

MOBTS Proposal**March 1, 2022****Abstract**

In this roundtable discussion, the topic of “women as leaders” will be explored. This discussion will include intriguing questions, current research, and several exercises that will invite participants to think about the characteristics of effective women leaders, as well as the challenges and advantages of being a women leader in these turbulent times. To compliment this discussion, the perspectives of multiple C-level women leaders, who were interviewed on this topic, will be shared. The dialog and discussion that ensues will expand the awareness of ways educators can give visibility to the evolving leadership roles of women in the “New Normal.”

Keywords: Women in Leadership, New Normal, Gender Empowerment

Introduction/Theoretical Background

A current review of the literature reveals that progress for diversity in leadership has improved but is still challenged in most developed economies. Specifically, the lack of women in leadership is highlighted as one of the first challenges in building a diverse workforce and culture. Due to the impact and effects of the global crisis (pandemic), the benefits of diversity in leadership has been an area of increased focus. Research demonstrates women in leadership is a force of “good for the people and the profits.” Numerous qualitative research interviews with C-level leaders will substantiate the current academic research occurring in the field of management and leadership. There is insufficient attention given to profiles, examples, and case studies featuring women in leadership being utilized in our educational system. This research suggests a prescription for all educators of management and leadership sciences. Please see

Appendices A, B, and C for preliminary literature review and current research with C-level women leaders.

Contribution to Teaching

The information gathered from the research will set the stage to explore what ways educators can help advance the cause of diversity in leadership. Together, with the roundtable participants, the presenters will explore and share possible ways that educators can incorporate a new expanded view of women leaders through their classroom discussions and assignments. Both students and instructors will be challenged in their thinking given contemporary global organizational dynamics in a post-COVID world. Materials from the session will be easily replicated for each instructor's situation or requirements and delivery format. Participants will also be provided a bibliography of relevant research studies and articles addressing Women in Leadership for their future reference and studies. This session will give all in attendance a pause to reflect and consider their personal mandates and strategies for future lesson plans. While this is focused on Organizational Behavior and Management, it is useful for any discipline to highlight and demonstrate the need for diversity in leadership.

Session Description – Proposed Timeline, Including Activities/Exercises/Content

1. **10 min. Opening Activity:** Presenters will engage participants in a sample exercise that can be utilized in class. A brief 5 item hand out will be distributed to each participant. Participants are simply asked to list the top five current leaders and the top 5 leaders of the past. Results will be shared in an open format and presenters will track response. Results will be discussed in the context of a similar survey presented to undergraduate and MBA students. This activity can be quite revealing of potential bias.

2. **5-8 min. Table Exercise #1- Qualities of Effective Women Leaders:** Participants will be asked to pair up and generate a list of qualities they believe women bring to the table that make them an effective leader. If need be, to prompt this discussion, participants will be asked to think of an effective woman leader and to make a list of the qualities this woman leader brings to the table that makes her thrive. After 5 minutes, the group will be asked to share their list of qualities with the group and a list of common qualities (themes) will be generated.
3. **8-10 min. Interview Findings and Literature Highlights:** Key interview themes acquired from the qualitative interview with C-Level women leaders will be shared, along with highlights from the literature. This will set the stage for the following roundtable discussions.
4. **15 min. Table Exercise/Discussion #2 – Case Study:** A table exercise will require the participants to review a very brief case study and try to determine if gender played a role in the ultimate outcome or results. The idea is to uncover potential cultural bias in the expectations and treatment based upon gender.
5. **15 min.: Table Exercise/Discussion #3 – Classroom Visibility:** For this table exercise, participants will be asked to reflect on how they currently give visibility to women leaders in their classroom, and more importantly, to share a new way they idea to share out regarding how to incorporate the topic of women in leadership in the classroom.

Please see Appendix A for list of Interview Participants (C-Level Women leaders) name, job title, and organization.

Please see Appendix B for Interview Questions.

Please see Appendix C for Preliminary Literature Review.

Appendix A: Interview Participants

Rebecca Henderson

Chief Executive Officer: Ranstad Global

Kelly Davis

Chief Strategy Officer: Sony Electronics North America

Julie Fletcher

Chief Human Resource Officer: Home Care Assistance

Michiko Muraki

Global Vice President Marketing: Dexcom

Melissa Master-Holder

Senior Vice President Human Capital: LPL Financial

Noreen Ipilitto

Senior Vice President Sales: iHeart Media

June Komar

Corporate Executive Vice President, Strategy and Administration at Scripps Health

Appendix B: Interview Questions for Women in Leadership

1. How many employees do you lead in your organization?
2. The past 24 months have been challenging to say the least. What would you say have been the top skills needed to lead during this time?
3. What challenges would you say you have faced being a female in a leadership role?
4. How did you establish credibility and how do you maintain credibility as a leader?
5. Do you see any advantages to being a woman in a leadership role when leading remotely? Or disadvantages?
6. Emotional intelligence is something that has been seen as an integral part of being an effective leader. What role do you think emotional intelligence has played in your leadership of others during the pandemic?
7. How can emotional intelligence be implemented to a greater level by leaders and virtual team members?
8. How have you shown emotional intelligence with those you've led during the pandemic? Examples?
9. What do you feel is the key to retaining employees during this turbulent time? Is there anything about being a woman leader that makes this challenging or more natural?
10. As a leader, how do you foster company culture in new employees who are/were working remotely during the pandemic? What are essential elements of your culture and how do you make this work for remote employees?
11. What challenges have you faced with regard to communication (i.e. lack of small talk, no water cooler talk, etc.)? How have you dealt with them?
12. What are possible career opportunities you see for women leaders in the "new normal"?

13. What are the main challenges you believe female leaders will face in the new normal?

14. Advice to leadership about Women in Leadership for the future?

15. What do you want students coming out of school to know about women in leadership?

16. What area(s) do educators need to focus on in order for our students to be effective leaders?

17. Do you see any similarities between how you develop your organization and college student training/teaching?

Appendix C: Preliminary Literature Review

A few areas we will highlight during the roundtable discussion:

Sense of Community

Communal Leader. Fosters a sense of belonging or community with those they lead. One study found no differences between gender and use of perceived communal leadership; whereas females from this same study, who were perceived of as “communal leaders” were perceived as more competent (Eichenauer, Ryan & Alanis, 2021).

Challenges for Women Leaders

Women naturally take on burden of domestic responsibilities, so it is no surprise that they’ve been significantly impacted by pandemic, and thus, their advancement in the workplace. (Staniscuaski, Kmetzsch, Soletti, Reichert, Zandona, Ludwig, Lima, Neumann, Schwartz, Mell-Carpes, Tamajusuku, Werneck, Ricachenevsky, Infanger, Seixas, Staats, & Oliveira, 2021). In fact, “more women than men have lost their jobs; more women than men are in essential jobs that expose them to infections and psychological stress, and women have had more work disruption than men have had because of increases in childcare and other responsibilities” (Carli, 2020). Being a mother is closely related to challenges in the workplace (Marczak, 2021). With work being moved to a remote format as a result of the pandemic, it’s been difficult for many women to navigate work and household duties, which, in some cases, has included taking care of children and overseeing their children’s remote schooling. While some women have been able to receive help with these duties, many women have had to juggle this overwhelming list of tasks. With this in mind, it is no surprise that the pandemic has created challenges for women’s advancement. “The ‘glass ceiling’, a term used to refer to invisible barriers impeding career

advancement, applies to minorities and females in both the business and political world” (as cited in Appelbaum & Mahabadi, 2022, pg. 1). While the C-level women executives interviewed for our project agree with these challenges, they also view what qualities women bring to the table that make them effective leaders during this turbulent time.

Advantages of Women Leaders

Several of the women leaders interviewed for this project noted that the pandemic actually provided an opportunity for women to shine. Rebecca Henderson, CEO of Randstad, shared that women naturally take on the burden of family and helping others. Their ability to empathize is what has made them strong leaders during the pandemic and will allow them to prosper in the “New Normal.” She shared how she actually dressed in a t-shirt and pulled her hair up in a ponytail to help her female employees, who were juggling multiple domestic duties at home, feel more comfortable when joining zoom calls. She didn’t want them to be concerned with one more thing – dressing up.

Implications for the Classroom

While research points to both the challenges and advantages associate with being a women leader, all women C-level executives interviewed for project, provided ideas for how to educate college students on being a woman in a leadership role. For instance, June Komar, Corporate Executive Vice President of Strategy and Administration at Scripps Health, recommended female students be encouraged and empowered to take on new opportunities. She shared that with hard work and dedication, they will accomplish more than they thought possible. Rebecca Henderson recommended case studies featuring women leaders be integrated into the college curriculum. Exposure to the challenges women leaders face is also important to share in order to

educate both female and male students aware of the support necessary for women to advance in leadership roles.

****Interviews are still in progress, so more details will be shared at the roundtable. We will also be asking participants at the roundtable for ideas on how they could give visibility to women leaders, as well as educate their students on challenges and advantages associated with being a women in a leadership role.***

References

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