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Gender Characteristics and Barriers to Community College Leadership

Joanna McClellan

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Gender characteristics and barriers to community college leadership

By

Joanna McClellan

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Community College Leadership
in the Department of Leadership and Foundations

Mississippi State, Mississippi

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2013

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Prior research has determined that there are still gender barriers that women must overcome to reach administrative positions in many employment settings. Gender barriers to leadership positions have been and continue to be a sensitive matter that must be addressed by community college administrators. This exploratory quantitative research study examined rural community college administrators' perceptions about gender barriers and explored administrators' perceptions about management styles based on gender. The study population included 596 community college administrators in the United States. Of those, 128 community college administrators chose to participate in this study and completed a 42-item researcher designed survey instrument that was administered electronically. The instrument included 7 perception items about the participants' current administrative supervisor's characteristics, 7 perception items about the most important characteristics of effective administrators, 15 perception items about gender characteristics related to barriers to becoming a community college administrator, and 13 demographic characteristic questions. Findings from the study indicate that males and females have similar perceptions about the administrative leadership characteristics

of their supervisors and similar perceptions about gender barriers to administrative leadership positions in community colleges. However, data collected showed a statistically significant difference between male and female perceptions about the importance of the following administrative leadership characteristics needed to be an effective leader: straight-forward, inspiring, forward-looking, intelligent, and fair-minded.

Key words: Gender, Leadership, Community College, Barriers

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my entire family. To the greatest parents that anyone could possibly ever have, Tom and Nancy McClellan, thank you for all that you have done for me. You have always been my biggest supporters and you have encouraged me throughout my entire life. There is nothing in this world that I could do or say to express how much you both mean to me. I love you more than you know. To my wonderful husband, Jason, thank you for your support throughout this process and for keeping things going smoothly at home. To my sweet daughter, McClellan, you have shown me my purpose and you have truly brought the greatest joy to my life.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Are equal pay and respect a part of today's workplace? According to the Women's International Center (1994), women have been fighting for equal rights in society since the 1800s. Although women's struggles to be accepted as equals in the workplace have resulted in improved women's rights, there are still barriers. The metaphor of a "glass ceiling" is often used to describe the separation between men and women's advancement in the workplace.

In their 1986 Wall Street Journal article, Hymowitz and Schellhardt stated that "Even those few women who rose steadily through the ranks eventually crashed into an invisible barrier. The executive suite seemed within their grasp, but they just couldn't break through the glass ceiling" (p. 64). The authors also noted an example of a barrier being placed based on gender could be found in the rhetoric of President Richard Nixon. Nixon expressed the following opinion after appointing a woman to the United States Supreme Court, "I don't think a woman should be in any government job whatsoever...mainly because they are erratic. And emotional. Men are erratic and emotional too, but the point is a woman is more likely to be" (p. 64).

One of the first attempts to understand gender in organizational studies was Kanter's (1977) *Men and Women of the Corporation*. Kanter believed that three structural reasons women have difficulty moving up job ladders are: (a) opportunity, (b)

power, and (c) numbers. She explained that any person, male or female, faces blocked opportunities simply because he or she has low aspirations or low self-esteem. Power, according to Kanter, is the “ability to get things done” (p.166). Considering there are fewer females in management positions, power is harder to achieve. With numbers, the minority group members seem to face more challenges and receive less support (Kanter, 1977).

Today, women occupy 40% of managerial positions (Eagly & Carli, 2007). Six percent of women today hold titles of Chief Executive Officer (CEO), President, Chairman, and Chief Operating Officer in fortune 500 companies. Two percent of the CEO’s are women and 15% of the boards of directors are women. Now that women occupy higher level positions, many feel that the glass ceiling has been broken in private industry. Although this may be the case for some sectors in the work force, in publicly funded community colleges, there still seems to be a stigma associated with female administrators.

Currently in community colleges, women constitute the majority of nonprofessional staff (65%) filling positions as secretaries, clerks, and maintenance workers (Phillippe & Sullivan, 2005). In contrast, women comprise only 29% of community college presidencies (ACE, 2012). The Association of Community Colleges (2001) predicted that in 2010, 10% of current community college presidents would retire . In 2007, women held less than one-third of community college president positions (ACE, 2012). Based on these statistics, Acker (2001) believed that two-year institutions are gendered organizations:

To say that an organization, or any other analytic unit, is gendered means that advantage and disadvantage, exploitation and control, action and emotion, meaning and identity, are patterned through and in terms of a distinction between male and female, masculine and feminine. Gender is not an addition to ongoing processes, conceived as gender neutral. Rather, it is an integral part of those processes, which cannot be properly understood without an analysis of gender. (p.146)

Denmark (1993) stated, “More women are needed in high-level positions to better assess leadership and empowerment” (p. 343). Therefore, why do there continue to be fewer women in community college administrative positions? Over the last 10 years, much attention has been given to women’s leadership roles in higher education.

Research has shown how men and women leadership styles are different in various ways.

Stereotypes have labeled men as the breadwinners and women as homemakers. As

Loomis and Wild (1978) explained, the education system in the United States is generally structured like a traditional home: men run the schools and women nurture the learners.

Denmark (1993) stated, “However, times have changed. Women, yet not nearly enough, are being seen taking leadership positions in business, academia, and a variety of other professions” (p. 345).

Women have been shown to prefer a collaborative leadership style (Wood & Eagly, 2010). A woman’s ability to collaborate shows that she depends more on interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, men tend to be categorized as authoritative in their leadership style. Men have also been referred to as transactional leaders, whereas women have been referred to as transformational leaders. Although

women have made upward advancements in their careers, they are still underrepresented in their roles as leaders.

In order to understand gender and administrative leadership roles in community colleges, it is important to explore the possible existing barriers of communication and behavior. Research has determined that most individuals expect certain traits to be used by men and other traits to be used by women. This rationale which has been developed based on gender may be ineffective if other leadership traits are not taken into account when leaders are selected. Individuals also have expectations about how women and men should or should not communicate. This can be a barrier to women moving into leadership roles. According to Lorber (2005), people feel a sense of social balance when individuals are successfully placed into gender categories.

Eagly and Carli (2007) described a clash between two associations: agentic and communal. Agentic qualities are usually associated with men. Assertion and control are the qualities that are conveyed. Also included with these qualities are being self-confident, forceful, aggressive, dominant, self-reliant, and individualistic. People tend to associate agentic traits with leadership. Communal qualities are associated with women. Eagly and Carli (2007) identified two dominating communal traits: concern and compassion for others. They also include friendly, kind, affectionate, helpful, and being soft-spoken as communal traits. If women leaders are high communal, they may be criticized for not expressing more leadership qualities.

Statement of the Problem

Analysis of the research literature available on leadership and gender in community colleges indicates that barriers for women in leadership positions in

community colleges still exist. The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of community college administrators about gender leadership characteristics, gender leadership styles, and gender barriers. Data collected examined how human and occupational values differ by gender and whether or not the concept of leadership itself is gendered in community college settings. The goal was to better understand the relationship between gender and community college administrative positions. Where gender barriers and stereotypes continue to exist, this study may provide a better understanding of those barriers for women wanting to become administrators and may help those women who are already administrators remove some of those gender barriers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this exploratory quantitative study was to investigate and clarify issues related to gender, values, and leadership style. Data from this study may aid in the reduction of gender-role stereotyping and may reduce barriers faced by women interested in administrative roles in community colleges.

Research Questions

The research questions examined in this study were:

- RQ1: Do community college administrators perceive that there are gender barriers related to entering community college leadership positions?
- RQ2: Do community college leaders' administrative styles vary based on gender?
- RQ3: What perceived characteristics are needed to be an effective community college administrator?

Assumptions of the Study

In this study, it was assumed that all participants completed the survey instrument honestly and accurately. It was also assumed that all hierarchical positions and/or titles are consistent throughout the rural community college structure. Therefore, results from each position should carry consistency throughout this study.

Limitations of the Study

This study was non-funded; therefore, time and resources for conducting this research were limited. Data were collected for six weeks.

Another limitation was that the survey instrument was developed and piloted for this particular study, so reliability and validity data were not available for the instrument prior to the study. There were several questions in Table 4 which may have been too sensitive towards gender; therefore, responses could have been skewed. Future projects may want to revise questions that have been identified as sensitive. Possible questions that might have been identified as gender sensitive were 1. People of the opposite sex are generally less suited or qualified to be leaders than members of my own sex, 2. Members of my sex are easier to work with than members of the other sex, and 3. If members of the other sex want to be promoted, they should be more aggressive and express their opinions openly.

Another limitation was that the researcher did not have control over the data-base used in this research study to contact respondents. Requests were made through administrators of the data-base. This study included members of the Rural Community College Alliance and Mississippi community college administrators; therefore, the results may not be generalizable to other administrators in community colleges in the nation.

Definition of Terms

Barrier is any factor or obstacle that hinders career advancement to the next level in administration or management (Shakeshaft, 1998).

Community college administrator is a person responsible for the performance or management of administrative community college operations. The following administrative titles will be used for this study: President, Vice President, Dean, Assistant Dean, and Division Chair (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Vaughan, 2000).

Community/junior college as defined in this study are public supported, regionally accredited institutions of higher education offering the associate's degree as the highest degree (Cohen & Brawer, 2003; Vaughan, 2000).

Gender stereotypes is the belief that a set of traits and abilities is more likely to be found among one sex than the other (Boyce & Herd, 2003, p. 366).

Leadership is "A set of role behaviors or actions on the part of a person who assumes the leadership role in an organization either by a formal appointment or by the informal choice of organizational members" (Mendonca, 2001, p. 268).

Leadership style is relatively stable patterns of behavior that are manifested by leaders (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001).

Summary

Research indicates that women have struggled for over a century and a half with equal rights and gender barriers. While there has been progress over the years, research

studies continue to show that there are still many cases of inequality. One factor that has been identified as a contributor to this gender inequality in administrative opportunities in community colleges is the difference in male and female perceptions about leadership characteristics. Overall, administrators in community colleges need to be aware of possible gender barriers that are present and leadership styles that are needed in their institutions.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the early 1970s, Virginia Slims launched an advertising campaign with the following slogan: “You’ve come a long way, baby” (Richmond & McCroskey, 1975, p. 42). The purpose of this slogan was to introduce a woman who was liberated from the past and who would have an increasing amount of power in the future. Yet over 35 years later, despite the advances of feminists, women are still living in a world where, to a large extent, the status quo has been maintained. According to the U.S. Census (2011), statistics released in August 2007 showed that women’s annual earnings in 1955 were 63.9% of men’s annual earnings and by 2006, women’s annual earnings increased only by 13% to 76.9% of men’s earnings. Bechtold (2008) stated:

It is well known, of course, that the aspirations of second-wave feminism have yet to be fulfilled: there is still no Equal Rights Amendment, the gender pay gap is still substantial, labor markets are still to some extent segregated, and with a few exceptions, the highest paid jobs are still reserved for males. (p. 753)

Despite the increased number of women who are educated and who are employed in professional fields, most executive positions are filled by men. It seems as if the “liberated” new woman is still living in a man’s world.

Social changes are complex and often quite slow. The changing role/empowerment of women is no exception. According to the National Women’s

History Project (2002), during the American Revolution, the women's rights movement began to grow. While the number of women advocates was small in the nineteenth century, the woman's movement continued to grow. In 1848, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, one of the first women leaders, led the first Woman's Rights Convention. According to the National Women's History Project (2002), the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) was proposed in 1923 but was not passed until 1972 and was not ratified until 1992.

According to the ERA website, 11 states have still not ratified ERA including Mississippi and Alabama.

In the early 1900s, women were expected to act a certain way and men to act another. In today's society, women are breaking the glass ceiling and moving into so called "male" positions of management and leadership. However, this notion of females being leaders is still foreign to both males and females alike (Moran, 1992).

Understanding the development of leadership characteristics and the perceptions that people have about leadership characteristics will affect the way we communicate and lead each other.

Gender Perceptions

According to Ivy and Backlund (2008), gender identity is how someone views himself or herself in terms of sexuality or sexual orientation, how he or she relates to culturally defined notions of masculinity or femininity, and how he or she defines appropriate roles for men and women in society. As small children, people begin learning certain language styles and developing certain values. Girls learn feminine ways of doing and saying things and boys learn a more masculine style. For example, girls play with dolls and tea sets and boys play with trucks and action figures. As children

grow older, these behaviors continue to stay with them. Women are taught to be more passive and men are taught to be more aggressive which can be a disadvantage for women as women may not be perceived as powerful (Lakoff, 2004). These developed traits such as values and language styles tend to define an individual's leadership style based on gender and could be considered to be preferences that followers attribute to strong leadership.

The words gender and sex are often used interchangeably. According to Wood (1996) in her book *Gendered Lives*, sex is a designation based on biology and gender is socially and psychologically constructed. Society uses genetic qualities to determine if a person is male or female. Gender, on the other hand, is a more complex concept than the sex of an individual. Wood believed that people are born either a male or a female, but people learn to be masculine and feminine.

Until the late 1900s, women in major positions of public leadership roles were extremely rare. Research, in the late 1990s, found that there have only been 42 women in history to serve as prime ministers or presidents, and 25 of those women came to office in the 1990s (Adler, 1999). In the United States, for example, women who are serving in powerful positions currently are Marissa Mayer, Yahoo's CEO, and Anne Mulcahy, Xerox's CEO (CNNMoney, 2011). In 2012, 94 women served in the 112th Congress (Manning & Shogan, 2012). Other recent women leaders include Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate, Nancy Pelosi; U.S. National Security Advisor, Condoleezza Rice; Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; and Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton.

In 1995, one of the Gallup Poll's questions was, "Do you think that this country would be governed better or worse if more women were in political office?"(Eagly &

Carli, 2001, p. 630). Of the respondents in the United States, 57% chose the response “better,” with greater endorsement by women at 62% than men at 51% (Gallup, 1995).

Heilman (2001) explained that the reason there were few women in top level organizational positions was because of gender bias. When a woman is as competent as a man it does not mean that she will advance to the same level in the organization as a man will. Women are hindered from advancing to the top because the top level jobs are usually considered to be “male” in sex-type (Heilman, 2001). Heilman stated:

The glass ceiling, which presents an impenetrable barrier at some point in a woman’s career is viewed as a natural consequence of gender stereotypes and the expectations they produce about what women are like and how they should behave. Because of gender bias and the way in which it influences evaluation in work settings, being competent provides no assurance that a woman will advance to the same organizational levels as an equivalently performing man. (p. 657)

Women can be denied credit for their work, devalued of their performance, or even penalized for being competent simply due to two different aspects of gender stereotype: description and prescription (Heilman, 2001). Description is what women are actually like and prescription is how women should behave. In gender bias, evaluators look at what they believe women are like and combine that with male sex typing of management roles or positions. This explanation would fall under description-based bias and has also been described by Heilman as “The Lack of Fit Model”. An example of prescription-based bias would be when a woman has proven to be able to execute a task just as well as a male, but by doing this, the woman is violating the prescriptive norms associated with gender bias.

Ridgeway (2001), in her article *Gender, Status, and Leadership*, discussed the expectation theory, which is defined as widely held cultural beliefs that link greater social significance and general competence, as well as specific positive and negative skills, with one category of a social distinction, such as men compared to women. Evidence has shown that gender stereotypes include beliefs relating to greater overall competence with males than females, especially in certain fields. Men are seen as having better mechanical ability and women are seen as having better domestic skills. When social groups develop these status beliefs, inequality occurs between the two groups. In the workplace, the expectation status theory argues that when men and women come together to work on a shared goal, they look for the appropriate cues on how to behave (Ridgeway, 2001).

In one research study conducted by Tomas, Lavie, del Mar Duran, and Guillamon (2010) that focused on women administrators at the university level, questionnaires were administered to faculty members in five departments at four participating universities. Of the faculty members attached to the departments, 150 male and female professors responded, 33.46 % of the entire population. There were three objectives to the study.

1. To analyze the barriers and difficulties present in the professional career path of women who occupy leadership positions in education.
2. To examine perceptions of female administrators on their leadership behavior.
3. To explain the skills and leadership qualities women leaders consider the most important.

Results showed that in all top level positions of power, women continue to be the minority. Of the four universities examined, one female was a vice-chancellor and the assistant vice-chancellorships were predominantly administered by males (80 %). There were two external barriers that were identified. The first barrier found was the conflict between career and family life. The second barrier was values of leadership styles in an organizational culture. Men felt that women were not ideal candidates for certain positions. However, when female faculty were asked if they would like to obtain a top level administrative position, no one wanted that position and only a few females expressed that they would take a mid or lower level positions.

In addition to the questionnaire, 18 interviews were conducted with upper, middle, and lower level administrators (Tomas et al., 2010). The female responses to questions about barriers was that “having been subject to processes of evaluation and promotion developed according to ‘male’ norms that openly discriminated against them” (p. 492) affected their decision not to pursue higher level administrative positions. Participants also responded that one main barrier was trying to function in a man’s world where performance is based on male standards.

The majority of candidates in administrative preparation programs are women, which is surprising since the majority of leadership positions are held by men (Rusch & Marshall, 2006). However, elementary principalships are dominated by women, and women are making advances into secondary principalships in the United States. According to a study in the American Association of School Administrators, women represent only 18% of the 13,728 superintendents in the nation (Brunner & Grogan, 2005). Researchers (Brunner & Grogan, 2005; Glass, 1992; Glass et al., 1995) who have

tracked the gender of administrators report that there is a disconnect between experienced and qualified women in central office positions and the gender of selected top administrators in US school districts. According to Kalkowski and Fritz (2004), the idea that women are not seen to be of equal worth as men is due to the simple fact that women's subordinate status is reinforced by society's assumptions or internalizations.

The term stereotype is defined as "beliefs or expectations about the characteristics of members of specific social groups" (Celikten, 2010, p. 533). When men exhibit dominance and aggression, they are praised; however, if a woman exhibits the same qualities, they are seen as pushy (Celikten, 2010). Celikten (2010) concluded that women lack the potential to be a leader and that women are simply more emotional than men. Being more emotional, communal, and less aggressive are all characteristics that do not fall under the managerial role.

Celikten (2010) found that:

One of the reasons of negative attitudes toward women as administrators is the stereotype that women do not have the characteristics that are required for administrative positions. The gender stereotypes and roles also affect the type of work that is seen as appropriate for women. Women are seen as most suitable for human service jobs such as nursing, teaching, social, and domestic work, whereas men are seen as most suitable for jobs involving leadership and strength-management, politics, and manual labor (Basow, 1992). In general, top administrative positions represent high-status and high power, require leadership skills which are seen as masculine, and are seen as appropriate for men. The barriers towards women become greater as they reach higher positions. (p. 534)

Dennis and Kunkel (2004) conducted a study to examine gender identities and how they correlate with characteristics of management. This study included 125 female and 95 male undergraduate students that were enrolled in communication classes at a mid-western university. Students completed a Power and Leadership Questionnaire. The three parts included in the questionnaire were background information, the Bem Sex Role Inventory (BSRI), and the Schein Descriptive Index (SDI). The BSRI was used to show masculine, feminine, and filler characteristics. Because people ascribe sex role stereotypes to managers, the SDI was used.

Study results indicated that male targets were rated more competent, active, emotionally stable, independent, hostile, and rational than female targets (Dennis & Kunkel, 2004). However, females were rated as showing more concern for others. In summary, the results as a whole estimated that males were perceived as showing more characteristics of leadership potential. Further research showed, according to Wood (2003), that individuals with feminine gender identities “tend to have relatively thin or permeable ego boundaries.” While those with masculine gender identities “tend to have relatively thick or rigid ego boundaries” (p. 159). The origin of such differences may start with youngsters’ identification, or lack thereof, with female caregivers.

Traditionally, males define themselves as not like their mothers and develop more ability to differentiate, while females define themselves as similar to mothers and perceive less “clear-cut or absolute lines between themselves and others” (p. 159).

According to Heilman, Wallen, Fuchs, and Tamkins (2004), data were tracked on 30,000 corporate managers which showed that females in upper levels of management

received fewer promotions than males. Women were viewed with biased judgment even if they were successful.

At a large northeastern university, 48 undergraduates enrolled in a psychology course participated in an experiment that involved two different levels of two independent variables: sex of the person and clarity of final performance (Heilman et al., 2004). Most of the individuals who participated in the study had previous work experience. According to the results of this study, females were more often criticized and were often less liked than successful males. Women were viewed negatively even though successful.

Gender stereotypes can not only be described, but can be prescribed as well. Prescriptive gender stereotypes show how women and men are different as well as what suitable behavior is (Heilman, 2001). Women are seen as exemplifying communal attributes and men as exemplifying agentic attributes. Women are praised for using communal traits because this is how women “should be”. Unfortunately, there are also the “should not” norms (Heilman, 2001). Although men are praised for using their agentic traits, women are not praised for using agentic traits.

Leadership Styles

As the number of women entering top management positions has increased over the years, it has become important to look at gender differences in leadership styles. Litsa Nicolaou-Smokoviti (2004) explained that leadership styles are defined as a stable mode of behavior that the leader uses in his or her effort to increase his or her influence, which constitutes the essence of leadership. In one study, she identified several leadership styles used by business leaders: competitive, task-oriented, directive, risk-

taking, and democratic. In this study, men were found to be more competitive than women and viewed themselves as having a competitive leadership style. Both men and women were task-oriented. Men were found to be slightly more directive than women, both were risk takers, and women had a more democratic style of leadership than did men.

Leadership is defined as a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2001). To better understand this definition, each word should be examined. Leadership is a process that occurs between individuals. Leadership cannot exist without influence which shows how followers are affected by their leaders. Leaders encourage individuals toward accomplishments.

There are two main attributes that are especially relevant to understanding leadership and gender roles: agentic attributes and communal attributes (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). When a leader is agentic, they are assertive, controlling, and confident while a communal leader shows concern for the welfare of other people. Women often use communal attributes and men use more of the agentic attributes.

Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) focused on three different leadership styles: transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire. Transformational leadership style is establishing oneself as a role model by gaining the trust and confidence of followers. Females tend to use this style more than males because of their attentiveness to individual needs. Transactional leadership style is used when leaders clarify subordinate responsibilities, reward subordinates for meeting objectives, and correct subordinates for failing to meet objectives. The transactional style is used by more males than females. The last leadership style is laissez-faire. It is defined as the

failure to take responsibility for managing. Males tend to use this style more than females.

In research conducted by Eagly et al., (2003), male and female leadership styles tended to differ even when men and women occupied the same leadership role. Leadership roles are male dominated and women are subjected to more discrimination than males. The advantages that women have in leadership style is sometimes countered by men's reluctance to give women power (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Despite women's potential for leadership, women's ascent in organizational positions can be either slowed or stopped by a glass ceiling.

According to a study conducted by Young (2004) specifically focusing on educational management and leadership, she found that both male and female managers displayed female styles and only sometimes used male styles. She explained:

Men and women saw themselves as inclusive and approachable, but men supplied more 'feminine' adjectives to describe their behaviors (collaborative, consulting, developing, facilitative, team working) whilst the women supplied adjectives that showed the effort necessary to become a woman manager (conscientious, determined, energetic, focused, forthright). (p. 98)

Women reported several different personal qualities: drive, commitment, approachability, and clarity of purpose. These qualities were shown to be more 'masculine' in tone. Men, however, reported that they encouraged humor in the workplace, prioritized time for people, were confident, had expertise, led by example, and liked to succeed. These qualities are more feminine in tone (Young, 2004).

There are several advantages and disadvantages for women in leadership positions. Combining 45 studies conducted on managers in business and educational organizations, Eagly (2007) found that one disadvantage is stereotypes. Men are in a natural leadership role within organizations because management positions are more male dominated. While over the years this disadvantage has decreased, it has not fully disappeared (Eagly, 2007).

There are also expectations that people have for gender roles. Women are placed at a disadvantage because many people's expectations are violated if women begin to use more male characteristics. It seems that women cannot be aggressive because, according to gender stereotypes, this is a masculine tendency. If women are more passive, which is considered a feminine characteristic, they will not be viewed as a good leader. So as Robin Lakoff said, women are "damned if they do and damned if they don't" (p. 41).

Literature has revealed that women appear to lead in styles that are recommended for leadership. According to Eagly (2007), men appear to lead in less advantageous styles. Three reasons were given for this which included: (a) Men attend to subordinates' failures to meet standards; (b) Men display behaviors that entail avoiding solving problems until they become acute; and (c) Men are sometimes seen as being uninvolved or even absent at critical times.

Communication Styles

Tannen (1990) explained in her book *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Communication*, that "communication between men and women can be like cross cultural communication, prey to a clash of conversational styles" (p. 42). She believed that women and men typically engage in distinctive styles of communication with

different purposes, rules, and understandings of how to interpret talk. Tannen (1990) goes on to explain:

Men speak in order to report, women to establish rapport; men give directions, women make suggestions; male discourse suggests that independence is important, female discourse that intimacy is crucial. Men are more likely to make decisions on the merits, and women feel that consultation is as important as decisiveness. (p. 187)

Our methods of communication may be directly linked to our gender. The development and understanding of communication patterns based on gender has been a popular field of study for scholars. Specifically, research in the area of relationship building received a great deal of attention in the early 1990s. Gray (1992) explained “Clearly recognizing and respecting these differences dramatically reduce confusion when dealing with the opposite sex” (p. 10). By recognizing gender differences in the communication process, we may be able to communicate more effectively between genders. Learning to communicate more effectively would be beneficial for community college administrators in their professional development.

In her book *Talking 9 to 5*, Tannen (1994) explained that both men’s and women’s speech characteristics and styles make sense and they are both valid; however, the difference in the styles may cause problems in interaction. When communicating with someone in a relationship or in a friendship, the interaction is very different than the interaction that happens within the workplace. Relationship and friendship styles of communication form within themselves. They grow from the beginning. When a woman enters into a job setting, this “job” world is already functioning, and the style of

communication is already in place. Gender differences in personality can be seen in communication styles. There are several differences that have been identified. One includes personal matters. Women are more likely to disclose personal information than men. Males have higher levels of aggressiveness than women and this does include bullying (Rathus, Nevid, Fichner-Rathus, & Herold, 2007).

Criticism and negotiating are common in the workplace. Female and male managers often engage in criticism giving. According to *The American Heritage College Dictionary (1993)*, criticism is defined as “a critical comment or judgment; the practice of analyzing, classifying, interpreting, or evaluating literary or other artistic works” (p. 328). Literature has proven that the status of relational differences between the criticizer and the recipient may result from how the criticism is given (Mulac, David, & Farris, 2000).

In the past, leadership has traditionally been seen as a masculine enterprise with special challenges and pitfalls for women (Carli & Eagly, 2001). During the last 20 to 30 years, the workforce has become much more diverse. However, women continue to lack the same access to power and leadership available to men (Carli & Eagly, 2001).

Cameron (2007) stated:

The gulf between men and women is a product of nature, not nurture. The sexes communicate differently (and women do it better) because of the way their brains are wired. The female brain excels in verbal tasks whereas the male brain is better adapted to visual-spatial and mathematical tasks. (p.7)

So, it can be perceived that men prefer action to words, and women like to talk. There are many myths about how men and women communicate, but all of those myths share

the following basic premises: Language and communication matter more to women than to men; women talk more than men. Women are more verbally skilled than men.

Men's goals in using language tend to be instrumental about getting things done; whereas, women's tend to be interpersonal or relational about making connections to other people. Men talk more about things and facts, whereas women talk more about people, relationships, and feelings. Men's way of using language is competitive, reflecting their general interest in acquiring and maintaining status; women's use of language is cooperative, reflecting their preference for equality and harmony. Because of this, men's style of communicating also tends to be more direct and less polite than women's. These differences routinely lead to 'miscommunication' between the sexes, with each sex misinterpreting the other's intentions. This causes problems in contexts where men and women regularly interact, and especially in heterosexual relationships.

Not only do men and women differ in language, but they also differ in nonverbal communication. Kramer (1977) found in his study that women were believed to smile more than men, were more concerned about their listener, and used their face and hands to express ideas more than men did. A study conducted by Britton (1995) explained that women were believed to possess greater skill and involvement in nonverbal communication, consistent with general sex-role stereotypes of women being more concerned with interpersonal relationships and accepting the needs of others. Previous research studies have shown that managers on a daily basis spend 70% to 80% of their time communicating (Eccles & Nohria, 1991). Since managers spend most of their time communicating, individuals must be an effective communicator in order to be a successful leader.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2006) reported that 24% of chief executive officer positions were comprised of women. In addition, women also held 43% of the chief financial positions. It is evident that there have been great gains by women in management and other top positions. As the Virginia Slim article stated, “You’ve come a long way, baby”. But, it does seem that women still have a long way to go.

Summary

This chapter focused on three major areas: gender perception, leadership styles, and communication styles. As reported, females have made advancements in achieving leadership roles. However, reports show that the majority of leadership positions have been and are currently being held by males. In addition, males also continue to make higher salaries.

Research has reported that problems do exist in the inclusion of women in administrative roles. For example, Baxter and Lansing (1993) found that women generally have different opinions than men regarding war, peace, child care, the poor, and education; however, when in leadership positions, their behavior resembles that of their male counterparts. Individuals’ expectations of leader roles have been defined by certain masculine characteristics; therefore, this has made it more difficult for females to occupy these positions. If leaders had a better understanding of individuals’ perceptions about gender barriers and leadership styles, communication among males and females could be enhanced in order to provide balance.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this exploratory quantitative research study was to examine rural community college administrators' perceptions about gender barriers and to examine administrators' management styles based on gender. Specifically, this study sought to extend the research about community college administrators in the areas of gender, values, and leadership styles. Data from this study may be useful in helping administrators reduce gender-role stereotyping and gender barriers in the workplace. This chapter outlines the research methodology used in the study including the research design, the population and sample for the study, instrumentation, study variables, procedures, and data analysis.

Research Design

An exploratory quantitative research design using a 42-item researcher-developed survey instrument was used to answer the following research questions:

- RQ 1: Do community college administrators perceive that there are gender barriers related to entering community college leadership positions?
- RQ 2: Do community college leaders' administrative styles vary based on gender?

RQ 3: What perceived characteristics are needed to be an effective community college administrator?

According to Shaughnessy, Zechmeister and Jeanne (2011), exploratory research is used when there is a problem that has not been clearly defined. The strengths of using exploratory research is to identify key issues and key variables. Survey research is often used to assess feelings, opinions and thoughts. However, there are several weaknesses. It is impossible to tell if participants are taking the survey seriously or frivolously, answer questions from confused participants, or that the same individual isn't taking the survey multiple times (Shaughnessy et al., 2011). An exploratory quantitative research design is appropriate for this study because of the differences that appear between gender and leadership. The study is used to examine which barriers should be addressed by administrators and leadership researchers.

Instrumentation

The 128 community college administrators from across the United States who participated in this study completed the survey instrument electronically. The instrument included 7 perception items about the participants' current administrative supervisor's characteristics, 7 perception items about the most important characteristics of effective administrators, 15 perception items about gender characteristics related to barriers to becoming a community college administrator, and 13 demographic characteristic questions.

In order to address the research questions, an electronic 42-item survey instrument (Appendix A) was developed by the researcher to gather data about gender bias related to leadership and about leadership characteristics of community college administrators. The

instrument was based on two questionnaires, the Characteristics of Admired Leaders (CAL), from the book *The Leadership Challenge* by Kouzes and Posner (2007) and the Gender Consciousness Questionnaire (GCQ) used in *Leadership: Theory in Practice* by Northouse (2001). The survey instrument included four sections that focused on the following areas: (a) Administrative Supervisor's Leadership Traits, (b) Leadership Traits of Effective Leaders, (c) Gender Consciousness and Barriers, and (d) Demographics.

In the first section of the questionnaire about administrative supervisor's leadership traits, participants were asked to evaluate seven adjectives on the degree to which the characteristic described their direct supervisor. The second section of the survey instrument which focused on the leadership traits of effective leaders collected data that ranked the participants' perceptions about leadership characteristics needed to be an effective community college administrator. In the third section of the questionnaire which focused on gender consciousness and barriers, participants responded to 15 questions that collected data about personal beliefs and expectations related to gender using a seven-point Likert-type scale that ranged from Completely Agree (1) to Completely Disagree (7).

The last section of the questionnaire which focused on demographic characteristics collected independent variable data through 13 questions about: (a) Gender, (b) Ethnicity, (c) Highest earned degree, (d) Administrative position, (e) Supervisor's gender, (f) Supervisor's years in current position, (g) Supervisor's alumni status, (h) Supervisor's ethnicity, (i) Rank Supervisor's administrative skills, (j) Years in current position, (k) Marital status, (l) State in which works, and (m) Salary.

Reliability and Validity

Reliability

The Section 1 and Section 2 questions on the questionnaire used in this study were taken from the CAL questionnaire and the questions in Section 3 were based on the GCQ. Sections 1, 2, and 3 of the survey instrument measured participant perceptions about leadership characteristics and how gender barriers impact access to administrator positions. Internal consistency reliability tests were conducted.

Validity

The structuring format of the instrument was determined by the researcher based on the CAL and the GCQ. In order to determine content validity of this survey, a pilot study was conducted with 12 division chairs at a rural community college in the southern region of the United States who did not participate in the research study. [Content validity](#) is a non-statistical type of validity that involves "the systematic examination of the test content to determine whether it covers a representative sample of the behavior domain to be measured" (Anastasi & Urbina, 1997 p.114).

Written permission to proceed with the validation study was obtained from the Vice President of Institutional Affairs at the community college where the validation panel members worked. The researcher emailed the questionnaire to each of the division chairs who participated on the validation panel and asked them to complete the questionnaire and to evaluate whether the items were valid. Validation panel participants included 9 females and 1 male. Regression analysis was used to identify demographic factors with a significant relationship to administrative styles and opportunities using data collected from the validation panel.

The final instrument was revised based on suggestions from the review panel. The review panel suggested that the instrument be condensed in order to reduce participant fatigue. Based on this recommendation, eight questions were removed from the instrument.

Participants

The population that was investigated included 396 members of the Rural Community College Alliance (RCCA) and approximately 200 administrators in Mississippi community colleges. Out of these two areas, 66.4% of the respondents were from Mississippi community colleges and the remaining participants were from the RCCA. A sample of 128 participants completed the questionnaire and returned useable data that was analyzed. The administrators included division chairs and/or department chairs, assistant deans, deans, vice-presidents, and presidents in community colleges. These administrators were invited to complete the survey instrument developed to collect data for this study via e-mail. Participation was voluntary.

Procedures

Survey data were collected using an online survey tool, *QuestionPro*. Once permission was received from the Mississippi State University Institutional Review Board (see Appendix B), community colleges, and the RCCA, an email was sent to the appropriate individuals with a link that would allow them to complete the survey at their convenience. All participants were given two weeks to complete the survey. Once that time expired, a follow-up email was sent as a reminder to complete the questionnaire. The researcher retrieved the data using QuestionPro Reporting Tools. T-tests were used

to identify any differences among gender. Overall, there were 342 individuals that viewed the survey, 190 individuals started it, and 128 respondents who participated and completed the survey.

Data Analysis

The following research questions were explored and answered during this study using statistical analysis:

RQ1: Do community college administrators perceive that there are gender barriers related to entering community college leadership positions?

RQ2: Do community college leaders' administrative styles vary based on gender?

RQ3: What perceived characteristics are needed to be an effective community college administrator?

A t-test was performed on research questions 1 and 3 to analyze and compare two independent population means between males and females. For research question 2, the p-values were analyzed to determine which leadership characteristics were determined to be most effective.

Ethical Considerations

Before research began, permission was granted by Mississippi State University's Internal Review Board (see Appendix B). Also, before one can conduct a study on Mississippi Community College campuses, permission must be granted by Mississippi's State Board of Community and Junior Colleges. Once that approval was complete, the researcher contacted the vice president or other appropriate supervisor in Mississippi by email to request permission to conduct research at that institution. Once permission was

granted, the appropriate supervisor dispersed the instrument to their employees. The president of the RCCA, Dr. Randy Smith, distributed the survey, by email, to all RCCA members.

Summary

This chapter explained the methodology that was used to complete this exploratory quantitative research study. An online survey instrument was created and distributed to administrators in Mississippi community colleges and also to all members of the RCCA. The survey asked participants to answer questions about their perceptions related to leadership characteristics and gender barriers. The participants also described their own administrator based on selected leadership characteristics.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of community college administrators about gender leadership characteristics, gender leadership styles, and gender barriers. Specifically, this study sought to extend the research about community college administrators in the areas of gender barriers and values related to leadership characteristics. Results from this study may be useful in helping college administrators reduce gender-role stereotyping in the workplace. This chapter details the data analysis and results for the study.

Descriptive Data

The following demographics describe the characteristics of rural community college administrators. Descriptive statistics were run on each of the following variables: (a) gender, (b) ethnicity, (c) highest earned degree, (d) administrative position, (e) supervisor's gender, (f) supervisor's years in current position, (g) supervisor's alumni status, (h) supervisor's ethnicity, (i) rank supervisor's administrative skills, (j) years in current position, (k) marital status, (l) state in which works, and (m) salary.

Overall, there were 342 individuals that viewed the survey, 190 individuals started it, and 128 respondents who participated and completed the survey. There were an equal amount of male and female respondents, and the majority of respondents were

Caucasian (83.6%). Out of the respondents, 41% reported their highest earned degree being at the master's level, while 38% reported it being a doctoral degree. The highest percentage of respondents were department chairs (26.6%) followed closely by vice-presidents (25%). Detailed responses for demographic questions are reported in Table 1.

Respondent's Gender, Ethnicity, Highest Degree Earned, and Position

Table 1

Respondent's Gender, Ethnicity, Highest Degree Earned, and Position

	<i>n</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Gender		
Male	64	50%
Female	64	50%
Total	128	100%
Ethnicity		
American Indian	5	3.9%
Asian American	1	0.8%
African American	10	7.8%
Caucasian	107	83.6%
Other	5	3.9%
Total	128	100%
Highest Degree Earned		
Bachelors	9	7.0%
Masters	53	41.4%
Doctorate	49	38.3%
Other Terminal Degree	12	9.4%
Other	4	3.1%
Missing	1	.8%
Total	128	100%
Current Position		
President	24	18.8%
Vice-President	32	25%
Dean	16	12.5%
Assistant Dean	3	2.3%
Chair	34	26.6%
Other	18	14.1%
Missing	1	.8%
Total	128	100%

Out of the respondents, 33% reported being in their positions between 2 and 5 years, while 22.7% reported being in their current positions between 5 and 10 years. The

majority of respondents reported being married (84.4%). Thirty-seven percent of respondents reported making between \$50,000 and \$74,000 annually, and 30.5% reported making between \$75,000 and \$99,999 annually. Detailed responses for these demographics are reported in Table 2.

Table 2

Respondent's Time in Years in Current Position, Marital Status, State, and Annual Salary

	<i>n</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Time in Position		
Less than 1 year	9	7.0%
1 year to 2 years	14	10.9%
2 years to 5 years	43	33.6%
5 years to 10 years	29	22.7%
10 years to 20 years	22	17.2%
20 years or more	10	7.8%
Missing	1	.8%
Total	128	100%
Marital Status		
Single	8	6.3%
Married	108	84.4%
Divorced	8	6.3%
Other	4	3.1%
Total	128	100%
State Where Respondent Works		
Alabama	1	0.8%
Maine	1	0.8%
Minnesota	4	3.1%
Mississippi	85	66.4%
Missouri	4	3.1%
Montana	3	2.3%
Nebraska	6	4.7%
New Mexico	1	0.8%
North Dakota	1	0.8%
Oklahoma	4	3.2%
Texas	4	3.2%
Washington	1	0.8%
West Virginia	3	2.4%
Wisconsin	1	0.8%
Wyoming	2	1.6%
Other	3	2.4%
Missing	4	3.1%
Total	128	100%

Table 2 (continued)

Annual Salary		
Under \$50,000	7	5.5%
\$50,000 - \$74,999	48	37.5%
\$75,000 - \$99,999	39	30.5%
\$100,000 - \$124,999	14	10.9%
\$125,000 - \$149,999	5	3.9%
\$150,000 - \$174,999	6	4.7%
\$175,000 - \$199,999	7	5.5%
\$200,000 - \$224,999	0	0%
\$225,000 - \$249,999	1	.8%
Missing	1	.8%
Total	128	100%

Out of respondents, 60% reported their direct supervisor being male, while 40% reported their direct supervisor being female. In regards to how long their supervisors had been in their current positions, 48.4% reported 2 to 10 years and 22.7% reported 10 to 20 years. Over half (73.4%) of the respondents reported that their supervisor was not an alumni of the institution in which they worked. The majority (83.6%) reported their supervisor's ethnicity as Caucasian. The remaining 43% of the respondents reported their supervisor's administrative skills as being excellent and 32.8% reported their supervisor's administrative skills as being mostly good. Detailed responses for these demographics are reported in Table 3.

Table 3

Supervisor's Gender, Time in Position, Alumni Status, Ethnicity, and Administrative Skills

	<i>n</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Supervisor's Gender		
Male	77	60.2%
Female	51	39.8%
Total	128	100%
Supervisor's Time (Years) in Position		
Less than 1 year	11	8.6%
1 year to 2 years	13	10.2%
2 years to 10 years	62	48.4%
10 years to 20 years	29	22.7%
20 years or more	12	9.4%
Missing	1	.8%
Total	128	100%
Supervisor's Alumni Status		
Yes	23	18%
No	94	73.4%
Not Sure	10	7.8%
Missing	1	.8%
Total	128	100%
Supervisor's Ethnicity		
American Indian	7	5.5%
African American	8	6.3%
Caucasian	107	83.6%
Other	3	2.3%
Missing	3	2.3%
Total	128	100%
Supervisor's Administrative Skills		
Excellent	55	43%
Mostly Good	42	32.8%
Somewhat Good	8	6.3%
Fair	10	7.8%
Somewhat Poor	3	2.3%
Mostly Poor	4	3.1%
Poor	5	3.9%
Missing	1	.8%
Total	128	100%

RQ1: Do community college administrators perceive that there are gender barriers related to entering community college leadership positions?

To answer this research question, the data collected from the ratings of the following statements were used. These statements were in the third section of the survey instrument. Statistics for each of these items were analyzed based on gender. The means and standard deviations are reported in Table 4. In addition to rankings for each statement, a t-test was performed to compare two independent population means between males and females. The p-values are listed in Table 4.

Table 4

Statistical Analyses for Research Question 1

Question	Gender	n	Mean	SD	p-value
Question 1	I prefer to work with a boss who is the same sex as me.				
	Male	64	4.28	1.25	.808
	Female	64	4.32	0.89	
Question 2	If I had a son and a daughter who were equally educated and qualified for the same position, it makes sense that my son would earn more money than my daughter for doing the same work.				
	Male	64	6.05	1.21	.299
	Female	64	6.29	1.32	
Question 3	People of the opposite sex are generally less suited or qualified to be leaders than members of my own sex.				
	Male	64	6.04	1.17	.498
	Female	64	6.18	1.16	
Question 4	My supervisor would prefer to hire individuals who have graduated from this institution rather than hire from outside.				
	Male	64	4.39	1.53	.463
	Female	64	4.59	1.58	
Question 5	I expect to earn more than my spouse/partner.				
	Male	64	3.71	1.89	.167
	Female	64	4.15	1.65	
Question 6	I would not be comfortable if my spouse/partner earned more than I did.				
	Male	64	5.32	1.93	.777
	Female	64	5.42	1.80	
Question 7	Members of my sex are easier to work with than members of the other sex.				
	Male	64	4.67	1.42	.733
	Female	64	4.75	1.14	
Question 8	If members of the other sex want to be promoted, they should be more aggressive and express their opinions openly.				
	Male	64	4.75	1.30	.502
	Female	63	4.90	1.27	

Table 4 (continued)

Question 9	I prefer to have a supervisor with a higher degree than myself.				
	Male	63	4.31	1.44	.009
	Female	63	3.63	1.45	
Question 10	I prefer to work with a supervisor who has more years of experience than me.				
	Male	64	3.53	1.34	.145
	Female	64	3.20	1.18	
Question 11	When community college administrators of the other sex are promoted into leadership positions, I usually think that some form of favoritism was part of the decision.				
	Male	64	5.34	1.23	.056
	Female	64	4.87	1.49	
Question 12	I expect to work in a community college where members of my sex make most of the decisions.				
	Male	64	5.40	1.39	.132
	Female	64	5.04	1.27	
Question 13	The majority of administrators at this institution have the same ethnicity as me.				
	Male	63	2.63	1.32	.225
	Female	64	2.96	1.73	
Question 14	My career plan was designed around my family/children.				
	Male	63	3.41	1.81	.145
	Female	64	3.84	1.47	
Question 15	Leaders should not expect to live balanced lives; work must come first.				
	Male	64	5.00	1.44	.407
	Female	64	5.20	1.31	

Scale: 1 = Completely Agree...7 = Completely Disagree

Most of the statement rankings showed no significant differences between males and females ($p\text{-value} > .05$) when encountering gender barriers. However, question 9 showed a significant difference between male and female ($p\text{-value} = .009 < 0.05$). Specifically, the results indicated that females preferred to have a supervisor with a higher degree than herself (see column "Mean" for Question 9). Question 11 showed no significant difference ($p\text{-value} = .056 > .05$), but the $p\text{-value}$ was close to .05. Specifically, more females thought that favoritism was shown when the other sex was promoted to a leadership position. Therefore, more women perceived that gender barriers may be present when entering leadership roles at a community college.

RQ2: What perceived characteristics are needed to be an effective community college administrator?

To answer this research question, the data collected from the rankings of the following characteristics were used when respondents rated these characteristics regarding how important they felt these characteristics are in being a successful community college administrator. These characteristics were in the second section of the questionnaire.

Competent – capable, proficient, effective, efficient, professional

Honest – truthful, has integrity, trustworthy, has character

Straightforward- direct, candid, forthright

Inspiring – uplifting, enthusiastic, energetic, humorous, cheerful, positive about
the future

Forward-looking – visionary, foresighted, concerned about the future, sense of
direction

Intelligent – bright, thoughtful, intellectual, reflective, logical

Fair-minded – just, unprejudiced, objective, forgiving, willing to pardon others

Descriptive statistics for each of these items were analyzed and examined based on gender. These means and standard deviations are reported in Table 5. For each question, the p-values were analyzed to determine which leadership characteristics were determined to be most effective. The p-values are listed in Table 5.

Table 5

Statistical Analyses for Research Question 2

Question	Gender	n	Mean	SD	p-value
Competent	Male	63	1.68	0.83	0.067
	Female	64	1.42	0.75	
Honest	Male	64	1.32	0.79	1.00
	Female	64	1.32	0.75	
Straightforward	Male	64	2.07	0.96	0.032
	Female	64	1.73	0.82	
Inspiring	Male	64	1.95	0.98	0.028
	Female	63	1.58	0.87	
Forward-Looking	Male	64	1.78	1.03	0.019
	Female	64	1.40	0.72	
Intelligent	Male	63	1.93	1.01	0.004
	Female	63	1.47	0.73	
Fair-Minded	Male	64	1.87	1.17	0.01
	Female	64	1.42	0.75	

Scale: 1 = Completely Agree...7 = Completely Disagree

All these items, except Honest and Competent, showed significant differences between males and females (p-value < .05). Specifically, females rated leadership characteristics differently than males (see column “Mean”). Competent and Honest were the two characteristics that had the most value for being an effective community college leader.

For this research question, the results indicated statistically significant differences between males and females regarding their leadership beliefs for the following items: straight-forward, inspiring, forward-looking, intelligent, and fair-minded. Females rated those items as more important in leadership positions than males rated them. The results for the competent and honest items were not statistically significant. Both males and females rated these as important with honesty being rated the highest. These results

indicate that females have different standards than males in relationship to characteristics of effective leaders and that gender does play a role in leadership styles of community college administrators.

RQ3: Do community college leaders' administrative styles vary based on gender?

To answer this research question, the data collected from rankings for the following characteristics were used. Respondents were asked to answer these questions about their direct, immediate supervisor. These questions were in the first section of the questionnaire.

Competent – capable, proficient, effective, efficient, professional

Honest – truthful, has integrity, trustworthy, has character

Straightforward- direct, candid, forthright

Inspiring – uplifting, enthusiastic, energetic, humorous, cheerful, positive about the future

Forward-looking – visionary, foresighted, concerned about the future, sense of direction

Intelligent – bright, thoughtful, intellectual, reflective, logical

Fair-minded – just, unprejudiced, objective, forgiving, willing to pardon others

Descriptive statistics for each of these items were analyzed and examined based on gender. These means and standard deviations are reported in Table 6. In order to determine which characteristics varied based on gender, a t-test was performed to compare two independent population means between males and females. The p-values are listed in Table 6.

Table 6

Statistical Analyses for Research Question 3

Question	Supervisor's Gender	n	Mean	SD	p-value
Competent	Male	77	2.09	1.35	.578
	Female	50	2.22	1.21	
Honest	Male	76	1.88	1.36	.289
	Female	50	2.16	1.47	
Straightforward	Male	77	2.36	1.37	.818
	Female	50	2.42	1.32	
Inspiring	Male	77	2.45	1.45	.287
	Female	50	2.78	1.79	
Forward-Looking	Male	77	2.25	1.40	.128
	Female	50	2.70	1.68	
Intelligent	Male	77	2.11	1.35	.126
	Female	50	2.52	1.48	
Fair-Minded	Male	77	2.33	1.56	.422
	Female	50	2.58	1.71	

Scale: 1 = Completely Agree...7 = Completely Disagree

All the items showed no significant differences between male and female supervisors (p-value >.05). However one interesting result was that in the sample collected, the majority of the sample means for female supervisors were higher than male supervisors. For all of these items, the respondents, both male and female, indicated a high level of agreement. All of the means were in the low to mid 2's with the exception of the mean of honesty for male respondents, which was 1.88.

Summary

Demographics were explored and three research questions examined in this study. The first question was to determine if gender barriers exist based on the perceptions of community college administrators entering community college leadership positions. The

second question was to determine if perceptions of leadership characteristics of effective community college administrators vary based on gender. The last question was to determine if gender plays a role in the leadership styles of community college administrators.

Data collected to answer the three research questions were tested statistically and demographic data about the participants was also collected and reported. The first research question data did not have statistically significant results. The second research question had statistically significant results. Specifically, male and female responses differed statistically significantly on their perceptions of the following leadership characteristics: straight-forward, inspiring, forward-looking, intelligent, and fair-minded. The third research question data did not have statistically significant results.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Scholars have established that there are differences in leadership perception based on gender and communication patterns. The purpose of this exploratory quantitative study was to investigate and clarify issues related to gender, values, and leadership style. Data from this study may aid in the reduction of gender-role stereotyping and may help reduce barriers faced by women interested in administrative roles in community colleges. A summary, conclusions, and recommendations resulting from this study follow.

Summary of the Study

Four areas of research were reviewed for this study: (a) gender barriers (b) leadership styles (c) gender perceptions and (d) communication styles. Results from the study did yield some significant information that added to the understanding about barriers between gender and leadership in community colleges. There is still work to be done with the instrument itself to maximize its effectiveness. Expanding the population of interest to include faculty at community colleges could provide additional information about gender barriers that affect female decisions about whether or not to pursue administrative roles.

Demographic data collected to describe characteristics of the sample who participated in this study included: gender, ethnicity, highest degree earned, current

position, time in position, marital status, state where they work, and annual salary. The participants also provided information about their direct supervisor: gender, years in position, alumni status, ethnicity, and administrative skills.

Research Question 1 Conclusion

Research Question 1: Do community college administrators perceive that there are gender barriers related to entering community college leadership positions?

In conclusion, the data determined that gender barriers do not exist based on the perceptions of community college administrators about entering community college leadership positions. This determination was based solely on the questions provided to the participants. There was one exception that showed significance that females preferred to have a supervisor with a higher degree than themselves. Another possible exception that did not show significance but had a p-value of .056 was that women perceived that when male community college administrators were promoted into leadership positions, they felt that there was some form of favoritism in the decision. As Madden (2005) stated, "Because people more easily perceive men as being highly competent, men are more likely to be considered leaders, given opportunities, and emerge as leaders more often than women" (p. 5). Future research could examine the possibilities of the existence of a "good ole boy" system in community college administration.

Nicolaou-Smokoviti (2004) explained that leadership styles are defined as a stable mode of behavior that the leader uses in his or her effort to increase his or her influence, which constitutes the essence of leadership. In one study, she identified several leadership styles used by business leaders: competitive, task-oriented, directive, risk-

taking, and democratic. In this study, men were found to be more competitive than women and viewed themselves as having a competitive leadership style. Both men and women were task-oriented. Men were found to be slightly more directive than women, both were risk takers, and women had a more democratic style of leadership than did men.

Recommendations for Further Research

Rural community/junior colleges could benefit from this data by providing additional training and supplemental material in leadership workshops that address gender equality in the administrative levels of rural community colleges. This information could also be implemented in 4-year institutions as well as private institutions to address hierarchal needs of community college leaders. Rural community college institutions could provide workshops to administrators and additional educational material could be provided about how to address gender differences in leadership. Graduate professors within the field of community college leadership may incorporate additional information that addresses gender differences between community college administrators and about leadership styles.

Research Question 2 Conclusion

Research Question 2: What perceived characteristics are needed to be an effective community college administrator?

The data showed that male and female administrators differed on their perception of important characteristics in being a successful community college administrator. They clearly prioritized the characteristics differently with the exception of being honest and competent. Honesty was one characteristic that was agreed upon by both genders as

being important in an administrative position. In research conducted by Eagly et al. (2003), male and female leadership styles tended to differ even when men and women occupied the same leadership role. Further research could focus on leadership styles of community college administrators and how they incorporate leadership styles into job performance.

Recommendations for Further Research

Rural community college administrators should take into account the multiple perceptions of appropriate leadership characteristics. This could be beneficial in the development of policies and procedures that will be used and followed by community colleges when hiring and evaluating administrators. Awareness of diverse leadership characteristics could provide better understanding of decisions made by fellow administrators when conflicts occur. Also, it is clear that both male and female administrators ranked “honesty” as a primary characteristic for administrators in community colleges. Since this is the case, honesty should be embraced. The characteristic of honesty could be used to create a new model of leadership or a new policy in leadership for administrators to follow. Administrators could provide an environment that is grounded in professional honesty with each other and the faculty and staff that they serve.

Research Question 3 Conclusion

Research Question 3: Do community college leaders’ administrative styles vary based on gender?

The respondents listed their supervisor as being either a male or a female. The majority of supervisors were male: 77 were male and 50 were female. Data from the

study showed that there were no significant differences in perceptions of leadership characteristics based on gender. However, there could possibly be other barriers that are in place that were not examined in this research study. Further studies could identify barriers which address fairness. Sensitivity training could be used to make administrators aware of bias in work situations; training could reduce or prevent these situations from arising. For example, if an administrator continually disregards an employee's contributions based on the employee's gender, but is not aware of the harm that is occurring, then continuing education can be provided that addresses this behavior.

Research has reported that problems do exist in the inclusion of women in administrative roles. For example, Baxter and Lansing (1993) found that women generally have different opinions than men regarding war, peace, child care, the poor, and education; however, when in leadership positions, their behavior resembles that of their male counterparts. The factors that affect the complex concept of gender identity are biological factors, cultural factors, and social influences (Ivy & Backlund, 2008). This study contributes to our understanding about perceptions on gender barriers.

Recommendations for Further Research

With such a wide percentage difference between males and females in leadership positions, the perception of barriers may not be clear until gender equality has been resolved. It may be difficult to determine the effect of the gender barriers when more males are in leadership positions than females. Rural community college administrators could take active measures to provide gender balance with administrative positions by balancing employment based on gender. Also, this may have a significant impact on recruiting and human resource policies because female student enrollment exceeds male

student enrollment in the community college system. According to the American Association of Community Colleges (2013), community colleges are made up of 61% females and 39% males. By reducing perceived gender barriers, rural community college leaders could enhance leadership production and promote better decision making skills.

According to Sallee (2011), change will not happen unless leaders of the colleges are aware of the ways in which gender functions to benefit one group at a cost to other groups. Workshops could be offered in order to make rural community college leaders and faculty aware of gender issues. If both men and women are made aware of possible gender biases, behaviors could be challenged and changed in order to create a more welcoming environment.

So, the question remains. Do women still live in a man's world? According to Madden (2005), "although those who write about women in higher education acknowledge progress toward equity, no one argues that women have achieved equal status with men" (p. 4). Despite supported values of being democratic institutions, community colleges are gendered organizations (Eddy & Cox, 2008). Cullins (2013) stated:

Society's categories for what is masculine and feminine may not capture how we truly feel, how we behave, or how we define ourselves. All men have some so-called feminine traits, and all women have some so-called masculine traits. And we may show different traits at different times. Our cultures teach women and men to be the opposite of each other in many ways. The truth is that we are more alike than different. (para. 5)

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APPENDIX A
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

SECTION I: For each adjective listed below, rank the response that indicates the degree to which you think the adjective describes YOUR DIRECT SUPERIOR (Boss) from 1 Completely Agree to 7 Completely Disagree

Competent: capable, proficient, effective, efficient, professional

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Honest: truthful, has integrity, trustworthy, has character

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Straightforward: direct, candid, forthright

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Inspiring: uplifting, enthusiastic, energetic, humorous, cheerful, positive about the future

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Forward-Looking: visionary, foresighted, concerned about the future, sense of direction

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Intelligent: bright, thoughtful, intellectual, reflective, logical

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Fair-Minded: just, unprejudiced, objective, forgiving, wiling to pardon others

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

SECTION II: For each leadership characteristic listed below, rank the response that indicates the degree to which you think the adjective is important to being an effective community college administrator from 1 Completely Agree to 7 Completely Disagree.

Competent: capable, proficient, effective, efficient, professional

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Honest: truthful, has integrity, trustworthy, has character

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Straightforward: direct, candid, forthright

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Inspiring: uplifting, enthusiastic, energetic, humorous, cheerful, positive about the future

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Forward-Looking: visionary, foresighted, concerned about the future, sense of direction

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Intelligent: bright, thoughtful, intellectual, reflective, logical

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

Fair-Minded: just, unprejudiced, objective, forgiving, wiling to pardon others

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

SECTION III

INSTRUCTIONS: Check the response that indicates the degree to which each of the following statements reflects your personal beliefs or expectations.

1. I prefer to work with a boss who is the same sex as me.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

2. If I had a son and a daughter who were equally educated and qualified for a position, it makes sense that my son would earn more money than my daughter for doing the same work.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

3. People of the opposite sex are generally less suited or qualified to be leaders than members of my own sex.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

4. My supervisor would prefer to hire individuals who have graduated from this institution rather than hire from outside.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

5. I expect to earn more than my spouse/partner.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

6. I would not be comfortable if my spouse/partner earned more than I did.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

7. Members of my sex are easier to work with than members of the other sex.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

8. If members of the other sex want to be promoted, they should be more aggressive and express their opinions openly.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

9. I prefer to have a supervisor with a higher degree than myself.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

10. I prefer to work with a supervisor who has more years of experience than me.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

11. When community college administrators of the other sex are promoted into leadership positions, I usually think that some form of favoritism was part of the decision.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

12. I expect to work in a community college where members of my sex make most of the decisions.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

13. The majority of administrators at this institution have the same ethnicity as me.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

14. My career plan was designed around my family/children.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

15. Leaders should not expect to live balanced lives; work must come first.

Completely Agree

Strongly Agree

Agree

Neither Agree nor Disagree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

Completely Disagree

SECTION IV: Check the response for each question that applies to you.

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. What is your ethnicity?

American Indian

Asian American

African American/Black

White/Caucasian

Other

3. What is your highest earned degree?

Bachelor's

Master's

Doctorate, Ph.D.

Other terminal degree (e.g. MFA, JD, EdD, MD)

Other

4. Which of the following best describes your position in the institution in which you work?

President

Vice President

Dean

Assistant Dean

Chair of Your Division

Other

5. What is the gender of your direct supervisor?

Male

Female

6. About how many years has your supervisor held their current position?

Less than 1 year

1 year to < 2 years

2 years to < 10 years

10 years to <20 years

20 years or more

7. Is your supervisor an alumni of the institution in which you work?

Yes

No

Not Sure

8. What is your supervisor's ethnicity?

American Indian

Asian American

African American/Black

White/Caucasian

Other

9. On a scale of 1 (Excellent) to 7 (Poor), how would you rank your supervisor's administrative skills?

1 Excellent

2 Mostly Good

3 Somewhat Good

4 Fair

5 Somewhat Poor

6 Mostly Poor

7 Poor

10. For how many years have you held your current position?

Less than 1 year

1 year to < 2 years

2 years to < 5 years

5 years to < 10 years

10 years to < 20 years

20 years or more

11. What is your marital status?

Single

Married

Divorced

Other

12. State in which you work:

13. In your current position, what is your annual salary?

Under \$50,000

\$50,000-\$74,999

\$75,000-\$99,999

\$100,000-\$124,999

\$125,000-\$149,999

\$150,000-\$174,999

\$175,000-\$199,999

\$200,000-\$224,999

\$250,000-\$274,999

\$275,000-\$299,999

More than \$300,000

APPENDIX B
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTER

June 14, 2012

Joanna Cooley
19 Caylee Lane
Ellisville, MS 39437

RE: IRB Study #12-166: Gender Characteristics and Barriers to Community College

Dear Ms. Cooley:

This email serves as official documentation that the above referenced project was reviewed and approved via expedited review for a period of 6/14/2012 through 5/15/2013 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.110 #7. Please note the expiration date for approval of this project is 5/15/2013. If additional time is needed to complete the project, you will need to submit a Continuing Review Request form 30 days prior to the date of expiration. Any modifications made to this project must be submitted for approval prior to implementation. Forms for both Continuing Review and Modifications are located on our website at <http://www.orc.msstate.edu>.

Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. Please note that the IRB reserves the right, at anytime, to observe you and any associated researchers as they conduct the project and audit research records associated with this project.

Please note that the MSU IRB is in the process of seeking accreditation for our human subjects protection program. As a result of these efforts, you will likely notice many changes in the IRB's policies and procedures in the coming months. These changes will be posted online at <http://www.orc.msstate.edu/human/aahrpp.php>. The first of these changes is the implementation of an approval stamp for consent forms. The approval stamp will assist in ensuring the IRB approved version of the consent form is used in the actual conduct of research. Your stamped consent form will be attached in a separate email. You must use copies of the stamped consent form for obtaining consent from participants.

Please refer to your docket number (#12-166) when contacting our office regarding this project.

We wish you the very best of luck in your research and look forward to working with you again. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Nicole Morse at nmorse@research.msstate.edu or call [662-325-3994](tel:662-325-3994). In addition, we would greatly appreciate your feedback on the IRB approval process. Please take a few minutes to complete our survey at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/YZC7QQD>.

Sincerely,

Nicole Morse
Assistant Compliance Administrator
cc: Julia Porter (Advisor)