: An Exploratory Study of the Cultures in the United States and China\***

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Development of followers' commitment to leadership is a critical element for a productive leadership and follower relationship as well as efficient organizational performance (Irwin & Berigan, 2013; Wong & Tjosvold, 2006). Growing degrees of globalization and the complexities of cross-cultural organizational environments increase the risk and uncertainty in internal and external relationships, making a deeper understanding of the relationship between followers' cultural orientations and their commitment an imperative (Huff & Kelley, 2003). This study presents quantitative research that addresses whether followers' commitment to leaders differs between the American and Chinese cultures. Data collection was performed via a probability sampling from two groups that can be characterized by collectivist or individualist norms and analyzed using *t*-tests with the help of SPSS software. While the tested hypothesis was supported, the findings were somewhat surprising, opening a door for further research.

**Key words:** American culture, Chinese culture, followers, followership, leadership,

Development of a sense of belongingness and association with a group and leadership is a critical element for productive leader and follower relationships and efficient organizational performance (Irwin & Berigan, 2013, Wong & Tjosvold, 2006). Such a sense of belongingness and a group member's desire to relate to a larger collective become powerful forces that increase the follower's motivation and cooperation with the leader, as well as serve as catalysts for the leader's ability to influence followers, which, in turn, determines the leader's effectiveness (Chemers, 2001; Hogg, 2001; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). However, it is not an easy task to develop followers' commitment to leadership as the forces of globalization increase and organizations increasingly become "melting pots" of different cultures, values, perceptions, and worldviews. Growing degrees of globalization and the complexities of cross-cultural organizational environments increase the risk and uncertainty in internal and external relationships (Huff & Kelley, 2003). According to Scarborough (1998), many

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\*Averin, A. (2019). Followers' commitment to leadership: An exploratory study of the cultures in the United States and China. *International Leadership Journal*, 11(2), 116–133.

cultures continue to adhere to the values that they have embraced for decades, despite evidence that specific aspects of societal culture are related to increases in GDP, societal standard of living, and several other financial and business measures. In other words, leaders continue to lead and followers to follow in ways that reflect societal core values, regardless of external pressures to do otherwise (Dickson, Den Hartog, & Mitchelson, 2003). To achieve an organizational environment with a high degree of follower commitment, leadership understanding of cultures and cultural dynamics within organizations and their influence on followers' commitment is imperative. This study presents a quantitative research that addresses whether follower commitment to leaders differs between the American and Chinese cultures.

## Literature Review

### Culture

The definition of *culture* remains one of the vaguest areas in organizational research. In fact, there is no single, more appropriate definition (Furmańczyk, 2010). For the purposes of this study, *culture* is defined as norms and values that characterize a group or an organization (Hartung, 2000). It determines which aspects of its operations and members become important and how members perceive and interact with one another, approach decisions, and solve problems (Hartung, 2000).

There have been a number of studies on differences among cultures. One of the most extensively researched topics is the contrast between individualism and collectivism, as introduced by Hofstede (1980). In his research on influence of cultural differences on group and organizational dynamics, Hofstede (1980) discovered that contrasts between individualist and collectivist cultures accounted for the greatest variance in group members' perceptions and priorities (Cox, Lobel, & McLeod, 1991).

### **Individualism and Collectivism**

According to Gorodnichenko and Roland (2012), *individualism* emphasizes personal freedom and achievement and awards social status to personal accomplishments, such as important discoveries, innovations, great artistic or humanitarian achievements, and all actions that make an individual stand out. Conversely, *collectivism* emphasizes individuals' belonging to a larger entity, such as a group or community that encourages conformity and discourages individuals from dissenting and standing out (Gorodnichenko & Roland, 2012).

The most comprehensive constructs of individualism and collectivism, however, are presented by Hofstede (1980). According to him, individualism and collectivism describe the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society. Hofstede referred to *individualism* as a loosely knit social framework in which people are supposed to take care of themselves and their immediate families only, while *collectivism* is a tight social framework in which people distinguish between in-groups and out-groups, wherein they expect their in-group to look after them in exchange for absolute loyalty to it (Hofstede, 1980).

Hofstede (2001) proposes individualism and collectivism scores that measure the extent to which it is believed that individuals are supposed to take care of themselves as opposed to being strongly integrated and loyal to a certain larger group (Huff & Kelley, 2003). These scores, ranging from 1 for the lowest to 120 for the highest, allow comparisons between cultures along collectivist and individualist dimensions. The constructs of individualism and collectivism Hofstede (1980) proposes serve as a basis of this study to explore the differences in followers' commitment in corresponding cultures.

### **Commitment**

Allen and Meyer (1990) propose a model of organizational commitment that consists of three key components: affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuous commitment. The authors point to one common denominator for all three, which is that when any one of them increases, there is a tendency to reduce the rate of employee turnover. However, Allen and Meyer draw clear distinctions among these three components based on the motivation that

underlies followers' behavior for remaining with the organization. Specifically, affective commitment is associated with followers' *desire* to stay with their organization, continuance commitment with followers' *need* to stay, and normative commitment with followers' *sense of duty and obligation* to remain with their company (Allen & Meyer, 1990). In other words, affective commitment is based on the emotional ties that followers develop with leaders primarily via positive work experiences (Jaros, 2007). To measure the degree of followers' commitment to leadership, this study employs the supervisor-related commitment instrument developed by Becker, Billings, Eveleth, and Gilbert (1996).

### **Cultures, Leaders, and Followers' Commitment**

According to implicit leadership theories, followers have certain expectations for leader behavior that influence the extent to which they attribute effectiveness and normative evaluations such as "good" or "bad" to a leader (Eden & Leviatan, 1975; Phillips & Lord, 1981; Rush, Thomas, & Lord, 1977). On the other hand, leadership, depending on its style, possesses its own set of expectations from the followers.

***Transformational Leadership.*** According to transformational leadership theory, followers tend to feel trust, admiration, loyalty, and respect toward a transformational leader, and they are motivated to do more than they originally expected to do (Yukl, 2012). A transformational leader transforms followers by stimulating them to go beyond self-interest by altering the followers' morale, values, and ideals and motivating them to perform above and beyond expectations (Bass, 1985; Yukl, 1999). Such a leader would tend to empower their followers; delegate significant authority to individuals or teams; eliminate unnecessary controls; develop follower skills and self-confidence, as well as greater awareness of the importance of task outcomes; and aspire to satisfy their higher-order needs, such as a sense of belonging and connection with a larger collective (Yukl, 2012).

In their research, Jung, Chow, and Wu (1995) propose that transformational leadership is more effective in collectivist cultures than in individualist ones. However, enhanced by the respect for authority and obedience characteristics of



collectivist cultures, high uncertainty avoidance cultures may require more transaction-based leadership, while low uncertainty avoidance cultures will tolerate more innovative, transformational behavior (Jung et al., 1995).

**Paternalistic Leadership.** *Paternalistic or clan leadership* is culture-specific and can be a powerful force of motivation for followers depending on the culture and the environment in which it is practiced (Aycan, 2006). This style of leadership refers to hierarchical relationships in which the role of the leader is to provide care, protection, and guidance in work and non-work areas of employees' lives, and the role of the subordinate is to be loyal and deferent to the leader (Aycan, 2006). Being culture-specific, paternalistic leadership will unlikely prove effective in the highly individualistic culture of the United States, especially when it comes to expectations of unconditional loyalty and unquestioning subordination to a leader. In collectivist cultures such as Russia or Saudi Arabia, however, this leadership style is welcomed by followers, who typically have complete loyalty and submission to authority and trust leadership unconditionally for decisions, directions, and their personal and family welfare (Khan & Varshney, 2013). In such cultures, conflict is to be avoided as much as possible and followers' pushback on leadership decisions and authority is very rare, as subordinates fear causing their leader's disapproval, creating a perception of disloyalty or usurping of authority (Khan & Varshney, 2013). A sense of loyalty is paramount, and disloyalty can mean life or death whether it is in a national or a business setting (Khan & Varshney, 2013).

Ho and Lin (2016) examined leadership behavior in collectivist cultures and how it influenced leaders' establishment of organizational values as well as decision-making and the engagement of followers to accomplish mutual goals. Specifically, their study focused on leader–follower relationships among purchasing professionals in China and Taiwan and investigated the leader–follower moral judgement relationship (Ho & Lin, 2016). The findings of this research indicate that the followers' level of moral judgment was directly and significantly influenced by the moral judgements of their leaders (Ho & Lin, 2016). Interestingly, the study results also point to cultural differences that moderate the

relationship between leader and follower moral judgements, wherein Chinese professionals were more easily influenced by their workplace leaders than their Taiwanese counterparts (Ho & Lin, 2016). The authors attribute such moderating effects to the difference in power distance between the two cultures, with the Chinese culture possessing a higher level of power distance than the Taiwanese culture (Hofstede, 1980).

***Large and Small Power Distance Cultures.*** Hofstede (2001) defines the construct of power distance “as the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions accept and expect that power is distributed unequally” (98). According to this definition, followers in high power distance cultures (represented by a calculated power distance index [PDI]) are more readily accepting of inequality as a norm in their society versus low power distance cultures in which people in subordinate positions expect a more equal distribution of power (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov, 2010). In their study of cultures among 76 countries, Hofstede et al. (2010) found the PDI to be higher in Asian cultures (e.g., China) and lower in Western ones (e.g., United Kingdom, United States).

Contributing to the research of cultural influences in leader–follower relationships Newman and Butler (2014) conducted an empirical study of the relationship between transformational leadership and followers’ affective commitment in the Chinese hospitality industry. Specifically, they investigated the moderating effects of power distance and uncertainty avoidance on the relationship between transformational leadership behavior and followers’ affective commitment. The data were gathered through a survey distributed to 398 employees of four Chinese hotels in the Zhejiang Province and analyzed through hierarchical regression analysis (Newman & Butler, 2014). The results showed a positive relationship between transformational leadership and follower affective commitment (Newman & Butler, 2014). In addition, data analysis revealed that followers in low power distance cultures exhibited higher levels of affective commitment when working under a transformational leader than those in high power distance cultures, and followers in high uncertainty avoidance and

high collectivism cultures exhibited greater commitment when working under a transformational leader than those in low uncertainty avoidance and low collectivism cultures (Newman & Butler, 2014).

**High and Low Uncertainty Avoidance Cultures.** Hofstede (2001) defines *uncertainty avoidance* as a degree of societal tolerance of “unstructured situations” (145). He distinguishes it, however, from the tolerance for risk-taking and referred to this construct as a measure of comfort that a society exhibits toward ambiguous, unconventional, and nontraditional situations, actions, events, etc. (Hofstede, 2001). In their study of cultural differences, Hofstede et al. (2010) calculated the uncertainty avoidance index (UAI) for 73 nations and found that Chinese and English-speaking cultures share lower UAI scores compared to Japanese, Eastern, and Central European cultures (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Adding to the body of research on leader–follower relationships in different cultural contexts, Bedi, Alpasian, and Green (2016) conducted an empirical study of ethical leadership impact on followership behavior. The results showed that correlations between ethical leadership and followers’ affective commitment were statistically stronger in studies conducted in North America than elsewhere (e.g., Netherlands, Spain, and Germany), which suggests that in North America, ethical leadership has a stronger influence on shaping the other-directed attitudes and behaviors (Bedi, et. al, 2016). However, correlations between ethical leadership and job satisfaction were statistically stronger in studies conducted outside of North America (e.g., the Netherlands and Germany) than in North America, which indicates that ethical leadership has a stronger influence in shaping a follower’s self-experienced attitudes and beliefs outside of North America (Bedi et al., 2016).

Highlighting the need for a deeper understanding of cultural impact on follower commitment was the study by Thoroughgood, Tate, Sawyer, and Jacob (2012), which focused on how destructive leadership behavior influences the behavior of followers. They conducted four quantitative empirical studies that explored toxic leadership constructs. The results showed that followers tend to exhibit destructive behaviors on an organizational level as a result of a toxic leadership

environment. However, such followers are less likely to behave in a destructive personal manner if they do not perceive a direct threat from toxic and abusive superiors (Thoroughgood, et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the research results show that even though followers may not feel threatened by the destructive leadership, their perception of leadership effectiveness is negatively affected by the unmet expectations, weak or broken trust, and the toxicity of leadership behavior (Thoroughgood, Hunter, & Sawyer, 2011). The scholars acknowledge, however, that one of the main weaknesses of the research is the generalizability of their findings to other cultures. Specifically, Thoroughgood et al. (2012) points out that the data for these studies were collected from subordinates in North America, which can be characterized as a low power distance culture. The scholars recognize that subordinates from a high power distance society might have very different perceptions of those behaviors deemed to be destructive as well as accept and expect unequal power structures among leaders and followers and, thus, be more tolerant of tyrannical and despotic leader behavior (Hofstede, 1980; Luthans, Peterson, & Ibrayeva, 1998; Padilla, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2007).

## **Hypothesis**

This study addresses the research question of whether followers' commitment differs in collectivist and individualist cultures and tests the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis: There is a difference in the level of followers' commitment to leadership in the American culture versus the Chinese culture.

## **Research Design**

To test the hypothesis, this study used a quantitative research method and a non-experimental research design with nonequivalent groups. Specifically, this design employed two groups wherein the participants were selected randomly from existing groups that can be characterized by collectivist or individualist norms as described below (Cozby & Bates, 2012).

### **Population and Sampling**

The sampling method utilized in this study was purposive sampling. The purpose of this method is to obtain a sample of people who meet some predetermined criterion (Cozby & Bates, 2012). The criterion selected in this study is a degree of individualism or collectivism that describes the culture in which participants reside. Utilizing Hofstede et al.'s (2010) measures of individualism and collectivism, this study focused on participants from two groups that fit the criteria of collectivism and individualism; specifically, a group of participants from China and a group of participants from the United States.

**The Chinese Group.** According to Hofstede's (2001) study, China is a society with highly collectivistic traits. The collectivist propensity of this culture means that there is a high preference for belonging to a larger social framework in which individuals are expected to act in accordance to the greater good of one's defined in-group (Hofstede, 2001). In-group considerations are often driven by personal relationships rather than tasks at hand (Hofstede, 2001). Interestingly, group members in this culture tend to exhibit low levels of loyalty to outsiders or a larger organization; however, they do develop relationships within in-group spheres that are marked by a high degree of cooperation (Hofstede, 2001).

**The American Group.** Diametrically opposed to China, the United States is considered to be one of the most individualistic cultures in the world (Hofstede, 2001). The high level of individualism that describes this culture is reflected in the fact that Americans are accustomed to doing business or interacting with people they do not know well, are not shy about approaching their prospective counterparts in order to obtain or seek information, and are expected to be self-reliant and display initiative (Hofstede, 2001).

### **Method**

The method used in this study was to randomly select participants from each of the purposefully selected groups that represent the different cultures on individualism/collectivism spectrum. The sample size was determined according to the guidelines proposed by Cohen (1988). For a data analysis method

designed to detect differences among groups, the number of study participants should be 30 per group to maintain about 80% power, which is the minimum suggested power for an ordinary study (Cohen, 1988). The participants in this study were randomly selected in equal numbers from two groups of working adults: one group residing in the Hudson Valley region of New York and the other group residing in the Jiangsu Province of China. To minimize confounding influences of age and socioeconomic status, each group consisted of working-age, middle-class adults. One group can be characterized by collectivist culture (the respondents from the Jiangsu Province), and the other group by individualist culture (the respondents from New York). To measure the degree of a follower's commitment to leadership, this study employs the supervisor-related commitment survey developed by Becker et al. (1996). The survey was translated into Mandarin to accommodate data collection from the Chinese respondents.

### **Variables**

The variables in this study include a respondent's cultural orientation as an independent variable and the degree of the follower's commitment to leadership as a dependent variable.

### **Instrumentation**

This study utilized the supervisor-related commitment survey to measure the dependent variable of follower commitment to the leader (Becker et al., 1996). Respondents were asked to complete a questionnaire using a seven-point Likert-type scale with 1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree.

### **Data Collection**

Two hundred thirty-four surveys were distributed to 132 participants in the Chinese group and 102 participants in the American group. Of these, 160 surveys were usable (80 per group). The responses were collected in writing.

### **Data Analysis**

Analysis of the collected data and the test of the hypothesis were conducted by utilizing a *t*-test. A *t*-test is a procedure for testing the hypothesis that the

population means of two groups are equal. This procedure compares the means of groups or samples in order to make conclusions about the population means (Girden & Kabacoff, 2010).

## Results

This study utilized SPSS software to conduct the *t*-test analysis.

**Table 1: Commitment: Group Statistics**

Culture	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
American	80	4.75	0.92	0.10
Chinese	80	5.39	0.68	0.08

The group statistics (see Table 1) results indicate that in the observed sample, the followers' commitment to leadership averaged 4.75 points on the scale from 1 to 7 among American respondents and 5.39 points among Chinese respondents. To test the null hypothesis, the assumption is that followers' commitment means between the two groups are equal. The resultant *p* value is below 0.05, which is the selected level of significance ( $p = 0 < 0.05$ ). The final results provide  $t(158) = -4.99$  with  $p < 0.05$ . Thus, the null hypothesis can be rejected, and the hypothesis is supported. Calculation of the effect size proposed by Cohen (1988) for two independent samples shows  $d = 0.79$ , which demonstrates a large effect size (Cohen, 1998). According to Cohen, with this effect size, the power of the *t*-test for two independent samples of equal size ( $n_1 = n_2$ ) will exceed 0.995 with a minimum sample size of 58 participants per group in order to achieve generalizability of findings to the entire sampled population. The sample size of this study is 80 participants from each group, which assures that a difference between the sample statistics can be generalized to the population from which the samples were drawn, with over 99.5% probability that the null hypothesis was rejected correctly.

**Table 2: Commitment: Independent Samples Test**

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Diff.	Std. Error Diff.	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
								Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	3.91	0.05	-4.99	158.00	0.00	-0.64	0.13	-0.89	-0.39
Equal variances not assumed			-4.99	145.50	0.00	-0.64	0.13	-0.89	-0.39

To assure the validity of the selected data analysis method, the following assumptions were met:

- the two groups with different cultural orientations were independent of each other (i.e., the assumption of independence) (Girden & Kabacoff, 2010);
- the distributions of populations (*F*-distribution) from which the samples were selected were normal (i.e., the assumption of normality; Girden & Kabacoff, 2010); and
- the variances of the distributions in the populations were equal (i.e., the assumption of homogeneity of variance; Girden & Kabacoff, 2010). The significance of Levene's test at  $p = 0.05$  indicates that the null hypothesis of equal variances in the two groups cannot be rejected (see Table 2).

## Discussion

This study investigated the differences in the followers' commitment to leadership in two distinct cultural groups that can be characterized as collectivist and individualist according to the scale developed by Hofstede (1980). The tested hypothesis that there is a difference in the followers' commitment to leadership in



individualist culture versus collectivist culture was supported. The findings are not surprising and in line with the results of the research conducted by Newman and Butler (2014) and Bedi et al. (2016). Particularly, they support the findings of Newman and Butlerb, which showed that followers in high uncertainty avoidance cultures (e.g., China) exhibit a greater level of commitment to leadership when working under a transformational leader than those in low uncertainty avoidance cultures (e.g., the United States).

The primary aim of this study was to gain a deeper understanding of followers' behavior in terms of their commitment to leadership in different cultural contexts. This will allow leaders to be better equipped with the necessary tools when establishing and developing relationships with followers in today's modern, multicultural organizational environment. While the literature review revealed that the cultural dimensions that dominate the cross-cultural studies of leader–follower relationships are mainly along the collectivist and individualist spectrum, those studies followed a primarily leader-focused approach. While this study also focuses on the individualist and collectivist cultural norms proposed by Hofstede, it is follower-focused—its main focus is on followers and their commitment to leadership as a function of the follower's cultural context, regardless of leadership style or behavior.

### **Study Limitations and Future Research**

The review of leadership studies reveals that follower-focused research of leader–follower relationships is still very limited. While this study contributes to the growing work in this area, it leaves a number of open doors for future research. First, this study focused primarily on the collectivist/individualist dimension of culture proposed by Hofstede (2001). Exploring followers' commitment to leadership in other cultural contexts, such as high/low power distance or uncertainty avoidance, would provide a valuable contribution to further understanding of followers' behavior (Hofstede, 1980). Likewise, increasing globalization and economic changes within countries bring additional complexities into the influence of culture on followers' behavior. This presents a

great opportunity for further research, specifically in the areas of followers' acculturation and socioeconomic status and their influence on the leader–follower relationship.

## Conclusion

A sense of belonging and a group member's desire to associate with the group are catalysts for followers' commitment to leadership and their desire to cooperate with a leader, which impacts a leader's ability to influence followers as well as his or her effectiveness (Chemers, 2001; Hogg, 2001; van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). Thus, development of a sense of belonging and connection with a group and leadership is a critical element for a productive leader and follower relationship and efficient organizational performance (Irwin & Berigan, 2013; Wong & Tjosvold, 2006). This task is complicated, however, by increasingly diverse organizational cultures that globalization forces bring together. To be an effective follower as well as a leader, one must not only acknowledge the reality of cultural diversity but also understand how cultural nuances impact follower commitment to leadership. This follower-focused study shed additional light on this subject, and the results of the data analysis revealed that there is a difference in the followers' commitment to leadership in the Chinese culture versus the American culture, which represent the collectivist and individualist norms of the cultural spectrum proposed by Hofstede. This study is by no means exhaustive, but it highlights the complexity and underexplored nature of the followership construct as well as the importance of studying multiple factors that impact followers' behavior and developing additional scales to effectively measure it.

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